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Lee Nathaniel Land

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**The Influence of Parental Bonding, Male Gender Role Conflict,
and Affect Regulation on Adult Attachment Avoidance:
Predictors of Men's Discomfort with Intimacy**

Committee:

Aaron Rochlen, Supervisor

Ricardo Ainslie

Keenan Pituch

Margaret Taylor

Heather Becker

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by

Lee Nathaniel Land, M.A.

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**The Influence of Parental Bonding, Male Gender Role Conflict,
and Affect Regulation on Adult Attachment Avoidance:
Predictors of Men's Discomfort with Intimacy**

Lee Nathaniel Land, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2008

Supervisor: Aaron Rochlen

Past research has indicated that masculine socialization norms contribute to avoidance of intimacy in close relationships, which has been proposed to inhibit men's psychological adjustment. The goal of the current dissertation was to examine associations among parental bonding, gender role conflict, affect regulation capacity, and adult attachment avoidance to describe the dynamic interaction between psychological and societal influences impacting adult attachment style. The present investigation employed a developmental contextual framework used to examine attachment and

psychoanalytic theories describing the evolution of characteristic male interpersonal strategies.

In the current study, it was proposed that parental bonding would predict adult attachment avoidance, gender role conflict, and affect regulation capacity. It was also hypothesized that both gender role conflict and three distinct affect regulation variables would predict adult attachment avoidance. Finally, the study aimed to test a model proposing that gender role conflict and affect regulation variables mediate the relationship between parental bonding and avoidance of intimacy in romantic relationships.

Two hundred and sixty-six undergraduate men completed a series of online surveys and 10 of these individuals participated in open-ended, follow-up interviews. The relationships between study variables were examined with linear regression and mediational analyses. Qualitative data regarding constructs of interest were elicited from interview respondents and interpreted for themes. Results demonstrated partial support for mediation effects, indicating that gender role conflict, emotion regulation suppression, and emotion regulation reappraisal helped to explain the association between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. In addition, interview themes related to five content areas were described and integrated with implications for future research directions and clinical applications.

Results of this study identified significant mechanisms underlying the development of men's maladaptive discomfort with intimacy in adulthood. Findings revealed through investigation of male interpersonal connections and the origins of

specific emotion regulation strategies will assist researchers and clinicians to further elucidate the construct of masculinity from a developmental contextual perspective. Study outcomes indicated that masculine gender role socialization and capacity to regulate affect should be key points of intervention for therapists working with men presenting with relational difficulties linked to early parental attachments.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the course of the past several decades, the relationship between traditional gender roles and psychological health problems among men has been well documented (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1993; Good, Borst, & Wallace, 1994; O'Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995). Male socialization patterns have been shown to contribute to avoidance of intimacy in close relationships, which has been proposed to harm men's psychological adjustment (Baxter & Montgomery, 1997; Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Fischer & Good, 1997; Good, Robertson, & O'Neil, 1995; Ludlow & Mahalik, 2001; Searle & Meara, 1999). Past research has suggested that conformity to masculine norms is associated with deficiencies in relationship skills (Ludlow & Mahalik, 2001) negatively impacting relationship satisfaction and mental health (Burn & Ward, 2005; Ickes, 1993).

The process of gender role socialization instructs boys and men to adhere to specific ideas about masculinity that often harm men's relationships (Levant, 1996). Pleck (1981, 1995) originally developed the gender role strain paradigm to describe the relationship between traditional masculinity and relationship dysfunction. According to this perspective, socially constructed masculinity ideologies present interpersonal and psychosocial challenges related to cultural standards for men. Particularly relevant to the current study examining male discomfort with interpersonal intimacy, gender role strain presents one possible explanation describing gender role socialization processes.

A distinct but related construct, gender role conflict, is defined as negative consequences experienced as a result of societal gender role expectations (O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986). Gender role conflict, or the tendency of men to

rigidly enact masculine ideologies, implies cognitive, emotional, unconscious, and/or behavioral problems caused by socialized gender roles (O'Neil et al., 1986). It has been conceptualized as a specific component of gender role strain linked to men's intrapsychic fear of femininity. Theorists have suggested that early relational experiences and attachment bonds influence the gender role socialization process and gender role formation (Bergman, 1995; Block, 1987; Chodorow, 1978; O'Neil, 1981; Pollack, 1995). Several researchers have identified negative associations between healthy attachment to parents and gender role conflict (Blazina & Watkins, 2000; DeFranc & Mahalik, 2002; Fischer & Good, 1998; Good, Robertson, & O'Neil, 1995; Schwartz, Waldo, & Higgins, 2004).

Using a psychoanalytic conceptualization to explain how potentially harmful male roles are internalized, Pollack (1992, 1995) proposed that normative early developmental trauma occur when boys are encouraged to separate prematurely from their primary maternal attachment figure. Greenson (1968) has described this disidentification process, through which he theorized boys develop a sense of masculine identity. Difficulties with the associated separation-individuation phase have been hypothesized to contribute to psychological maladjustment and reliance on unhealthy defense mechanisms throughout the lifespan. It has been suggested that early forms of gender role conflict related to problematic interactions with caregivers lead to the development of characteristic maladaptive masculine defenses to protect the resultant fragile sense of self (Blazina, 1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2004; Blazina & Watkins, 2000).

Attachment theory provides another rich conceptual framework to explain how maladaptive early relational experiences may lead to distinctive, stereotypical male styles of relating to others. Attachment describes the critical nature of the connection between child and caretaker in relation to healthy development and interpersonal functioning (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1970). Researchers examining adult relationships have created a four-category model of adult attachment to assess strategies used to manage security in close adult relationships on two dimensions, attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance (Bartholomew, 1990). These dimensions, which have also been conceptualized as internal working models of self and other respectively, impact intrapsychic and interpersonal processes in adulthood (Mikulincer, 1998). Particularly relevant to the current study, the avoidance of intimacy (i.e., model of other) dimension considers the degree to which individuals avoid close emotional contact with others due to expectations of negative consequences.

Based in part on early attachment relationships and adequacy of parental bonding, individuals vary with respect to characteristic affective regulation styles, important contributors to interpersonal wellbeing. Bowlby (1970, 1982) proposed that emotion management strategies learned in early interactions with caregivers are carried forward and utilized in later relationships. According to attachment theory, individuals use both internal and external resources to manage negative affect resulting from threats to attachment security. When attachment figures are unavailable or unresponsive, capacity to regulate affect will be inhibited because attempts at proximity seeking have not effectively relieved distress (Bowlby; Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003). Shaver and

Mikulincer (2002) have developed an integrative model describing how early experiences and interactions with caregivers lead to the evolution of divergent attachment-related affect regulation strategies. It has been suggested that the primary factor leading to men's reliance on distinctive interpersonal strategies is their ability to regulate affective experience (Blazina, 2004).

Blazina (2004) has proposed two distinct relational stances for gender role conflicted men. The first involves emotional distancing from others through avoidance of relational intimacy. Blazina theorized that these men distance themselves from others in an attempt to modulate negative emotional states in isolation. Another possible consequence of a problematic disidentification process is reliance on an overly dependent style of relating to others. Thus, other highly conflicted men may rely on their female partners in an overdependent manner to manage anxiety through continued externalization of traditionally feminine roles. This may be especially true for men who lack the internal resources to effectively manage negative affective states. DeFranc and Mahalik (2002) have asserted that the harmful effects of gender role strain described above closely resemble maladaptive developmental outcomes associated with anxious-ambivalent and avoidant attachment styles. Considering traditionally socialized, emotionally restricted men's tendency to experience interpersonal difficulties (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991, 1995), it is particularly important to further explore the influence of affect regulation on relational functioning.

In addressing this issue, several theorists and researchers have stressed the need for a developmental contextual foundation to more accurately and comprehensively

describe male gender role formation and its consequences (Eckes & Trautner, 2000; O'Neil, 2004; Smiler, 2004). Developmental contextualism is a theory of human development focused on the shifting connections between individuals and their context (Lerner, 1986, 1991). It has been proposed that masculinity is not a stable property, but instead a multidimensional construct with dynamic, reciprocal origins and outcomes (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Contextual examination of the interaction between socialization processes and social constructions of masculinity allows psychologists to better focus on the variability between and within men (Addis & Mahalik, O'Neil, 2004). Importantly, this type of integrative approach shows potential to foster insight regarding the development of gender roles throughout the lifespan, as well as their impact on interpersonal processes.

Notably, the relationships between parental bonding, gender role conflict, negative mood regulation, and adult attachment avoidance have yet to be tested empirically. Numerous masculinity researchers have asserted that a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the dysfunctional characteristics of traditional masculinity will lead to reduced psychological distress and improved psychological services for men (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Levant, 1996; Rochlen, 2005). Support for the proposed model will help to identify significant mechanisms underlying the development of maladaptive discomfort with intimacy in adulthood. By investigating men's interpersonal connections and the evolution of distinctive affect regulation styles, researchers and clinicians will be able to expand upon developmental contextual perspectives to further explore male relational development.

Current Study

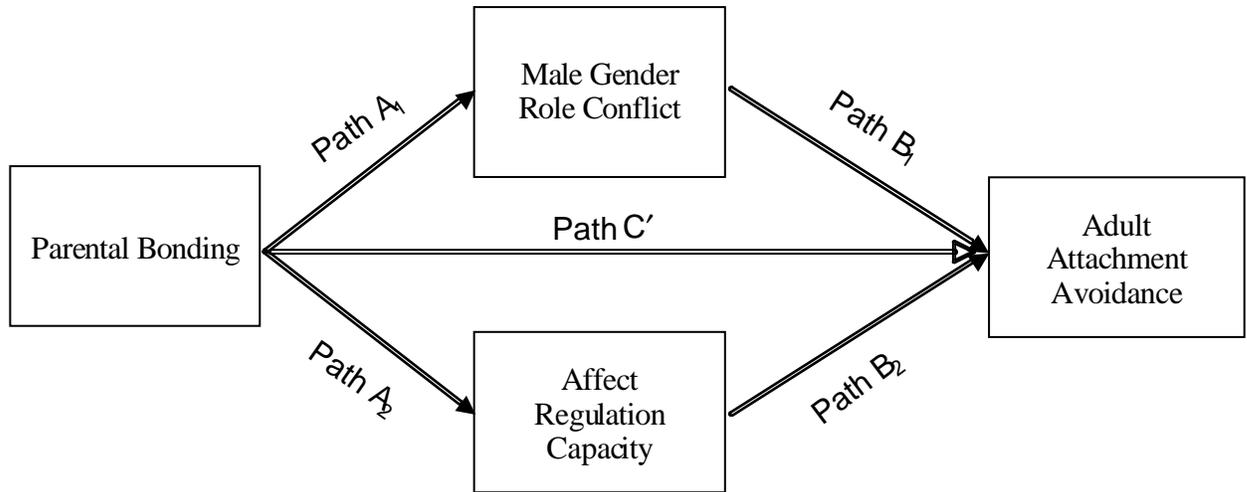
To address limitations in previous research describing the etiology of gender-role related avoidance of intimacy, the proposed study assesses the accuracy of a mediational model used to explain the role of parental bonding, male gender role conflict, and affect regulation in adult attachment avoidance. It is hypothesized that both gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity partially mediate the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance (see Figure 1, p. 8). Significant findings would indicate that masculine gender role socialization and capacity to regulate affect should be a key points of intervention for therapists working with men presenting with relational difficulties linked to early parental bonding relationships.

In particular, results from this study stand to make several important contributions. First, in order to facilitate treatment for men it has been advocated that future research focus on developmental areas to pinpoint specific mechanisms of the male socialization process that may lead to the formation of maladaptive defenses (Mahalik et al., 1998; O'Neil, 2004). An analysis of specific influences (e.g., parental bonding) on male role strain at critical developmental periods will be instrumental in the development of preventative interventions. Next, increased understanding of the relationship between characteristic male affect regulation tendencies and relational avoidance will be useful in the promotion and marketing of psychotherapy to men facing interpersonal challenges. Unfortunately, men who internalize traditional male role norms also appear to be the least interested in pursuing psychological services (Good & Wood, 1995; Levant, 2001; Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992). Finally, studies more closely examining traditional

masculine socialization and relational difficulties linked to affect regulation challenges will help to advance psychological theory related to individual, couples, family, and group treatments for men (Blazina, 2001a; Levant, 2001). The relationships among childhood bonds with caregivers, masculine gender role conflict, affect regulation capacity, and subsequent interpersonal functioning have important implications for psychotherapy process and outcome research.

Figure 1

Hypothesized Relationships Among Variables



Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The following section provides a conceptual overview of the variables under investigation in the current study and their relevance to the proposed hypotheses. In addition, empirical data are examined, including a description of limitations in past research, to provide evidence for the hypothesized relationships between constructs of interest. Topics reviewed in support of this dissertation study include masculine gender role socialization, specifically male gender role strain and male gender role conflict paradigms. An overview of the relational needs of traditionally socialized men is followed by a discussion of problems associated with rigid adherence to masculine gender roles. Next, the adult attachment paradigm and its relationship to avoidance of intimacy in close relationships, affect regulation capacity, and interpersonal functioning is explored.

In addition, a developmental contextual model for healthy interpersonal functioning is presented, as well as related psychoanalytic perspectives on masculinity formation. Research and clinical applications of this framework are discussed in relation to pathways hypothesized to contribute to maladaptive levels of adult attachment avoidance in men. Finally, a summary of the current dissertation study illustrates theoretical conceptualizations and empirical support regarding hypothesized relationships between male gender role conflict, affect regulation, parental bonding, and adult attachment avoidance.

Theoretical Foundations of Masculine Gender Role Socialization

Gender Role Strain Paradigm

The gender role strain model (Pleck, 1981, 1995) describes a developmental process often associated with emotional and relational disconnection, representing a commonly used heuristic to help explain the reciprocal, dynamic influence of gender role on men's interpersonal processes. According to Pleck, gender role strain occurs as a result of the internalization of stereotypical societal norms concerning gender role ideals. Thus, gender roles are socially constructed and are often contradictory, inconsistent, and unattainable. Harmful consequences may result from social condemnation that commonly follows men's gender role violations. For example, although shifts in gender role expectations mandate that men become increasingly emotionally available in intimate relationships, these same men are often condemned for revealing vulnerable feelings. In addition, many of the attributes prescribed by gender role norms have potential to be psychologically dysfunctional (Good & Brooks, 2005). Due to gender role socialization and resultant fear of appearing feminine, men are proposed to over-conform to traditional masculine roles as coping strategies used to minimize anxiety and shame (O'Neil, 1981).

Pleck (1995) has explained how cultural standards for traditional masculinity have harmful effects that lead to men's gender role strain. He has proposed that men often experience low self-esteem and other negative psychological consequences as a result of failures to fulfill male role expectations. Furthermore, even if men are successful in enacting traditional male roles, the socialization process is inherently traumatic. Because

culture-specific desirable characteristics are often inherently maladaptive, even those successfully conforming to these standards, expectations, and norms of masculinity may experience negative outcomes. Not surprisingly, men with high levels of gender role strain also report negative attitudes towards help seeking (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Levant, 2001; Rochlen & Hoyer, 2005). These men experience a double bind; those most in need seem least interested in pursuing psychological services (Good, Dell, & Mintz, 1989; Good & Wood, 1995; Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992).

Gender Role Conflict Paradigm

Research has indicated that adherence to traditional conceptions of masculine gender roles is associated with higher rates of a wide variety of negative physical and psychological difficulties (Good & Wood, 1995; Levant, 2001; O'Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995). Convincing evidence of the restrictive components of traditional male gender role values in the United States has been found using the Gender Role Conflict Scale (O'Neil et al., 1986), the most widely used instrument assessing masculinity in counseling psychology research (O'Neil, 2004). Gender role conflict has been described as experiences of unwanted consequences due to gender roles dictated by society (Stillson, O'Neil, & Owens, 1991). It has been conceptualized as one of the possible negative outcomes of gender role strain, proposed by Pleck (1981) to provide an integrative theoretical framework for masculine socialization (O'Neil, 2004). According to the male gender role conflict paradigm, men frequently experience distress and conflict because successfully meeting the contradictory and unattainable demands of traditional male socialization is impossible.

Gender role conflict has been defined as a psychological state leading to negative consequences for an individual or others caused by rigid, sexist, or restrictive socialized gender roles (O'Neil et al., 1995). Gender role conflict is a complex, multidimensional construct that is related to specific cognitive, emotional, unconscious, and/or behavioral problems caused by socialized gender roles internalized in sexist and patriarchal societies. O'Neil (2004) has developed an ongoing research paradigm and noted that over 200 published studies have shown gender role conflict patterns to be associated with a wide range of demographic, psychological, and attitudinal variables. Hayes and Mahalik (2000) have proposed that specific patterns of gender role conflict be conceptualized as operationally defined and observable outcomes of gender role strain.

Male gender role conflict has been hypothesized to be interconnected with men's fear of femininity, defined as a strong, negative emotion associated with stereotypic feminine values, attitudes, and behaviors (O'Neil et al., 1986). O'Neil has proposed that these emotional reactions are learned primarily in early childhood during gender identity formation. Boys and men experience gender role conflict in situations when they deviate from or violate gender role norms of masculinity, try to meet or fail to meet gender role norms, and/or experience discrepancies between their real self-concepts and their ideal self-concepts (O'Neil et al., 1995). Furthermore, it has been theorized that men use gender role conflict to help manage negative affect that occurs as a result of discomfort about aspects of themselves that have traditionally been viewed as feminine (Mahalik, Cournoyer, DeFranc, Cherry, & Napolitano, 1998).

Limitations of Gender Role Conflict Research

Although gender role conflict theorists and researchers have often promoted a contextual perspective, research in this area has shown a significant lack of attention to this issue. Limited empirical work has focused on the links between male gender role conflict and life span development. Heppner (1995) has stated that “counseling psychologists know very little either about gender role conflict across the life span or about gender role conflict within specific developmental issues” (p. 22).

In order to address these concerns, O’Neil (2004) has proposed a research paradigm to guide future gender role conflict research. He has advocated the use of more detailed contextual frameworks to empirically test theoretical conceptualizations describing gender socialization. It has been suggested that research based in rigorous theory should investigate moderator and mediator variables to provide a more complex and useful causal understanding of male gender role conflict. O’Neil has argued that researchers should examine more closely family of origin issues such as experiences with caregivers in order to more fully explore how men’s interpersonal dynamics evolve throughout the lifespan.

Finally, O’Neil (2004) provided an overview of his updated gender role conflict paradigm, in which he recommended investigating contextual-situational-developmental aspects of gender role conflict, particularly factors impacting how a man’s gender role conflict activates interpersonal problems with others. In doing so, he advocated that attention be developmentally focused on the contextual, situational, and environmental demands (i.e., gender role restrictions) placed on boys and men. Additionally, O’Neil

emphasized the need for research to address the often overlooked unconscious aspects of gender role conflict, as well as how early experiences may impact the evolution of gender role strain and conflict. The links between men's gender role conflict and potential enactment of maladaptive relational styles are further discussed below.

Addressing the Relational Needs of Traditionally Socialized Men

Various studies have provided evidence for men's tendency to mask insecurity with outward displays of confidence and bravery (Levant, 2001; O'Neil et al., 1995). Masculine norms of emotional control, self-reliance, and physical toughness have all been associated with males' unwillingness (or inability) to show vulnerability (Mahalik et al., 2003). Levant has suggested that one of the consequences of normative gender socialization in men is a mild form of alexithymia, or diminished emotional and affective capabilities. He proposed that this relative lack of awareness of emotions and inability to verbalize emotional states negatively impacts interpersonal functioning, while also decreasing the likelihood of benefit from psychotherapy. Traditional male gender roles have historically been viewed as strengths, but have more recently been reevaluated based on whether or not they are adaptive depending on situational context (Mahalik et al.). Thus, it is chronic and inflexible enactment of traditional male role norms that is more likely to result in negative psychological outcomes for men.

Relational Problems Associated with Rigid Adherence to Masculine Gender Roles

In general, research has supported the assertion that men may be deficient in relationship skills compared to women (Burn & Ward, 2005). Men and women both report higher levels of intimacy, enjoyment, and nurturance in their relationships with

women (Sapadin, 1998). Good, Robertson, and O'Neil (1995) determined significant positive correlations between gender role conflict and fear of intimacy. In particular, the authors discussed direct associations between restrictive emotionality and both fear of intimacy and psychological distress variables. They suggested that the restrictive emotionality gender role conflict subscale is closely related to detrimental consequences of interpersonal discomfort in close relationships. Ludlow and Mahalik (2001) have shown that conformity to masculine norms is associated with a reduced capacity for intimacy. Relational dissatisfaction seems to be especially significant for men who conform more rigidly to stereotypically masculine roles (see review by Ickes, 1993).

In order to test whether traditional masculine gender roles, measured as gender role conflict and masculine gender role stress, were associated with alexithymia (i.e., reduced emotional capacity) and fear of intimacy, Fischer and Good (1997) sampled 208 undergraduate men. The authors determined that both alexithymia and fear of intimacy were strongly positively related to traditional masculine enactment patterns. Fischer and Good suggested that family of origin issues, including norms about emotional expression, may interact with the masculine socialization variables examined to impact interpersonal functioning. In addition, fear of intimacy has been empirically linked with loneliness and feelings of isolation (Doi & Thelen, 1993). It is likely that increased difficulty sharing thoughts and feelings may negatively influence personal connections with others, including friends, romantic partners, and/or psychotherapists.

It has been proposed that boys and men in dominant White, North American culture are typically socialized to ignore and/or disparage emotionality (Fischer & Good,

1997). O’Neil (1981) originally theorized that men with higher levels of the gender role conflict restrictive emotionality subscale would have more difficulty with self-disclosure, recognition of feelings, and “processing the complexities of interpersonal life” (p. 206). O’Neil proposed that in close relationships, high levels of restrictive emotionality limit the degree to which men participate in emotional, expressive, and intimate exchanges with others, possibly inhibiting their ability to form and maintain intimate bonds with others. Possible determinants of discomfort with intimacy (i.e., parental bonding, gender role conflict, and affect regulation capacity) and potential negative interpersonal consequences in adult relationships are examined in the current study.

Theorists studying male gender role socialization have long suggested a relationship between early experiences and subsequent traditional masculine role enactment (Bergman, 1995; O’Neil, 1986; Pleck, 1981). Pollack (1995) hypothesized that a father’s specific pattern of masculine gender role attributes influences his son’s ability to form healthy and lasting affectionate relationships. Given the extreme emphasis on the development of an independent, self-reliant identity for men, it is likely that socialized traditional masculine gender roles impede interpersonal functioning. DeFranc and Mahalik (2002) have argued that an early push for boys towards disconnection and self-sufficiency may foster a fear of abandonment later in life.

Review of Previous Research Linking Attachment and Gender Role Strain

Fischer and Good (1998) investigated associations between parent-child attachments and masculinity-related conflicts later in life. They proposed that men’s perceptions of the quality of their relationships with parents would be predictive of

current levels of male gender role conflict and stress. More specifically, Fischer and Good hypothesized that men with higher gender role conflict and gender role stress (i.e., men who are more traditionally socialized) would report less positive relationships with parents. These relationships were expected to be exemplified by less secure attachment to mothers and fathers, more conflict with mothers and fathers, and parental attachment characterized by less positive affect, less facilitation of sons' independence, and less emotional support from parents.

In order to measure the constructs of interest, 195 undergraduate male participants filled out the Gender Role Conflict Scale (O'Neil et al., 1986), the Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987), the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), the Parental Attachment Questionnaire (Kenny, 1987), and the Conflictual Independence subscale of the Psychological Separation Inventory (Hoffman, 1984). Fischer and Good (1998) found that men with more secure, positive, and conflict free relationships with their parents endorsed less gender role conflict and less gender role stress. These results indicated that conflicted relations with parents seem to be linked with men's experiences of masculine role strain. The authors suggested that future research examining specific contributions of relationships with both mother and father in relation to masculine gender roles was warranted to better determine their respective impact.

Similarly, DeFranc and Mahalik (2002) hypothesized that parental gender role strain, especially paternal gender role strain, reduces healthy attachment and increases the degree of maladaptive psychological separation reported in parent-child relationships.

The authors discussed how gender role socialization influences parent-child connections, ultimately impacting attachment formation. They argued that societal pressure for male children to prematurely separate from attachment figures, especially maternal caregivers, contributes to subsequent relationship difficulties. DeFranc and Mahalik detailed striking similarities between maladaptive outcomes associated with high levels of gender role strain (e.g., gender role conflict and stress) and the anxious-ambivalent and avoidant attachment styles, a phenomenon the current study further explores.

To test the hypotheses described above, DeFranc and Mahalik (2002) examined 204 male college students who completed the Parental Attachment Questionnaire (Kenny, 1987) to measure parental attachment, the Psychological Separation Inventory (Hoffman, 1984) to measure aspects of parent-child independence, as well as two gender role strain measures, the Gender Role Conflict Scale (O'Neil et al., 1986) and Masculine Gender Role Stress scale (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987) both for themselves and estimated for their fathers. Results supported the proposed hypotheses. Men's higher reported levels of gender role conflict and stress were associated with a greater degree of psychological separation from both mother and father, as well as lower levels of attachment to parents. Results also indicated that sons' estimates of their fathers' gender role conflict and stress were negatively related to secure attachment status in participants, suggesting that a father's gender role enactment affects his son's subsequent relational faculties. The authors suggested several clinical implications, including the importance of clinicians assessing and maintaining an awareness of gender role strain issues when working with clients presenting with attachment and/or interpersonal difficulties.

Findings illuminated how masculine gender role strain in both sons and fathers is likely a significant factor in the development of unhealthy attachment patterns.

Limitations in Previous Research Linking Attachment and Gender Role Strain

Literature documenting the precise manner in which gender role identity influences psychological health and relationship satisfaction is limited (Burn & Ward, 2005; Rochlen & Mahalik, 2004). In particular, much of the literature examining the relationship between attachment to parents and gender role strain (Fischer & Good, 1998; DeFranc & Mahalik, 2002) is correlational in nature, limiting causal determinations. Furthermore, it is possible that third variables may be instrumental in the relationship between attachment to parents and gender role conflict. Both studies discussed earlier utilized measures of parental attachment in which adult male participants reflect on current relationships with parents. In order to more closely investigate the intergenerational transmission of attachment bonds and their subsequent impact on interpersonal functioning, the current research asks participants to reflect retrospectively on childhood relationships with parents in order to more directly examine early childhood relationships. Furthermore, qualitative interviews consider participants' relationships with caregivers while growing up, as well as currently, to investigate connections between historical attachment bonds and current interpersonal functioning. In doing so, this dissertation study allows detailed assessment of the proposed negative relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance, which is discussed further below.

The Adult Attachment Paradigm

The following section discusses the evolution of attachment theory, originally developed to describe early relationships between infants and caregivers. An overview of adult attachment follows, linking early attachment bonding to adult interpersonal styles. Next, the connections between attachment theory and emotions is examined, specifically the relationship between adult attachment avoidance and affect regulation. Finally, the relationship between avoidance of intimacy in close relationships and characteristic modes of managing negative emotional states is explored.

Bowlby (1970) originally formulated attachment theory to describe the formation and maintenance of emotional bonds between infants and caregivers. Close attachment relationships are crucial components of interpersonal functioning that persist developmentally throughout the lifespan (Bowlby, 1979). Attachment theory focuses on the impact of early relationships on a child's worldview and personality through internal working models of self and others. Experiences with caregivers are internalized and influence later relationships outside the family (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby). In the late 1970s, researchers began to use attachment theory to study individual differences in interpersonal functioning in adulthood, particularly the nature and quality of intimate adult relationships (Crowell, Fraley, & Shaver, 1999; Hazan & Shaver, 1994). It is now generally accepted that affective events during childhood strongly influence the nature and quality of close interpersonal bonds in adulthood (Collins & Read, 1990).

To formulate an empirical basis for the study of adult attachment, Hazan and Shaver (1987) theorized that adult attachment patterns are analogous to characteristic

styles of emotional connection between infants and parents. Research has suggested moderate overlap between early infant attachment patterns and adult attachment styles (Fraley, 2002) and has supported the assertion that adult attachment theory is a useful conceptualization for exploring relationship dynamics in adulthood (Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Hazan & Diamond, 2000). Differences in adult attachment styles have predicted distinct coping strategies that impact emotional adaptation and personal well-being (Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Mikulincer, Florian, & Weller, 1993; Ognibene & Collins, 1998).

In conceptualizing adult attachment, Hazan and Shaver (1987) originally classified adults into three adult attachment styles identical to the attachment typologies delineated from detailed observations of infant-mother interactions by Ainsworth et al. (1978). These secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant classifications were conceptualized as habitual interaction styles in adulthood closely mirroring infants' expectations concerning parental accessibility and responsiveness. Secure individuals have been described as comfortable with intimacy and depending on others for support when necessary, as well as confident that others love and value them (Rothbard & Shaver, 1994). They typically view attachment figures (including romantic partners) as warm and responsive and have positive expectations regarding their relationships. Securely attached people have been found to be more socially skilled than those exhibiting insecure attachments (Deniz, Hamarta, & Ari, 2005; DiTommaso, Brannen-McNulty, & Ross, 2003). In addition, adults who are securely attached typically exhibit high self-esteem (Collins & Read, 1990; Shaver, Papalia, & Clark, 1996) and are

considered well adjusted, nurturing, and warm by others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

In contrast, anxious-ambivalent individuals have a strong desire for closeness, along with intense fear of rejection (Collins, Cooper, & Albino, 2002). Because they maintain their sense of self-esteem based on the acceptance of others, these adults tend to have a strong desire to gain approval. Finally, those displaying an avoidant adult attachment orientation are uncomfortable with intimacy and close relationships. By distancing themselves emotionally from others and renouncing attachment needs, avoidant individuals attempt to avoid potential rejection. Compared to their insecure (i.e., anxious-ambivalent and avoidant) counterparts, secure adults experience more satisfying relationships (Feeney, 1999). In addition, their relationships differ markedly in emotional tone and likelihood for success. Thus, insecure attachment can be viewed as a vulnerability factor for the potential success of intimate relationships (Collins et al.).

Adult Attachment and Avoidance of Intimacy

Research has since supported the existence of two distinct patterns of avoidant orientations, called fearful and dismissing avoidance, observed in the four-category model of individual differences in adult attachment (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). It has been shown that four categories of adult attachment (secure, anxious-ambivalent, fearful-avoidant, dismissing-avoidant) can be conceptualized using a two dimensional model (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). These dimensions vary depending upon individuals' representational models of self (i.e., anxiety dimension) and others (i.e., avoidance dimension). The dismissing and fearfully avoidant styles both

reflect avoidance of intimacy, but differ in terms of need for acceptance of others in order to maintain positive self-regard. While fearfully avoidant individuals adopt a distancing approach to relationships to prevent being rejected, dismissing individuals use a similar stance to maintain a sense of independence and self-reliance. The avoidance dimension of adult attachment is particularly relevant to male gender role conflict, reflecting the extent to which people distrust others and strive to maintain emotional distance and independence from relationship partners.

Both dismissing and fearful avoidants tend to view relationships as dangerous, preferring to maintain distance from others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). These attachment orientations are both characterized by negative models of others. However, dismissing avoidants exhibit a positive model of self, while fearful avoidants endorse a negative model of self. In general, avoidant adults tend to withdraw from intimacy with romantic partners when experiencing stress, avoiding potential opportunities to receive care and support (Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992), and often attempt to cope with anxiety by ignoring or denying it (Dozier & Kobak, 1992). Not surprisingly, these individuals also dislike sharing intimate knowledge about themselves (Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991).

Masculine Gender Role and Adult Attachment

One relatively unaddressed aspect of attachment research and theory is the influence of gender role dynamics on men's relational functioning. Furthermore, the specific mechanism(s) by which socialized gender role norms impact and/or impede the formation of healthy interpersonal relationships is unclear. Gender role needs to be more

closely considered to further clarify the relationship between attachment style and relationship functioning (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). Research indicates that gender role socialization affects early attachment (DeFranc & Mahalik, 2002; Good et al., 1995), as well as the formation of adult attachment bonds (Block, 1987; Pollack, 1995). It has also been suggested that early relational experiences with caregivers impact the course of gender role socialization and development (O'Neil, 1981; Shaver et al., 1996), though empirical work in this area is limited.

Collins and Read (1990) have investigated correlates of adult attachment including self-esteem, expressiveness, instrumentality, trust in others, beliefs about human nature, and styles of loving. The authors asserted that avoidant men devalue their relationships in part due to fear of intimacy and desire to maintain emotional distance. Furthermore, they proposed that avoidant men's discomfort with their relationships may reflect adherence to traditional masculine stereotypes and socialization patterns. For men with avoidant attachment styles, comfort with closeness (i.e., lower levels of adult attachment avoidance) was more predictive of positive relationships than their concern about abandonment (i.e., adult attachment anxiety). For women, less concern about abandonment was more predictive of satisfying and trusting relationships than comfort with closeness. Results suggested that sex likely moderates associations between attachment style and relationship characteristics.

The importance of the above study was highlighted by Kirkpatrick and Davis, who advocated for the incorporation of gender role variables to facilitate a more complete understanding of the ways in which adult attachment style differentially impacts

interpersonal functioning (1994). Using a longitudinal design, Kirkpatrick and Davis expanded upon the previously discussed study by focusing on the effect of attachment styles on relationship dynamics. Three hundred fifty-four heterosexual undergraduate couples involved in serious dating relationships were assessed at baseline, as well as by telephone 7-14 months later, and again at 30-36 months. Participants completed the Hazan and Shaver (1994) Attachment Style measure and the Davis and Todd (1985) Relationship Rating Form, as well as demographic and relationship-history measures at the outset of the study. At Times 2 and 3, a telephone interview was conducted to ascertain relationship status and stability. Results indicated that male and female attachment styles were non-randomly paired and related to concurrent relationship ratings of both partners in distinct but theoretically meaningful ways.

Particularly relevant to the current study, Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) focused their discussion on future research directions involving integrating gender role considerations and relationship mechanisms with adult attachment conceptualizations. Results suggested that the manner in which attachment style influences interpersonal dynamics depends on gender. The authors asserted that consideration of traditional gender role issues is crucial to an accurate understanding of this seemingly gender-conditioned pattern. Avoidant men consistently rated their relationships as more negative and endorsed less commitment to them than other men, findings that were consistent with previous research (Collins & Read, 1990; Simpson, 1990). Given that avoidant individuals typically prefer to avoid intimacy and maintain interpersonal emotional distance (Collins & Read; Hazan & Shaver, 1987), this result is not surprising. Collins

and Read have suggested that this pattern may, in part, be related to men's adherence to traditional stereotypes about masculinity.

Currently, only one published empirical study directly investigated the proposed link between male gender role conflict and adult attachment (Schwartz, Waldo, & Higgins, 2004). In order to explore how gender role socialization processes impact early attachment bonds (DeFranc & Mahalik, 2002; Good et al., 1995), Schwartz et al. hypothesized reciprocal influences between attachment style and gender role socialization, especially in relation to interpersonal problems. One hundred seventy male undergraduate students participated in the study in exchange for course credit. The associations between masculine gender role conflict and adult attachment styles in college men were investigated using the Gender Role Conflict Scale (O'Neil et al., 1986) and the Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The authors predicted that participants with insecure attachment styles would show greater levels of gender role conflict than those with a secure attachment style. As hypothesized, results indicated that men with secure attachment styles endorsed significantly less restrictive emotionality than men with preoccupied, dismissive, or fearful attachment styles. Also, men with fearful attachment styles exhibited more conflict with success, power, and competition compared to men with secure attachment styles. The authors proposed that negative internal models of self and others might cause men to overidentify with traditional masculine values. These results were consistent with the work of Bartholomew (1990) and Bowlby (1979), which suggested that insecure attachment experiences in early childhood might lead to maladaptive internal working models later in

life. In a reciprocal manner, continued difficulties expressing emotions and dysfunctional pursuit of success, achievement, and control of others may further exacerbate insecure attachment patterns. Schwartz et al. theorized that men's insecure attachment and gender role conflict interacted dynamically to sustain and reinforce each other throughout their lives. Directly related to the current study, the authors suggested that future research utilize alternative research designs to examine cause and effect relationships between these constructs.

Attachment Theory and Affect Regulation

Another area of theory and research with relevance to the proposed project concerns the relationship between attachment and characteristic emotional management patterns. According to Bowlby (1970), major affect regulation strategies are organized around the beliefs (positive or negative) that individuals form about self and others. Support for this theory has been provided by Mikulincer (1998), who examined proposed relationships between adult attachment style and discrepancies in self-appraisal. He hypothesized that positive or negative views of self and others vary by adult attachment style resulting in distinctive affect regulation strategies. Similarly, previous research has shown variability in coping strategies and affective responses to stress that vary depending on attachment style (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Shaver & Hazan, 1994).

Mikulincer's results indicated that self-views and resultant adult attachment style were products of individuals' customary affect regulation strategies. As expected, avoidant participants exhibited a positive self-view and anxious-ambivalent participants endorsed a negative self-view compared to secure individuals. Because these results

supported Bowlby's assertion that attachment-related regulatory strategies occur out of conscious awareness, Mikulincer suggested that unconscious defensive mechanisms likely play an important role in the relationship between affect regulation strategies and adult attachment styles.

Shaver and Mikulincer (2002) have further developed this conceptualization to model associations between attachment styles and emotional regulation functions. Their framework describes the importance of the monitoring and appraisal of threatening events, the availability of external and internalized attachment figures, and the viability of proximity seeking as a means of coping with attachment insecurity and distress. Individuals use proximity seeking in bonding with attachment figures to manage affect in response to physical and psychological threats. Early experiences that confirm the world is a safe place and that others are responsive and protective will lead to more positive levels of attachment security that are gradually internalized during development (Bowlby, 1988). This suggests that perceptions of the availability and sensitivity of attachment figures provide significant sources of variation on subsequent emotional regulation tendencies. The current study utilizes two distinct affective regulation measures in order to more closely determine the relationship between emotional management strategies and adult attachment style enactment in an attempt to further validate Shaver and Mikulincer's theoretical framework.

Affect Regulation and Interpersonal Functioning

Expanding on the links between attachment and affect regulation previously discussed, research examining the interaction of these variables with interpersonal

dynamics is further detailed. Specified emotion management routines are triggered when relational situations match prototypes of past experiences in which affect regulation scripts have been effective (Westen, 1998). In the emotion regulation literature, it has been frequently suggested that individuals vary along several dimensions of affective experience including their capacity to cope with negative emotions. People are presumed to develop specific strategies that help them to manage their emotional responses to others, which vary according to each individual's level of comfort with intense feelings.

Studies using two-dimensional models of attachment styles (i.e., anxiety and avoidance dimensions) have confirmed that attachment style differences are associated with variability in relationship functioning and affect regulation tendencies (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Shaver & Hazan, 1994). Results indicated that people with anxious (i.e., low on avoidance dimension, high on anxiety dimension) and avoidant (i.e., high on avoidance dimension, low on anxiety dimension) adult attachment styles are unlikely to seek social support to help relieve distress. It is theorized that in adults, coping with stress depends on external and internalized attachment-related affective regulation resources (Mikulincer et al., 2003). When psychological resources are insufficient, individuals with secure attachment patterns are more likely to seek support from others. Thus, healthy affective regulation in stressful situations depends upon reciprocal interactions between internal and external coping mechanisms.

There are several factors that have been proposed to impede a developing child's ability to effectively regulate affect in a healthy manner. Lack of availability of physical or emotional proximity to attachment figures may result in deactivating strategies that

inhibit the search for support from others and lead to attempts to manage distress in isolation (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988). Individuals with this goal orientation closely resemble men with high levels of gender role conflict. They often deny attachment needs to avoid distress related to attachment-figure unavailability, thus avoiding closeness, intimacy, and dependence on others while striving for self-reliance (Mikulincer et al., 2003). Bowlby (1982) described the avoidance of potentially painful emotional connections as compulsive self-reliance. In an effort to protect themselves, people often actively ignore threatening events and personal vulnerabilities (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). In addition, they may inhibit and suppress thoughts and memories that evoke feelings of vulnerability. Related research has suggested that a secure attachment style may lead to a more positive self-view and lower likelihood that individuals will use maladaptive levels of self-inflation (or presumably other) defensive mechanisms to protect the self (Mikulincer, 1998).

Although traditional male socialization presents an illusion of extreme self-sufficiency (Bergman, 1995), security-based strategies that facilitate confidence in available emotional support promote engagement in activities that contribute to healthy autonomy. Mikulincer et al. (2003) proposed three mechanisms that aid in the expansion of self-regulatory ability. These included the broadening of perspectives and capacities, expansion of the self, and internalization of functions that were originally accomplished by attachment figures. The authors asserted that empirical evidence during the past two decades has provided initial support for their integrative design connecting attachment and affective regulation constructs. The current study attempts to further validate

proposed relations between generalized affective management patterns, as well as more specific negative mood regulation strategies, and adult attachment styles.

Developmental Contextual Approach to Interpersonal Functioning

It has been argued that societal pressure for male children to prematurely separate from attachment figures and remain interpersonally disconnected can lead to relationship difficulties (Bergman, 1995; Blazina, 1997, 2004; Pollack, 1995, 1998). Blazina has contended that early gender role conflict contributes to emotional maladjustment and reliance on unhealthy psychological defenses throughout the lifespan. Further exemplifying this perspective, Mahalik et al. (1998) suggested that men may rigidly enact masculine roles to manage feelings of shame and anxiety produced in response to failure to achieve culture-specific gender ideals. DeFranc and Mahalik (2002) presented an integration of psychoanalytic and gender role strain theories proposed to explain how masculinity injunctions impact development. In doing so, they detailed striking similarities between the maladaptive outcomes associated with high levels of gender role strain (e.g., gender role conflict) and the anxious-ambivalent and avoidant adult attachment styles. The following discussion further explores assertions that the promotion of unhealthy restrictive gender roles for boys may negatively impact adult relational capacity.

Pollack (1995) has theorized that men typically struggle with issues of emotional connectedness and tend to protect themselves by psychologically distancing from their affective states. According to this view, men tend to avoid empathic, intimate relationships, especially those with women, which then negatively impacts physical and

emotional health. Traditional male socialization can lead to chronic reliance on defensive autonomy and affective suppression strategies that may not be adaptive across situational contexts. In contrast to traditional theories of masculinity that emphasize extreme forms of masculine self-sufficiency, Pollack stressed potential negative outcomes for men who desire emotional connections with others, yet simultaneously fear and avoid interpersonal closeness.

Problems with identity-connectedness issues originating in early childhood may lead men to psychologically defend against close connections with others (Pollack, 1995). Pollack has proposed that this occurs in part due to men's normative, developmental traumas that lead to greater risk of difficulties with intimacy, empathy, and commitment later in life. A caregiving environment characterized by distorted and/or unsupportive emotional connections is believed to contribute to developmental disruptions that may lead to diminished emotional capacity (Ogden, 1990; Winnicott, 1958). Additionally, gender socialization patterns often exacerbate gender polarization through social disapproval and shaming of men who deviate from traditional male role norms. As a result, men often pursue extreme forms of independence while depriving themselves of intimacy. A series of articles conceptualizing the links between unsatisfactory early interactions with caregivers and the development of characteristic gender role conflict and maladaptive interpersonal patterns is further discussed below (Blazina, 1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2004; Blazina & Watkins, 2000).

Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Masculinity

According to traditional psychoanalytic theory, the unconscious mind influences identity development as well as behavior. A young child's relationships with primary caregivers are thought to be of paramount importance to psychological development (Bergman, 1995; Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975). Empathically attuned caregivers who are adequately responsive to an infant's needs, feelings, and experiences allow the child to gain a sense of trust, safety, and relatedness. Over time, the quality of caregiver response will shape a child's expectations of how others will respond to his or her needs. Child-caregiver bonds characterized by chronic failures (e.g. lack of empathic attunement, overintrusiveness, and/or neglect) are believed to contribute to subsequent interpersonal difficulties.

Greenson (1968) has described problems that men often experience as a result of the relative fragility of male gender role identity. According to his conceptualization, for boys to form a healthy gender identity, they relinquish their bond to a female caregiver as their primary object of identification (i.e., disidentification) at an appropriate developmental point during the separation-individuation phase. It is the process of successfully disidentifying in a suitable manner that will largely determine a boy's ability to form a positive identification with his father and begin to develop a healthy sense of maleness. From this perspective, masculinity can be viewed as a defensive construction used to emphasize difference and distance from the mother and females in general (Pattman, Frosh, & Pheonix, 1998).

According to Tyson (1982), Freud's description of the development of male gender identity clearly stressed the distinction between mother and child (1927). It has been suggested that a young boy's focus on gender dichotomy and difference may lead to a deeply unconscious envy of females linked to relationship difficulties with women later in life (Greenson, 1968). Chodorow (1978) challenged Freud's established normative heterosexual theory and proposed that characteristic sex differences in early childhood can be traced to asymmetrical organization of parenting, stressing dissimilar child rearing processes that boys and girls encounter. Pleck (1981, 1995) has also criticized what he considered to be the conventional male identity model's essentialist approach, claiming that further attention must be paid to socio-cultural influences shaping gender role demands. According to this view, through differential interactions with caregivers, boys and girls develop varied sets of internal object relations that further influence their maturational processes.

While Greenson (1968) based his conclusions about male gender identity within the confines of Freud's psychosexual model, Chodorow's (1978) reformulations focused on the lack of attention paid to relational interactions and environmental factors influencing gender role identity, placing emphasis on messages about masculinity and femininity transmitted through the family (Tyson, 1982). This dispute illustrates the historic disagreement and more recent evolution of conceptualizations describing the foundation of gender role identity in psychoanalytic thought. Chodorow and Tyson have proposed that early socialization experiences with attachment figures influence boys in developing particular gender role constellations.

In a similar manner, the development of the construct of gender role strain was directly influenced by conceptualizations focused on deciphering how societal messages affect individual and interpersonal well-being (O'Neil, 1981). Theorists have long suggested that early interactions with caregivers can harm the development and functioning of the masculine self (O'Neil, 1981; Pleck, 1981; Pollack, 1992). Utilizing both self-psychological (2004) and object-relations (2001c) perspectives, Blazina has suggested that adverse childhood experiences fostering gender role conflict lead men to enact distinct relational styles to defend against emotional damage caused during unsatisfactory disidentification processes. He asserted that men use psychological defenses to protect themselves from painful emotional states related to negative early experiences, discussing how conflicts related to gender role socialization may lead to the development of a fragile masculine self. This term is used to describe maladaptive psychological consequences to male gender identity proposed to be the result of empathic failings of caregivers.

Blazina (2004) conceptualized two distinct masculine styles based on characteristic approaches to negotiating the gender role conflicted aspects of disidentification and resultant fragile masculine self. One stance involves denial of the importance of relationships and support from others. Compartmentalization is used to split off the negative emotional residual of the flawed disidentification process and protect against the re-experiencing of painful emotional states. This first stance closely resembles adherence to stereotypical traditional male gender roles and involves distancing oneself emotionally from others. The other stance entails moving towards

others in an overly dependent manner. This overdependent approach to relationships occurs when individuals attempt to habitually use others to modulate negative emotional states. Because embracing traditional feminine characteristics would threaten masculine identity in these men, they rely upon others to perform affect modulation roles. Blazina's two proposed relational stances for gender role conflicted men closely resemble the fearful avoidant and preoccupied adult attachment styles. He further asserted that both postures are the result of normative developmental trauma associated with gender role socialization, which may then lead to divergent internal working models of self and others.

Empirical Support for Psychoanalytic Conceptualizations of Masculinity

Research, though limited in scope, has revealed support for a link between gender role conflict enactment and psychoanalytic theories of development. Ego defense mechanisms are believed to maintain equilibrium by preventing painful ideas, emotions, and drives from entering conscious experience. Defense mechanisms may be classified across continuums ranging from developmental maturity vs. immaturity (Vaillant, 1992) or internalizing vs. externalizing defenses (Ihilevich & Gleser, 1993). Past research has indicated that men typically use more externalizing defenses while women more commonly use internalizing defenses (Bogo, Winget, & Gleser, 1970; Cramer, 1991; Ihilevich & Gleser). A study by Mahalik et al. (1998) demonstrated that gender role conflict factors are associated with distinct psychological defenses used by men.

Mahalik et al. (1998) theorized that men may rigidly enact masculine roles to manage feelings of shame and anxiety produced in response to failure to achieve culture-

specific gender ideals. The authors investigated the link between psychological defensive structure and male gender role conflict, discussing how male emotional socialization teaches boys to inhibit the expression of vulnerable and caring emotions by disconnecting from their feelings. Mahalik et al. predicted that higher levels of gender role conflict in men would be associated with more immature and neurotic defenses. The authors also hypothesized that the gender role conflict subscales of success, power, and competition, restrictive affectionate behavior between men, and restrictive emotionality would vary in relation to defense mechanism externalization vs. internalization.

As expected, gender role conflict factors were significantly related to immature and neurotic defenses. All three of the gender role conflict factors modeled (i.e., success, power, and competition, restrictive emotionality, and restrictive affectionate behavior between men) were positively associated with immature and neurotic defense mechanisms. As a result, Mahalik et al. (1998) conceptualized gender role conflict dimensions as defenses used to protect men from feelings of weakness, block awareness and expression of vulnerable emotions, and avoid feelings of attraction towards other men. In a manner similar to traditional psychological defenses, gender role conflict seems to help maintain homeostasis by obstructing painful ideas, emotions, and drives from conscious awareness. Thus, men with high levels of gender role strain exhibit a defensive configuration that is based on viewing others as unfair, undependable, and undeserving of trust.

Mahalik et al.'s (1998) results indicated that gender role conflict factors and psychological defenses perform similar protective functions. Additionally, restrictive

emotionality and success, power, and competition factors were positively related to externalizing defenses and negatively related to internalizing defenses. The authors suggested that in working with clients who experience high levels of gender role conflict and exhibit rigid defenses, therapists should help clients to manage their gender-related anxiety and improve coping skills. These outcomes directly relate to the present study, which seeks to further investigate the relationships between masculine gender socialization, affect regulation, and subsequent interpersonal functioning.

In a series of studies, Blazina and Watkins (2000) and Blazina (2001b) established that gender role conflicted men exhibit separation-individuation difficulties and poor parental attachment. First, Blazina and Watkins investigated whether male gender role conflict was related to attachment and separation-individuation issues, as well as attitudes about feminism. One hundred seventy-two male college students were administered the Gender Role Conflict Scale (O'Neil et al., 1986), Attitudes Toward Feminism Scale (Smith, Ferree, & Miller, 1975), Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), and Separation-Individuation Inventory (Christenson & Wilson, 1985). Correlational results indicated that higher levels of gender role conflict are associated with greater desire for traditional women's roles, as well as attachment and separation-individuation problems. In their interpretation of canonical results, the authors asserted that degree of male gender role conflict "clearly emerges as being significantly related to relationship issues" (p. 130). Blazina and Watkins suggest that in the future a variety of additional attachment and separation-individuation measures be used to allow for continued empirical support of the use of

psychoanalytic concepts to better understand gender role conflicted men's interpersonal dynamics.

In 2001 (b), Blazina reanalyzed data from the previous study in an attempt to examine more closely the role of attachment in gender role conflicted men using a modified version of the Inventory of Peer and Parent Attachment, yielding additional information about the quality of attachment to others. While the attachment measure in the original Blazina and Watkins study produced scores for attachment to mother, attachment to father, and attachment to peers, this study generated three separate scores related to overall parental attachment: trust, communication, and alienation. Blazina argued that men who are restricted in their gender roles would experience increased relational and intrapsychic challenges. Results supported the hypotheses indicating that men who are gender role conflicted show increased separation-individuation difficulties and poor parental attachment. Particularly relevant to the current dissertation study, Blazina again proposed that research integrating attachment theory with gender role conflict be further validated with conceptually distinct measures of attachment. In addition, he suggested that additional empirical investigations of psychoanalytic conceptualizations might provide a useful perspective to further integrate ideas about gender role development and adult attachment.

Potential Implications of the Developmental Contextual Perspective for Men

The proposed study seeks to provide initial empirical support for the relationship between men's parental bonding, gender role conflict, capacity to regulate negative emotional states, and adult attachment avoidance levels. It is anticipated that results will

show that both male gender role conflict and affective regulation capacity partially mediate the relationship between bonding to parents and adult attachment avoidance. In addition, proposed outcomes will pinpoint multiple significant predictors determining avoidance of intimacy in adult romantic relationships. This empirical support will allow researchers and clinicians to better understand the dynamic interaction between cultural and intrapsychic factors ultimately shaping the nature and quality of intimate relationships. In addition, psychologists working with traditionally socialized men presenting with relational concerns will be able to develop targeted interventions based on empirically validated results.

Applications of the Developmental Contextual Perspective

Researchers studying masculine socialization have emphasized the contribution of individual factors in variability across individuals in conformity to gender role norms (Mahalik et al., 2003). Through an increased understanding of the developmental contextual interactions between intrapsychic and environmental factors, therapists can help clients to understand and (if necessary) adjust interpersonal styles influenced by gender socialization. Interventions addressing characteristic defense mechanisms utilized by men with higher levels of gender role conflict will allow for improved treatment planning and intervention (Mahalik et al., 1998). A particular challenge for those working with men will be to help them to incorporate relational and emotional qualities traditionally seen as feminine without threatening a healthy and cohesive sense of maleness (Bergman, 1995; Blazina, 2004). An awareness of the complex, reciprocal interplay between individual, group, and larger societal factors will allow intervention at

various structural levels in order to examine and address unwanted long-term effects of traditional masculine gender role socialization.

It has been hypothesized that in response to traumatic separations from early caregivers, psychological defenses are initiated to protect men from shameful memories of early disconnections (Pollack, 1995). According to this model, men may use emotional distancing in order to protect themselves from re-experiencing hurtful disconnections in close relationships. Pollack emphasized how clinicians working with men must develop greater levels of empathy and sensitivity for these men and the specific issues they present with in therapy. He proposed that normative models of self-development focus less on autonomy and self-sufficiency. Instead, Pollack argued for the incorporation of a more relational perspective to help men develop a more flexible set of internalized object relations balancing innate needs for autonomy and affiliation.

Analyzing the dynamic interaction between socialization factors and early-internalized experiences can be a useful perspective to conceptualize and understand relational functioning. Mental health workers have consistently described gender roles as being relevant to their empirical and clinical work (Mahalik et al., 2005), as they impact both intrapersonal issues and interpersonal interactions. Because cultural messages about masculinity are often contradictory, or may reflect impossible ideals, it is important to have a language to describe how they interact with psychological characteristics of different men. Similarly, the effects of gender roles on the therapeutic process (e.g., transference/countertransference) are important factors to consider in treatment, especially when working with traditionally socialized men (Mahalik et al., 1998). At

present, the lack of attention paid to gender with regard to interpersonal processes demands attention, especially concerning family and couples treatment implications (Levant, 2001).

Blazina (2001a) has developed a model for conceptualizing and working with men in individual and group therapy that considers both intrapsychic and psychosocial forces. He cited Kohut (1984) in stressing the importance of relational issues in psychotherapy, especially in helping men to heal emotional deficits related to the fragile masculine self Blazina believes is often produced by traditional gender role socialization. Additionally, group therapy is suggested as a useful avenue to help men manage anxiety and further develop their ability to connect with others. Finally, continued research in this area will be instrumental in the design of preventative interventions to address men's difficulties with gender role conflict, affective regulation, and maladaptive relational avoidance.

Overview of the Present Study

Purpose of Proposed Research Study

Numerous authors have convincingly noted that through socialization influences, men are generally taught to act as agents of disconnection from relationships and to define themselves in opposition to what they perceive as different (i.e., femininity). Because this withdrawal likely results in isolation from mutually empathic relationships, it may also lead to a harmful sense of emotional disconnection from oneself (Bergman, 1995). Thus, through reciprocal interactions, male individual identity is simultaneously weakened by, and leads to, disavowal of emotions and other culturally defined feminine

aspects of identity. In evaluating the theoretical literature and key concepts, it is proposed that using intrapsychic internalization of gender identity as a lens through which to examine gender role strain shows promise in illuminating the interplay between personality and environmental factors shaping adult attachment.

In order to directly examine this proposed developmental contextual interaction, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between adult attachment avoidance and the following variables: parental bonding, masculine gender role conflict, and affect regulation capacity. The current study hypothesizes that male gender role conflict and capacity to regulate affect will be important variables for consideration in conceptualizing the impact of parental bonding on subsequent adult attachment enactment.

At present there is limited research detailing how gender role conflict develops during the lifespan. O'Neil, Good, and Holmes (1995) have discussed the importance of designing interventions for resolving significant gender role transitions and conflicts. In working with emotionally avoidant men in psychotherapy, an awareness of potential influences on the evolution of gender role enactment will be instrumental to effective treatment. Clinical goals in psychotherapy will be divergent depending upon specific affect regulation strategies presented based on adult attachment configuration (Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003). It has been suggested that therapeutic work with anxiously attached clients should focus on strengthening self-regulatory skills. In contrast, avoidant clients should be encouraged to gain comfort in experiencing their

emotions by focusing on their cognitive and affective reactions to potentially threatening intimate situations.

A number of researchers have theorized about the relationship between gender role conflict and adult attachment, but thus far only one published study has empirically investigated this proposed link (Schwartz, Waldo, & Higgins, 2004). The current study proposes a mediational model to investigate hypothesized connections between parental bonding, gender role conflict, affective regulation, and adult attachment avoidance.

Attachment and psychoanalytic theories are integrated to provide a rationale to explain how traditional masculine gender role socialization impacts interpersonal functioning in close relationships. The hypothesized mediational model shows promise to contribute a useful framework for conceptualizing and treating the reciprocal interactions between intrapsychic and relational constructs affecting interpersonal health. In addition, qualitative examination allows a more contextual examination of the constructs of interest. It is hoped that additional empirical support of theoretical conceptualizations of maladaptive avoidance of intimacy will better inform the assessment and treatment of male relational difficulties.

Hypotheses

The next section briefly reviews theory and research supporting proposed relations between study variables. In addition, hypotheses are presented.

Relations Between Parental Bonding and Adult Attachment Avoidance

Several theorists have proposed that early attachment bonds contribute to characteristic patterns of relational functioning in adults (Ainsworth, 1979; Bartholomew

& Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1970). Studies have shown continuity in attachment style from childhood to adulthood, which significantly impacts relationship quality later in life (Fraley, 2002; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Affective experiences in childhood relationships strongly influence interpersonal bonds in adulthood (Collins & Read, 1990).

Furthermore, researchers have suggested that less than adequate relationships with parents are associated with avoidance of intimacy in close relationships across the lifespan (Blazina, 2001b; Blazina & Watkins, 2000; DeFranc & Mahalik, 2002). Two studies directly investigating associations between parental bonding variables and adult attachment avoidance have shown parental care to be negatively related to subsequent avoidance of attachment bonds (Carnelley, Pietromonaco, & Jaffe, 1994; Gittleman, Klein, Smider, & Essex, 1998).

Results from the United States national comorbidity study suggested that lack of care is the parenting variable related most consistently with interpersonal problems (Enns et al., 2002). As discussed earlier, it has been theorized that early, abrupt disconnections from caregivers may lead to maladaptive interpersonal styles (Bergman, 1995; Blazina, 2004; O'Neil, 1981). More specifically, problems with identity-connectedness issues originating in early childhood may lead men to psychologically defend against intimate connections with others (Pollack, 1995). Furthermore, research has indicated that paternal and maternal influence uniquely explain adult relational outcomes (Rohner, 1998), leading to assertions that the impact of maternal and paternal relationships with children should be assessed independently to determine their respective contributions to attachment bonds. It has been suggested that investigators further examine how

differential early relationships with caregivers affect subsequent avoidance of intimacy in close romantic relationships (Steele & Steele, 2005).

Hypothesis 1: Higher levels of maternal and paternal bonding care and lower levels of maternal and paternal bonding overprotection would be predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance.

Relations Between Parental Bonding and Male Gender Role Conflict

As discussed earlier, it has been theorized that early relational experiences with caregivers influence the development of attachment bonds (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1970). In turn, these developing attachments impact gender role formation through a nuanced, multifaceted process of gender role socialization. For young boys, early attachment relationships are embedded in the context of gender role socialization, in which messages are often transmitted through primary caregivers emphasizing disconnection and self-sufficiency (Gilbert & Scher, 1999). It has been argued that the encouragement many boys experience to become independent may result in premature separation from early attachment figures, leaving them with insufficient psychological resources to develop healthy connections with others later in life (Bergman, 1995; O'Neil, 1981, 1986; Pleck, 1981; Pollack, 1992,1995).

Previous studies have shown negative correlations between the quality of parent-child relationships and gender role conflict, indicating that more healthy parent-child relationships are associated with lower levels of adult male gender role conflict (Blazina & Watkins, 2000; DeFranc & Mahalik, 1999; Fischer & Good, 1998). These studies indicated that men who report less attachment to, and higher levels of separation from,

parental relationships are generally more rigid in enacting masculine ideologies (i.e., higher levels of gender role conflict) and more stressed from failing to live up to masculine ideals (i.e., higher levels of gender role stress).

Hypothesis 2: Higher levels of maternal and paternal bonding care and lower levels of maternal and paternal bonding overprotection would be predictive of lower levels of gender role conflict.

Relations Between Parental Bonding and Affect Regulation Capacity

Bowlby (1970, 1982) has proposed that early attachment relationships, in large part determined by the nature and quality of bonding with caregivers, impact characteristic affective regulation styles later in life. He described how a developing child's perception of the availability and sensitivity of caregivers impacts affect regulation capacity. Bowlby viewed attachments as having a critical role in the emotional lives of children and adults, asserting that difficulties with emotion management are directly related to unsatisfactory attachment bonds early in life. Attachment theorists have more recently focused on the influence of sensitive, caring parenting on subsequent ability to effectively regulate emotional states (Cassidy, 1994; Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 1999). Characteristic emotion regulation strategies are often utilized in stressful situations; especially conditions that may trigger cognitive models shaped by interpersonal dynamics experienced in early attachment relationships (Westen, 1998).

In drawing upon psychoanalytic perspectives on early relationships, theorists and researchers have suggested that problematic interactions with caregivers may lead to the

development of characteristic maladaptive masculine defenses against negative emotional states (Blazina, 1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2004; Blazina & Watkins, 2000; Mahalik et al., 1998). Using an attachment-derived, integrative model Shaver and Mikulincer (2002) described how early experiences and interactions with caregivers lead to the evolution of divergent attachment-related affect regulation strategies. Attachment theorists have proposed that experiences with sensitive caregivers increase comfort with intimacy and closeness with others later in life (Bowlby, 1982; Cassidy & Kobak, 1988; Mikulincer et al., 2003). Conversely, individuals who did not receive caring treatment from early attachment figures may rely on emotional suppression and other maladaptive affective regulation strategies in response to interpersonal conflict (Catanzaro & Greenwood, 1994).

Hypothesis 3: Higher levels of maternal and paternal bonding care and lower levels of maternal and paternal bonding overprotection would be predictive of higher levels of affect regulation capacity.

Relations Between Male Gender Role Conflict and Adult Attachment Avoidance

Several studies have illustrated preliminary associations between gender role conflict and attachment constructs. Perceptions of relationships with parents have been shown to be related to masculine role conflicts and stresses (DeFranc & Mahalik, 2002; Fischer & Good, 1998). In addition, there is a positive relationship between male gender role conflict and poor parental attachment and separation-individuation difficulties (Blazina & Watkins, 2000; Blazina, 2001b; DeFranc & Mahalik). Empirical evidence has indicated that male socialization patterns and gender role conflict influence avoidance

of intimacy in close relationships (Baxter & Montgomery, 1997; Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Fischer & Good, 1997; Good, Robertson, & O'Neil, 1995; Ludlow & Mahalik, 2001; Searle & Meara, 1999).

DeFranc and Mahalik (2002) noted that negative outcomes related to gender role conflict exhibit striking similarities to insecurely attached adult relational styles. In a related study, participants with a fearful attachment style scored lower than participants with secure and preoccupied attachment styles on measures of self-disclosure, intimacy, and reliance on others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Searle and Meara (1999) found that securely attached participants were more comfortable than insecure individuals with expressing emotions they experienced. Results suggested that parental attachment is closely related to gender role conflict, especially the restrictive emotionality component. Finally, using a similar four-category, two-dimensional measure of adult attachment to the current study, Schwartz, Waldo, and Higgins (2004) found that men with insecure attachment styles had significantly higher levels of restrictive emotionality than men with secure attachment styles. Furthermore, securely attached men had significantly lower levels of success, power, and competition as compared to fearful men. The results described above support the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4a: Lower levels of gender role conflict would be predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance.

Relations Between Affect Regulation Capacity and Adult Attachment Avoidance

Emotional regulation is a central adaptive component of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1979, 1982). Attachment styles are closely linked to emotion regulation

processes, which are viewed as observable manifestations of internal working models based on personal experiences (Shaver et al., 1996). It has been proposed that management of anxiety related to intimate relationships is an important factor determining men's reliance on distinctive interpersonal strategies (Blazina, 2004). Numerous studies have found systematic differences across attachment styles with respect to affective responses to stress and avoidant coping strategies (e.g., Mikulincer & Florian, 1995, 1998; Mikulincer, Florian, & Weller, 1993; Mikulincer & Orbach, 1995; Simpson, 1990).

Avoidant individuals often regulate affect through defensive attempts to deactivate the attachment system and ignore potential sources of distress (Mikulincer et al., 2003). Research has indicated that perceived ability to regulate negative mood is related negatively to avoidant coping and stress (Catanzaro & Greenwood, 1994). In contrast, anxious-ambivalent people habitually react to distress by trying to minimize distance from attachment figures and to increase proximity to these secure base resources (Bowlby, 1988; Shaver & Hazan, 1994). They tend to approach difficulties in a hypervigilant manner involving hyperactivating negative thoughts and memories and relying on passive, ruminative coping methods. In contrast, security-based strategies allow individuals to manage negative affect in an active and adaptive manner (Mikulincer et al., 2003). Research has supported the assertion that attachment-related strategies are primarily affect-regulation devices that are activated by the arousal of affective states (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Pereg & Mikulincer, 2004). Based on this literature linking affect regulation and adult attachment avoidance, the following hypothesis is offered:

Hypothesis 4b: Higher capacity to regulate affect would be predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance.

Rationale for a Mediational Model

Unlike traditional psychoanalytic approaches focused almost exclusively on intrapsychic factors, more recently researchers and clinicians have stressed that humans do not develop in isolation, but rather in a constantly shifting interplay between individuals, families, communities, and society at large (Bergman, 1995; Jordan, 1991). Recent attempts have been made to integrate both personal and situational influences that collaboratively and dynamically affect gender development (Mednick, 1989). Theorists have provided evidence that gender role dynamics impact the formation of adult relational styles (Schwartz, Waldo, & Higgins, 2004). Therefore, a more comprehensive understanding of the consequences of individuals' gender role socialization will allow a better perspective to frame eventual adult attachment enactment.

It has been argued that there is reciprocity between gender socialization and gender role identity (Cross & Madsen, 1997). Because interactions between internalized psychological organization and gender role orientation are reciprocal, it is critical for researchers to determine which factors play important roles in their maintenance and evolution. By using the gender role strain paradigm as a lens through which to examine adult attachment enactment, psychologists will be better equipped to decipher the complex interrelationships between multiple factors leading to distinctive avoidant interpersonal styles.

Schwartz, Waldo, and Higgins (2004) have proposed that negative internal models of self and others related to insecure attachment experiences in early childhood may cause men to overidentify with traditional attitudes about masculinity impacting identity formation. Furthermore, Blazina (1997, 2004) has contended that intense socialization pressure towards premature disidentification harms the development and functioning of the masculine self and leads to one of two characteristic postures to modulate resultant anxiety. These styles are influenced by relational templates and involve either distancing oneself in an avoidant manner or anxiously clinging to others using an overdependent approach. Although men utilizing both of these approaches may present with high levels of gender role conflict, their interpersonal styles and strategies used to manage emotional distress vary markedly. Therefore, ability to manage negative affect and associated emotional regulation style should influence templates of relationships.

There are clear similarities between Blazina's scripts of potential masculine self-development and existing adult attachment categories, especially with regard to tendencies to minimize intimacy in close romantic relationships. Because boys with close ties to both their parents may have greater opportunity to internalize both masculine and feminine qualities, this may lead to a more balanced and flexible gender role orientation. At present, relatively few researchers have empirically investigated the relationship between intrapsychic mechanisms and gender differences (Cross & Madsen, 1997). It has been argued that gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity mediate the proposed relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance.

Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004) have suggested that mediation analysis is typically warranted to explore the mechanisms underlying a strong relationship between predictor and outcome. While the relationships among parental bonding, gender role conflict, affective regulation, and adult attachment patterns have theoretical and empirical support, these proposed mediational links have not yet been empirically established.

Hypothesis 5: The predictive effect of parental bonding on adult attachment avoidance would be reduced after including the influence of male gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity (as measured by negative mood regulation, emotion regulation suppression, and emotion regulation reappraisal), suggesting that gender role conflict and affect regulation variables serve as partial mediators (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Hypothesis 6: The distribution of product test (MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2006) would be significant, indicating that both gender role conflict and affect regulation partially mediate the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Design

To examine the proposed relationships between parental bonding, male gender role conflict, affect regulation capacity, and adult attachment the current study employed linear regression and mediational analyses. This research also explored qualitatively a selected subset of participants' experiences in order to more rigorously confirm hypothesized relationships between the constructs of interest, as well as to gain a more holistic overview of the contextual relationships between variables. Analysis of audiotaped responses allowed a more detailed examination of the phenomenology of avoidance of intimacy within this population. Interviews were analyzed for descriptive information and salient themes.

Participants

A total of two hundred eighty-eight male students recruited from the undergraduate Educational Psychology (EDP) Subject Pool at the University of Texas at Austin participated in the study. A screening question used to recruit students who had experienced an intact parental unit (i.e., mother and father) during childhood was posted on the EDP Subject Pool webpage as follows: "Did you have a relationship with both your mother and father through age sixteen?" Students registered in the subject pool for the Fall 2006 semester completed this question online. Participants received course credit toward the department's undergraduate research requirement in exchange for completing the online survey portion of the study.

Data were examined in order to confirm that multiple responders were not retained in the final dataset. Data from three participants were excluded because these participants did not reply to more than 10% of the overall survey questions. Data from six additional participants were excluded because they were missing more than 20% of data on at least one scale. As a result, all retained participants were missing less than 10% of data on any individual scale. Six participants who endorsed having a deceased parent were removed from the final data set, as well as seven participants with standardized scale scores (i.e., *z*-scores greater than 3.0 or less than -3.0) defined as outliers for the purposes of the current study. The mean insertion method (Roth, Switzer, & Switzer, 1999) was used for the remaining participants, in which the mean sub-scale score for any given participant was calculated and inserted where data were missing.

The final sample consisted of 266 male students. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 24 years ($M = 20.93$, $SD = 1.26$, 5 missing values). One hundred forty-five (54.5%) participants reported they were Caucasian / European American, 53 (19.9%) were Asian American / Pacific Islander, 34 (12.8%) were Hispanic / Latino, 14 (5.3%) were Asian Indian or Pakistani, 12 (4.5%) were bi-cultural, 5 (1.9%) were Middle Eastern / Arab, 2 (0.8%) were African American, and 1 participant (0.4%) endorsed Native American or Alaska Native. When asked about year in school, 16 (6%) endorsed freshman, 21 (8%) were sophomores, 54 (20%) were juniors, 168 (63%) were seniors, 6 (2%) were graduate students, and one participant did not respond to this question. Two hundred twenty-nine participants (86.1%) reported that their parents were still married. The remaining

participants reported their average age when their parents' marriage had ended to be 11.66 ($SD = 6.77$).

Instrumentation

Demographic Information. Participants were asked to indicate their age, year in school, ethnic background, and to respond to family of origin questions including whether participants' parents were living and/or married (see Appendix C).

Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986; see Appendix D). This 37-item self-report inventory was designed to assess the potential negative influence of socialized gender roles. These harmful effects have been described as gender-role conflict, defined as a psychological state in which gender roles have negative consequences or impact on a person or others (O'Neil, 1981). The GRCS assesses men's thoughts and feelings about their gender role behaviors. Item scores range on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Individual items are summed to determine a total gender role conflict score, with higher scores on the GRCS indicating higher levels of gender role conflict and fear of femininity.

The GRCS is currently the most widely used scale in the field of counseling psychology to measure aspects of male gender role strain. Empirical results have consistently supported the validity and reliability of the GRCS, suggesting that it accurately identifies gender role conflict reflecting men's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, allowing researchers to rigorously investigate theoretical models of gender-role conflict (Good et al., 1989; Good et al., 1995). Good et al. reported total scale internal consistencies to be .88, .90, and .89 across three samples, with subscale alphas

ranging from .78 to .88. O'Neil et al. (1995) demonstrated adequate internal consistency of the GRCS subscales averaged across 14 studies, with alphas of .80 for Conflict Between Work and Family Relations, .85 for Restrictive Emotionality, .86 for Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men, and .87 for Success, Power, and Competition. Satisfactory test-retest reliability over a 4-week period was also established, with reliabilities of .72, .76, .86, and .84, respectively (O'Neil et al., 1986).

Good et al. (1995) provided extensive validity support for the GRCS, reporting significant correlations in the expected directions between GRCS scores and endorsement of traditional masculine role norms and social desirability. They also demonstrated concurrent validity by finding expected correlations with components of the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1974) measuring attitudes about masculinity and fear of intimacy. Construct validity was supported using item-reduction procedures, factor analysis, and multivariate analysis of variance of the results of the PAQ and GRCS (O'Neil et al., 1986). In the present study, the coefficient alphas were .92 for the overall scale and .89 for Conflict Between Work and Family Relations, .87 for Restrictive Emotionality, .84 for Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men, and .83 for Success, Power, and Competition subscales.

Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire (ECRQ; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver; 1998; see Appendix E). This measure of adult attachment is a 36-item inventory, including two 18-item scales to measure each hypothesized dimension. This instrument was designed to assess individual differences with respect to attachment-related anxiety (i.e., the extent to which people are insecure vs. secure about their partner's availability

and responsiveness) and attachment-related avoidance (i.e., the extent to which people are uncomfortable being close to others vs. secure depending on others). It is a two-dimensional, four-category measure of adult attachment that has been validated in several studies (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998). Each item is based on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly).

This measure was based on the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), the first scale designed to conceptualize four categories that result from combining two levels of self-image (positive vs. negative) with two levels of image of others (positive vs. negative) initially proposed by Bowlby (1970). The RQ was designed with two continuous dimensions, the avoidance (i.e., behavioral) dimension and the anxiety (i.e., emotional) dimension. To design the ECRQ, Brennan et al. (1998) performed a large-sample factor-analytic study in which multiple self-report measures were analyzed. As a result, similar dimensions of anxiety and avoidance emerged clearly in the ECRQ.

Adult attachment assessment inventories based on multi-dimensional measures have demonstrated the greatest precision and validity (Brennan et al., 1998; Fraley & Waller, 1998). It has been recommended that adult attachment patterns examined using the ECRQ be conceptualized using dimensional terms in two-dimensional space to maximize precision (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998; Fraley & Waller, 1998). Previous research has demonstrated internal consistencies of .91 and .94, respectively, for the anxiety and avoidance subscales (Conradi, Gerlsma, van Duijn, & de Jonge, 2006). To examine the avoidance dimension underlying attachment styles in the current study, the

avoidance subscale of the ECRQ will be established from the mean of avoidance-related items. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the ECRQ for the current sample was .89, with alphas of .92 for the Avoidance subscale and .92 for the Anxiety subscale.

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ: Gross & John: 2003; see Appendix F).

This 10-item, self-report inventory consists of items rated on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This measure was designed to assess strategies used in regulating emotions. Factor analysis has indicated an independent two-factor structure with 6 items loading on the Reappraisal factor and 4 items on the Suppression factor. The Reappraisal scale asks participants to rate the extent to which they typically try to think about situations differently in order to change how they feel. The Suppression scale asks participants to rate the extent to which they typically try to inhibit their emotion-expressive behavior. The authors developed individual items rationally, indicating clearly which emotion regulatory process they intended to measure (e.g., "I control my emotions *by changing the way I think* about the situation I'm in" – reappraisal; "I control my emotions *by not expressing them*" – suppression).

In addition to these general-emotion items, the Reappraisal scale and the Suppression scale both included at least one item exploring the regulation of negative emotion (i.e., *sadness* and *anger*) and one item about regulating positive emotion (i.e., *joy* and *amusement*). Cognitive reappraisal is defined as a strategy employed prior to full activation of an emotional response and resultant physiological and behavioral changes. Thus, it is believed that reappraisal can be used to reduce the impact of negative emotional states. In contrast, emotional suppression involves inhibiting the expression of

emotions. Suppression follows reappraisal in the process of emotion generation and exerts influence primarily over behavioral responses to feelings as they arise. Past research has indicated that chronic use of suppression is related to negative outcomes including alienation, rumination, and depression, as well as impairments in emotional attention and awareness (Gross & John, 2003).

Item content was specifically limited to the intended emotion regulatory strategy, and care was taken to avoid mentioning any positive or negative consequences for well-being and affective or social functioning in order to reduce potential confounds. Both scales have demonstrated adequate reliability and validity. In a sample of undergraduate students, the Reappraisal and Suppression scales exhibited alpha values of .79 and .73, respectively (Gross & John, 2003). Individual differences in suppression and reappraisal, as well as self-ratings of emotional experience and expression, and peer ratings of emotional expression, were determined to be related in expected directions. Furthermore, findings examining the impact of habitual suppression and reappraisal on life satisfaction, well-being, and depression provided additional evidence that these emotion regulation constructs impact affective responses in conceptually distinct ways. The authors reported test-retest reliability estimates of .69 after a period of three months for both scales. In the current study, the 6 ERQ Reappraisal scores and 4 ERQ Suppression scores were averaged separately to form two composite scale scores. Higher scores indicated higher levels of reappraisal and suppression, respectively. In the present study, the coefficient alphas were .72 for the overall scale, .78 for the Suppression subscale, and .83 for the Reappraisal subscale.

Negative Mood Regulation Scale (NMRS; Catanzaro & Mearns, 1990, see Appendix G). This is a 30-item self-report inventory that assesses perceived ability to reduce negative mood and affective distress. Three subscales include: a Cognitive scale measuring degree of confidence in use of cognitive strategies to reduce negative mood, a Behavior scale measuring expectancies regarding actions used to address negative emotions, and a General scale that examines generalized beliefs that one can influence their own mood. Responses are scored on a 5-point Likert scale with answer choices ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement, and are summed to calculate subscale and total scale scores. Higher scores on the total scale indicate higher levels of confidence in ability to improve one's emotional state.

Catanzaro and Mearns (1990) produced internal consistency estimates for five separate samples, measuring Cronbach's alphas that ranged from .86 to .92. A series of studies has demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity of the NMRS (Brashares & Catanzaro, 1994; Catanzaro & Greenwood, 1994; Catanzaro, Horaney, & Creasey, 1995). NMRS scores positively correlated with active coping behaviors and negatively correlated with avoidant coping and symptoms of stress in a sample of college students (Catanzaro & Greenwood). This scale was also shown to be negatively associated with the Beck Depression Inventory (Catanzaro & Mearns), as well as with frequency of self-report of dysphoric mood (Kirsch, Mearns, & Catanzaro, 1990). The current study observed internal consistencies of .88 for the NMRS, .86 for the General subscale, .71 for the Cognitive subscale, and .62 for the Behavioral subscale.

Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI; Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979; see Appendix H). A fifty-item self-report measure, this survey is arranged in two parallel forms of 25 items each, one for ratings of representations of mother and the other for father. The directions instruct respondents to make evaluations of parental attitudes and behaviors on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very unlike) to 4 (very like), based on “your earliest memories until you were 16 years old,” which were later rescored to range from 0 (very unlike) to 3 (very like) for analysis. The questionnaire ratings of each parent are composed of 12 items for the Care scale and 13 items for the Overprotection scale, a two-factor model with bipolar scales supported by factor analysis. Care is used to describe memories of emotional responsiveness and warmth. On the Care scale, higher scores are associated with memories of warm and loving parents, while those who score lower on this scale rate parents as insensitive during childhood. Overprotection refers to memories of a parent who were reluctant to allow autonomy in their child and intrusively controlling. Higher scores on this scale reflect greater levels of perceived parental control and intrusion.

The PBI has been the most consistently used measure of parenting style in both clinical and non-clinical samples (Enns, Cox, & Clara, 2002). The PBI has consistently been shown to have adequate test-retest reliability as a measure of perceived parental characteristics over brief intervals ranging from 1-34 weeks. In addition, the long-term stability of the PBI in a non-clinical population over a twenty-year period has been demonstrated (Wilhelm et al., 2005). An extensive program of research has been conducted to establish the validity of the retrospective ratings utilized by the PBI (Parker,

1981; Parker et al., 1979; Parker & Gladstone, 1996; Parker & Lipsombe, 1981). The authors reported internal consistency coefficients of .76 and .63 for Care and Overprotection, respectively, as well as split half reliability estimates of .88 and .74 in a non-clinical sample. Wilhelm et al. determined no differences in PBI scores over time by sex, lifetime-major depression diagnosis, or life event variables, as well as level of neuroticism or state depression, further supporting the PBI as a valid measurer of perceived parenting over extended time periods. Reliability coefficients were .70 for maternal PBI (care = .89, overprotection = .87) and .75 for paternal PBI (care = .90, overprotection = .86) in the current sample.

Qualitative Questionnaire (see Appendix L). Interview questions were designed to address themes regarding hypothesized relationships between the constructs of interest (e.g., “Do you believe your early relationships with your family while you were growing up have affected your romantic relationships?”). In addition, participants were asked to describe their sense of their own masculinity and to consider factors they believe may have contributed to male avoidance of intimacy (e.g., “What are some of the things that can make intimate relationships difficult?”). Potential open-ended questions were pilot tested on several independent participants (i.e., two psychology graduate students and one undergraduate student). Audiotaped pilot interviews were reviewed and discussed with the study’s faculty sponsor, a counseling psychology professor, who provided additional feedback on item structure and thematic content. The interview protocol was developed and refined several times in collaboration with the study’s faculty sponsor, with modifications made both before and after pilot testing.

A subset of 10 students volunteered for and completed in-person, open-ended interviews with the primary researcher. Participants' responses to structured interview questions were audiotaped. The purpose of this component of the study was to allow subjects to discuss their experiences of masculine socialization and relational intimacy in their own words, allowing the investigator to gather qualitative data to further inform empirical findings. Transcriptions of audiotaped qualitative interviews were tracked for salient themes to be discussed in relation to quantitative results.

Procedures

Prior to the start of the study, a proposal and research materials were submitted to and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Texas at Austin. The current study complied with the ethical standards of research as required by both the American Psychological Association (2002) and the University of Texas at Austin.

Data Collection

Study questionnaires were administered using an internet-based computer program. Internet findings have been shown to be consistent with and of at least as good quality as those provided by traditional paper-and-pencil methods (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004). Gosling et al. (2004) compared survey data collected via the internet with data collected through traditional methods and concluded that internet participants were equally likely to provide accurate information compared to traditional samples. In the current study, participants were sent an email containing an electronic link directing them to the online survey, with instructions to click on the link to begin participation.

After completing the online informed consent document (see Appendices A and B), participants were administered a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C), followed by the following self-report measures: Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS, see Appendix D), Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire (ECRQ, see Appendix E), Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ, see Appendix F), Negative Mood Regulation Scale (NMRS, see Appendix G), and Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI, see Appendix H). After completing these instruments, participants received educational debriefing materials that included referral sources for psychological services (Appendix I). The surveys were followed by two questions to assess interest in participating in an hour-long, audiotaped, face-to-face interview with the principal investigator (Part II) in exchange for a \$25 gift certificate (see Appendices I and J).

Analysis

Data analyses described below provide information about the individual relationships between each variable in the mediational framework described above. If significant, confirmation of the initial four hypotheses allows the use of the mediational model described by Baron and Kenny (1986). In order to do so, it was necessary to first establish that linear relationships existed between the independent variable (i.e., parental bonding) and the dependent variable (i.e., adult attachment avoidance), the independent variable and the proposed mediators (i.e., male gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity variables), and between the proposed mediators and the dependent variable (see Figure 1, p. 8).

Hypotheses were examined using linear regression and mediation analyses in order to explore the proposed relationships. Six separate regression equations were used to determine relationships among study variables in preparation for direct examination of the proposed mediational model. The Baron and Kenny (1986) framework described earlier was then used to determine whether male gender role conflict and affect regulation variables partially mediate the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance. According to MacKinnon (2000), regression analyses are the most common method used to test for mediation (see Hoyle & Kenny, 1999). Next, the distribution of products approach to testing significance of mediation effects (MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2006) was used to confirm the Baron and Kenny mediation analyses.

Hypothesis One

First, it was hypothesized that higher levels of parental bonding care and lower levels of parental bonding overprotection would be predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance. The hypothesis for question 1 was tested with a linear regression analysis, in which adult attachment avoidance was regressed on maternal bonding and paternal bonding (i.e., total effect). Specific parental bonding variables utilized in subsequent analyses will be dependent upon parental bonding variables determined to have significant individual regression coefficients. Based on outcomes related to this first hypothesis, the decision to exclude nonsignificant parental bonding regression coefficients was used to facilitate the development of the best possible empirically

validated mediation model in order to promote evidence-based theoretical advances and practically significant clinical applications.

$$AAA = b_0 (\text{int}) + b_1 (\text{PB}_{\text{mc}}) + b_2 (\text{PB}_{\text{mo}}) + b_3 (\text{PB}_{\text{pc}}) + b_4 (\text{PB}_{\text{po}}) + e$$

Criterion and predictor variables:

Criterion variable: AAA = Adult Attachment Avoidance

Predictor variable: PB_{mc} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Care
PB_{mo} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Overprotection
PB_{pc} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Care
PB_{po} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Overprotection

Hypothesis Two

Second, it was hypothesized that higher levels of maternal and paternal bonding care and lower levels of maternal and paternal bonding overprotection would be predictive of lower levels of gender role conflict. The hypothesis for question 2 was tested with a linear regression analysis, in which gender role conflict was regressed on parental bonding variables (i.e., Path A₁) depending on which parental bonding variables were shown to have significant individual regression coefficients in question 1.

$$\text{GRCS} = b_0 (\text{int}) + b_1 (\text{PB}_{\text{mc}}) + b_2 (\text{PB}_{\text{mo}}) + b_3 (\text{PB}_{\text{pc}}) + b_4 (\text{PB}_{\text{po}}) + e$$

Criterion and predictor variables:

Criterion variable: GRCS = Gender Role Conflict Scale

Predictor variables: PB_{mc} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Care
PB_{mo} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Overprotection
PB_{pc} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Care
PB_{po} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Overprotection

Hypothesis Three

Third, it was hypothesized that higher levels of maternal and paternal bonding care and lower levels of maternal and paternal bonding overprotection would be predictive of higher levels of affect regulation capacity (i.e., higher level of negative mood regulation, higher level of emotion regulation reappraisal, and lower level of emotion regulation suppression). The hypothesis for question 2 was tested with three linear regression analyses, in which each affect regulation variable was regressed separately on parental bonding variables (i.e., Path A₂) based on the outcome of hypothesis 1.

$$1. \text{ NMRS} = b_0 (\text{int}) + b_1 (\text{PB}_{\text{mc}}) + b_2 (\text{PB}_{\text{mo}}) + b_3 (\text{PB}_{\text{pc}}) + b_4 (\text{PB}_{\text{po}}) + e$$

Criterion and predictor variables:

Criterion variable: NMRS = Negative Mood Regulation Scale

Predictor variables: PB_{mc} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Care
PB_{mo} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Overprotection
PB_{pc} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Care
PB_{po} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Overprotection

$$2. \text{ ERQ}_s = b_0 (\text{int}) + b_1 (\text{PB}_{\text{mc}}) + b_2 (\text{PB}_{\text{mo}}) + b_3 (\text{PB}_{\text{pc}}) + b_4 (\text{PB}_{\text{po}}) + e$$

Criterion and predictor variables:

Criterion variable: ERQ_s = Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, Suppression

Predictor variables: PB_{mc} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Care
PB_{mo} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Overprotection
PB_{pc} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Care
PB_{po} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Overprotection

$$3. ERQ_r = b_0 (\text{int}) + b_1 (PB_{mc}) + b_2 (PB_{mo}) + b_3 (PB_{pc}) + b_4 (PB_{po}) + e$$

Criterion and predictor variables:

Criterion variable: ERQ_r = Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, Reappraisal

Predictor variables: PB_{mc} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Care
 PB_{mo} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Overprotection
 PB_{pc} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Care
 PB_{po} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Overprotection

Hypothesis Four

Fourth, it was hypothesized that:

- a) Lower levels of gender role conflict would be predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance.
- b) Higher capacity to regulate affect would be predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance.

To assess the hypotheses for questions 4a and 4b a multiple regression analysis, in which adult attachment avoidance was regressed on parental bonding, male gender role conflict, and affect regulation variables, was considered. Adult attachment avoidance was regressed on predictors for which significant paths were found in the previous research questions in order to control for other variables in the model during subsequent analyses. First, to test hypothesis 4a (i.e., Path B₁) the individual regression coefficient for male gender role conflict was examined for significance. Next, to assess hypothesis 4b (i.e., Path B₂) the individual regression coefficients for each of the three affect regulation capacity variables were inspected for significance.

$$\text{AAA} = b_0 (\text{int}) + b_1 (\text{PB}_{\text{mc}}) + b_2 (\text{PB}_{\text{mo}}) + b_3 (\text{PB}_{\text{pc}}) + b_4 (\text{PB}_{\text{po}}) + b_5 (\text{GRCS}) + b_6 (\text{NMRS}) + b_7 (\text{ERQ}_s) + b_8 (\text{ERQ}_r) + e$$

Criterion and predictor variables:

Criterion variable: AAA = Adult Attachment Avoidance

Predictor variables: PB_{mc} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Care
 PB_{mo} = Parental Bonding, Maternal Overprotection
 PB_{pc} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Care
 PB_{po} = Parental Bonding, Paternal Overprotection
 GRCS = Gender Role Conflict Scale
 NMRS = Negative Mood Regulation Scale
 ERQ_s = Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, Suppression
 ERQ_r = Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, Reappraisal

Hypothesis Five

It was hypothesized that the predictive effect of parental bonding on adult attachment avoidance would be reduced after including the influence of male gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity variables (as measured by negative mood regulation, emotion regulation suppression, and emotion regulation reappraisal), suggesting that gender role conflict and affect regulation variables serve as partial mediators (Baron & Kenny, 1986). After analysis to determine whether hypotheses 1-4 were supported, the hypothesis for question 5 was tested using Baron and Kenny's mediation model. To demonstrate that gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity variables function as partial mediators in this model, the strength of the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance should be significantly decreased when each proposed mediator is added to the model while other variables were held constant. The statistical significance of this proposed reduction in predictive power

was then tested. If significant, the degree to which the effect was reduced (i.e., the change in regression coefficients) would serve as an indicator of the strength of the mediator.

Hypothesis Six

Lastly, it was hypothesized that the distribution of product test (MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2006) would be significant, indicating that both gender role conflict and affect regulation partially mediate the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance. The hypothesis for question 6 was assessed using a specific test of the indirect effect (i.e., $A \times B$), a more powerful test of the proposed mediation effects, used to corroborate results of research question 5. A computer program, PRODCLIN (distribution of the PRODUCT Confidence Limits for INDIRECT effects), was used to compute confidence limits for the product of two normal random variables. Values for the two paths involved in the indirect effect and their standard errors were entered in the PRODCLIN program and distribution of the product confidence limits were computed to further assess the mediation model.

Qualitative Analysis

An interpretive analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted. Data reduction involved review of raw data by the primary investigator. Specific content areas and themes were labeled and defined according to a category system developed and modified throughout pilot testing and data collection in collaboration with the faculty sponsor. Qualitative findings from open-ended questions are reported and discussed in relation to results from quantitative analyses.

Chapter 4: Quantitative Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 below provides descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, scale ranges, and coefficient alpha reliability estimates) for each of the predictor and criterion variables analyzed. To determine if scale and subscale means and standard deviations were within the expected range, each was compared to samples from previous literature. For example, Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS; O'Neil, 1986) scale and subscale scores were compared to online normative data composed of the means of eight prior studies with college students (O'Neil, 2007). As a result, it was determined that GRCS scores were within range of expected values from past empirical work. Similarly, mean scores for additional study variables were also shown to be consistent with published outcomes. Due to the relatively diverse ethnic composition of the sample, study variable means and standard deviations were compared for Caucasians and non-Caucasians, indicating no evidence that these groups differed systematically on any measure.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>α</i>
Maternal Bonding Care ^a	28.51	6.23	8	36	.89
Maternal Bonding Overprotection ^a	14.92	7.21	1	37	.87
Paternal Bonding Care ^a	23.89	7.22	3	36	.90
Paternal Bonding Overprotection ^a	10.95	6.39	0	30	.86
Gender Role Conflict ^b	129.68	23.85	59	190	.92
Negative Mood Regulation ^c	103.09	14.33	62	142	.88
Suppression Emotion Regulation ^d	3.75	1.21	1	7	.78
Reappraisal Emotion Regulation ^d	4.62	0.98	1.50	7	.83
Adult Attachment Avoidance ^e	3.08	0.96	1	5.83	.92

Note. ^aAs measured on the Parental Bonding Instrument. ^bAs measured on the Gender Role Conflict Scale. ^cAs measured on the Negative Mood Regulation Scale. ^dAs measured on the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. ^eAs measured on the Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire. N = 266.

Preliminary Analysis

To determine whether the variables met the assumptions of normality for linear regression and mediational analysis, skewness and kurtosis values for the scales being analyzed were calculated and normal probability plots were evaluated. Results indicated that all the measures in the study met the assumptions of normality. None of the variables in the final model were skewed or exhibited kurtosis, as they possessed skewness and kurtosis values within ± 2 . Although the sample was collected from an undergraduate subject pool, for the purposes of data analysis it was assumed they were representative of a random, independent sample.

Table 2 shows intercorrelations between all predictor and criterion variables in the mediational model. Next, Table 3 provides subscale intercorrelations. Data were screened for multicollinearity by examining collinearity diagnostics (i.e., tolerance and *VIF* values) for variables included in both the total effect and full model paths described

below. All tolerance values were greater than .2 and *VIF* values were less than 4, indicating that multicollinearity is not problematic for this data. The data were therefore assessed to be adequate for use in the following regression analyses.

Table 2
Intercorrelations Among Predictor and Criterion Variables

<i>Scale</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>
1. GRCS	-	.31**	-.02	.44**	-.31**	-.17**	.17**	-.13*	.10
2. AVOI		-	.17**	.46**	-.22**	-.31**	.18**	-.19**	.17**
3. REAP			-	.00	.39**	.18**	-.19**	.08	-.20**
4. SUPP				-	-.27**	-.15*	.06	-.10	.01
5. NMRS					-	.29**	-.28**	.36**	-.28**
6. MCA						-	-.42**	.48**	-.32**
7. MOV							-	-.17**	.42**
8. PCA								-	-.33**
9. POV									-

Note. GRCS = Gender Role Conflict Scale; AVOI = Avoidance Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire Subscale; REAP = Reappraisal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire Subscale; SUPP = Suppression Emotion Regulation Questionnaire Subscale; NMRS = Negative Mood Regulation Scale; MCA = Maternal Care Parental Bonding Instrument Subscale; MOV = Maternal Overprotection Parental Bonding Instrument Subscale; PCA = Paternal Care Parental Bonding Instrument Subscale; POV = Paternal Overprotection Parental Bonding Instrument Subscale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. $N = 266$.

Table 3
Intercorrelations Among Variable Subscales

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. SPC	-	.27**	.38**	.49**	.03	.31**	.11	.24**	-.14*	-.08	-.05	.04	.01	-.03	-.00
2. RE		-	.55**	.28**	.58**	.15*	-.05	.60**	-.27**	-.21**	-.32**	-.29**	.16**	-.19**	.08
3. RABBM			-	.32**	.27**	.25**	-.11	.27**	-.25**	-.19**	-.25**	-.19**	.19**	-.07	.14*
4. CBWF				-	.02	.32**	-.07	.13*	-.30**	-.20**	-.15*	-.11	.17**	-.10	.13*
5. AVOID					-	-.03	.17**	.46**	-.13*	-.16*	-.31**	-.31**	.18**	-.19**	.17**
6. ANXI						-	.08	.03	.40**	-.24**	-.08	-.10	.13*	-.24**	.13*
7. REAP							-	.00	.26**	.44**	.31**	.18**	-.19**	.08	-.20**
8. SUPP								-	-.20**	-.17**	-.32**	-.15*	.06	-.10	.01
9. GEN									-	.71**	.50**	.22**	-.26**	.33**	-.25**
10. COG										-	.53**	.23**	-.23**	.32**	-.25**
11. BEH											-	.30**	-.21**	.28**	-.21**
12. MCA												-	-.42**	.48**	-.32**
13. MOV													-	-.17**	.42**
14. PCA														-	-.33**
15. POV															-

Note. SPC = Success, Power, and Competition Gender Role Conflict Subscale; Restrictive Emotionality Gender Role Conflict Subscale; RABBM = Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men Gender Role Conflict Subscale; CBWF = Conflict Between Work and Family Relations Gender Role Conflict Subscale; AVOID = Avoidance Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire Subscale. ANXI = Anxiety Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire Subscale; REAP = Reappraisal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire Subscale; SUPP = Suppression Emotion Regulation Questionnaire Subscale. NMRS = Negative Mood Regulation Scale; GEN = General Negative Mood Regulation Subscale; COG = Cognitive Negative Mood Regulation Subscale; BEH = Behavioral Negative Mood Regulation Subscale; MCA = Maternal Care Parental Bonding Instrument Subscale; MOV = Maternal Overprotection Parental Bonding Instrument Subscale; PCA = Paternal Care Parental Bonding Instrument Subscale; POV = Paternal Overprotection Parental Bonding Instrument Subscale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. $N = 266$.

Main Analysis

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis stated that higher levels of parental bonding care and lower levels of parental bonding overprotection would be predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance. In order to test this prediction, adult attachment avoidance was regressed on parental bonding. As predicted, parental bonding was significantly associated with adult attachment avoidance ($R = .32$, $R^2 = .10$, $F(4, 261) = 7.41$, $p < .001$). In examining the individual regression coefficients, it was determined that maternal bonding care ($\beta = -.25$, $t = -3.46$, $p < .001$) was the only parental bonding subscale significantly associated with adult attachment avoidance (see Table 4). These results showed that maternal care was a significant predictor of adult attachment avoidance in the expected negative direction, indicating that higher levels of maternal care were related to lower levels of avoidance. Therefore, maternal care was used as the sole parental bonding variable to be included in the mediation model during subsequent analyses.

Table 4
Results of Regression Analysis, Adult Attachment Avoidance Regressed on Parental Bonding

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Adult Attachment Avoidance</i>		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Maternal Bonding Care	-0.04	0.01	-.25***
Maternal Bonding Overprotection	0.01	0.01	.04
Paternal Bonding Care	-0.00	0.01	-.04
Paternal Bonding Overprotection	0.01	0.01	.06

Dependent Variable: Adult Attachment Avoidance (Adjusted $R^2 = .09$)

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. $N = 266$.

Hypothesis Two

In light of the results described above regarding hypothesis one, maternal bonding care was utilized as the lone parental bonding variable during ensuing analyses. Thus, the second hypothesis tested was that higher levels of maternal bonding care would be predictive of lower levels of gender role conflict. To test this hypothesis, gender role conflict was regressed on maternal bonding care. As predicted, maternal bonding care was significantly related to gender role conflict ($R = .17$, $R^2 = .03$, $F(1, 264) = 8.17$, $p < .01$). Thus, higher levels of maternal care were associated with lower levels of gender role conflict. This outcome indicated that maternal care was a significant predictor of gender role conflict in the expected negative direction (see Table 5).

Table 5
Results of Regression Analysis, Gender Role Conflict Regressed on Maternal Bonding Care

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Gender Role Conflict</i>		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Maternal Bonding Care	-0.66	0.23	-.17**

Dependent Variable: Gender Role Conflict (Adjusted $R^2 = .03$)

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. $N = 266$.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis examined was that higher levels of maternal bonding care would be predictive of higher levels of affect regulation capacity. To test this premise, three separate affect regulation variables were each individually regressed on maternal care.

As predicted in hypothesis 3a, maternal bonding care was significantly associated with the first affect regulation variable, negative mood regulation ($R = .29$, $R^2 = .09$, $F(1, 264) = 24.80$, $p < .001$). The prediction for hypothesis 3b was also confirmed, indicating that maternal bonding care was significantly associated with the second affect regulation variable, emotion regulation suppression ($R = -.15$, $R^2 = .02$, $F(1, 264) = 5.78$, $p < .05$). In addition, hypothesis 3c was corroborated with results demonstrating that maternal bonding care was significantly associated with the third affect regulation variable, emotion regulation reappraisal ($R = .18$, $R^2 = .03$, $F(1, 264) = 9.30$, $p < .01$). These results indicated that maternal care significantly predicted negative mood regulation, emotion regulation suppression, and emotion regulation reappraisal, all in expected directions (see Table 6). Therefore, men who expressed greater levels of maternal care reported lower levels of maladaptive emotion regulation suppression, and higher levels of adaptive negative mood regulation and emotion regulation reappraisal.

Table 6
Results of Regression Analysis, Affect Regulation Variables Individually Regressed on Maternal Bonding Care

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>								
	<i>Negative Mood Regulation</i>			<i>Emotion Regulation Suppression</i>			<i>Emotion Regulation Reappraisal</i>		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Maternal Bonding Care	0.68	0.14	.29***	-0.03	0.01	-.15*	0.03	0.01	.18**

Dependent Variables: Negative Mood Regulation (Adjusted $R^2 = .08$); Emotion Regulation Suppression (Adjusted $R^2 = .02$); Emotion Regulation Reappraisal (Adjusted $R^2 = .03$)

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. $N = 266$.

Hypothesis Four

In order to test hypotheses 4a and 4b, a multiple regression analysis using the full model described above was completed in order to control for the effects of all variables in the model (see Figure 1, p. 8). Based on the results of previous hypotheses, adult attachment avoidance was regressed on maternal bonding care, gender role conflict, negative mood regulation, emotion regulation suppression, and emotion regulation reappraisal (see Table 7). This full model was significantly associated with adult attachment avoidance ($R = .54$, $R^2 = .30$, $F(5, 260) = 21.74$, $p < .001$), allowing further inspection of individual regression coefficients for gender role conflict (see hypothesis 4a), as well as those for negative mood regulation, emotion regulation suppression, and emotion regulation reappraisal (see hypotheses 4b).

Hypothesis 4a: Adult attachment avoidance regressed on male gender role conflict. Hypothesis 4a stated that lower levels of gender role conflict would be predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance. In order to test this prediction and establish that gender role conflict was related to adult attachment avoidance, adult attachment avoidance was regressed on the full model described above including all variables remaining in the model (see Table 7). The individual regression coefficient for gender role conflict was then examined. Contrary to prediction, although results approached significance, gender role conflict was not significantly associated with adult attachment avoidance ($\beta = .11$, $t = 1.91$, $p = .06$). Therefore, gender role conflict was not a significant predictor of adult attachment avoidance.

Hypothesis 4b: Adult attachment avoidance regressed on affect regulation capacity. Hypothesis 4b stated that higher capacity to regulate affect would be predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance. In order to test this prediction and establish that affect regulation capacity was related to adult attachment avoidance, adult attachment avoidance was regressed on variables in the full model described above. The individual regression coefficients for each of the three separate affect regulation capacity variables were then examined (see Table 7).

Contrary to prediction, the first affect regulation variable, negative mood regulation, was not significantly associated with adult attachment avoidance ($\beta = .03, t = .54, p = .59$). As predicted, the second affect regulation variable, emotion regulation suppression, was significantly associated with adult attachment avoidance ($\beta = .39, t = 6.55, p < .001$). The third affect regulation variable, emotion regulation reappraisal, was also significantly associated with adult attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.14, t = -2.51, p < .05$). Therefore while emotion regulation suppression and emotion regulation reappraisal did significantly predict adult attachment avoidance in expected directions, negative mood regulation did not significantly predict avoidance. Results indicated that higher levels of emotional suppression and lower levels of cognitive reappraisal were both significantly related to higher levels of avoidance.

Table 7

Results of Regression Analysis, Adult Attachment Avoidance Regressed on Full Model

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Adult Attachment Avoidance</i>		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Maternal Bonding Care	-0.03	0.01	-.21***
Gender Role Conflict	0.00	0.00	.11
Negative Mood Regulation	0.00	0.00	.03
Emotion Regulation Suppression	0.31	0.05	.39***
Emotion Regulation Reappraisal	-0.14	0.06	-.14*

Dependent Variable: Adult Attachment Avoidance (Adjusted $R^2 = .28$)

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. $N = 266$.

Hypothesis Five

The fifth hypothesis stated that the predictive effect of parental bonding on adult attachment avoidance would be reduced after including the influence of both male gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity, suggesting that gender role conflict and affect regulation serve as partial mediators (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Baron and Kenny have asserted that significant correlations between all three variables in a mediation model are a precondition for a significant mediation effect. According to this four-step model, there must be a significant relationship between the predictor and the outcome, between the predictor and the mediator, and between the mediator and the outcome. Finally, it must be shown that the strength of association between the predictor and the outcome is significantly reduced when each mediator is added individually to the model (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004).

Procedures for determining mediating effects of gender role conflict, negative mood regulation, emotion regulation suppression, and emotion regulation reappraisal are described below. They involve examining results of the five regressions previously

described in hypotheses 1-3, as well as the final regression using the full model to test hypotheses 4a and 4b. Finally, in order to test the significance of each mediated effect, error terms suggested by Kenny and colleagues (i.e., the square root of $b^2sa^2 + a^2sb^2 + sa^2sb^2$, where a and b are unstandardized regression coefficients and sa and sb are their respective standard errors) were calculated and compared to ± 1.96 to test each mediated effect at the .05 level (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998).

Mediating effect of gender role conflict on the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. To assess whether gender role conflict mediated the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance, correlations were first examined between maternal bonding care, gender role conflict, and adult attachment avoidance. Results demonstrated that these three variables were intercorrelated (see Table 2, p. 75), indicating that conditions for proper use of Baron and Kenny's mediation model had been met (1986).

In order to test whether gender role conflict mediated the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance, Steps 1-3 of Baron and Kenny's mediation model were examined (1986). It was determined that significant relationships existed between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance and between maternal bonding care and gender role conflict (see Table 8). However, gender role conflict did not add significantly to the prediction of adult attachment avoidance after maternal bonding care was entered into the regression equation. Thus, gender role conflict was not found to be a statistically significant partial mediator of the relationship between maternal care and avoidance.

Table 8
Testing for Gender Role Conflict as a Mediator Using Multiple Regression

Steps in testing for mediation	Adjusted R^2	B	$SE B$	β
Testing Step 1 (Path C)	.09			
Outcome: adult attachment avoidance				
Predictor: maternal bonding care		-0.04	0.01	-.25***
Testing Step 2 (Path A_1)	.03			
Outcome: gender role conflict				
Predictor: maternal bonding care		-0.66	0.23	-.17**
Testing Step 3 (Paths B_1 and C')	.28			
Outcome: adult attachment avoidance				
Mediator: gender role conflict		0.00	0.00	.11
Predictor: maternal bonding care		-0.03	0.01	-.21***

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. $N = 266$.

Mediating effect of negative mood regulation on the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. To assess whether negative mood regulation mediated the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance, correlations between maternal bonding care, negative mood regulation, and adult attachment avoidance were inspected. Results indicated that these three variables were intercorrelated (see Table 2, p. 75), revealing that conditions for proper use of Baron and Kenny's mediation model were met (1986).

In order to test whether negative mood regulation mediated the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance, Steps 1-3 of Baron and Kenny's mediation model were considered (1986). Significant relationships were found between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance and between maternal bonding care and negative mood regulation (see Table 9). However, negative mood regulation did not add significantly to the prediction of adult attachment avoidance after

maternal bonding care was entered into the regression equation. Thus, negative mood regulation was not determined to significantly mediate the relationship between maternal care and avoidance.

Table 9
Testing for Negative Mood Regulation as a Mediator Using Multiple Regression

Steps in testing for mediation	Adjusted R^2	B	$SE B$	β
Testing Step 1 (Path C)	.09			
Outcome: adult attachment avoidance				
Predictor: maternal bonding care		-0.04	0.01	-.25***
Testing Step 2 (Path A_2)	.09			
Outcome: negative mood regulation				
Predictor: maternal bonding care		0.68	0.14	.29***
Testing Step 3 (Paths B_2 and C')	.28			
Outcome: adult attachment avoidance				
Mediator: negative mood regulation		0.00	0.00	.03
Predictor: maternal bonding care		-0.03	0.01	-.21***

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$. $N = 266$.

Mediating effect of emotion regulation suppression on the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. To assess whether emotion regulation suppression mediated the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance, correlations between maternal bonding care, emotion regulation suppression, and adult attachment avoidance were examined. Results indicated that these three variables were intercorrelated (see Table 2, p. 75), thus conditions were met for appropriate use of Baron and Kenny's mediation model (1986).

Steps 1-3 of Baron and Kenny's mediation model were examined in order to test whether emotion regulation suppression mediated the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance (1986). Significant relationships were

determined to exist between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance, between maternal bonding care and emotion regulation suppression, and between emotion regulation suppression and adult attachment avoidance, suggesting partial mediation (see Table 10). Next, the significance of the mediated effect was calculated to determine whether the difference in path C and path C' was statistically significant. The z-score was calculated to be -2.33. Therefore, because the absolute value of the z-score was greater than 1.96, emotion regulation suppression was found to be a statistically significant partial mediator of the relationship between maternal care and avoidance.

Table 10
Testing for Emotion Regulation Suppression as a Mediator Using Multiple Regression

Steps in testing for mediation	Adjusted R^2	B	$SE B$	β
Testing Step 1 (Path C)	.09			
Outcome: adult attachment avoidance				
Predictor: maternal bonding care		-0.04	0.01	-.25***
Testing Step 2 (Path A_2)	.02			
Outcome: emotion regulation suppression				
Predictor: maternal bonding care		-0.03	0.01	-.15*
Testing Step 3 (Paths B_2 and C')	.28			
Outcome: adult attachment avoidance				
Mediator: emotion regulation suppression		0.31	0.05	.39***
Predictor: maternal bonding care		-0.03	0.01	-.21***

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$. $N = 266$.

Mediating effect of emotion regulation reappraisal on the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. To test whether the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance was mediated by emotion regulation reappraisal, correlations were observed between maternal bonding care, emotion regulation reappraisal, and adult attachment avoidance. Results demonstrated

that these three variables were intercorrelated (see Table 2, p. 75), indicating that conditions for proper use of Baron and Kenny's mediation model were met (1986).

To examine whether emotion regulation reappraisal mediated the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance, Steps 1-3 of Baron and Kenny's mediation model were inspected (1986). Significant relationships were present between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance, between maternal bonding care and emotion regulation reappraisal, and between emotion regulation reappraisal and adult attachment avoidance, which suggested a partial mediation effect (see Table 11). The significance of the mediated effect was then calculated to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in path C and path C'. The z-score was calculated to be -1.47. Emotion regulation suppression was not found to be a statistically significant partial mediator because the absolute value of the z-score was less than 1.96.

Table 11
Testing for Emotion Regulation Reappraisal as a Mediator Using Multiple Regression

Steps in testing for mediation	Adjusted R^2	B	$SE B$	β
Testing Step 1 (Path C)	.09			
Outcome: adult attachment avoidance				
Predictor: maternal bonding care		-0.04	0.01	-.25***
Testing Step 2 (Path A_2)	.03			
Outcome: emotion regulation reappraisal				
Predictor: maternal bonding care		0.03	0.01	.18**
Testing Step 3 (Paths B_2 and C')	.28			
Outcome: adult attachment avoidance				
Mediator: emotion regulation reappraisal		-0.14	0.06	-.14*
Predictor: maternal bonding care		-0.03	0.01	-.21***

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. $N = 266$.

Hypothesis Six

The sixth hypothesis predicted that distribution of product tests (MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2006) would be significant, indicating that gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity variables partially mediated the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance. The strength of hypothesized mediation effects of male gender role conflict, negative mood regulation, emotion regulation suppression, and emotion regulation reappraisal were tested using MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams and Lockwood's (2006) PRODCLIN computer program, a mediation test recommended for small samples. In order to test these four proposed mediators, four indirect effects were examined using individual regression coefficients and standard errors from analyses described above (see Table 7, p. 82). Due to the exploratory nature of the current study and the conservative nature of the Baron and Kenny mediation model (1986), the alpha level for preliminary regressions described above necessary to proceed

with tests of indirect effects were set to .10, resulting in all preliminary requirements being met for subsequent distribution of product test mediation analyses.

Indirect effect of maternal bonding care to male gender role conflict to adult attachment avoidance. As predicted, the specific test of the indirect effect provided support for the assertion that male gender role conflict partially mediated the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. The Path A₁ unstandardized regression coefficient relating maternal bonding and gender role conflict was -.663 with a standard error of .232. The Path B₁ unstandardized regression coefficient relating gender role conflict and adult attachment avoidance was .00456 with a standard error of .00240. The lower and upper 95% confidence limits based on the distribution of the product, -.00825 and -.00005, did not contain zero and were thus consistent with a statistically significant mediation effect.

Indirect effect of maternal bonding care to negative mood regulation to adult attachment avoidance. Contrary to prediction, the specific test of the indirect effect showed that negative mood regulation did not act as a statistically significant mediator influencing the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. The Path A₂ unstandardized regression coefficient relating maternal bonding and negative mood regulation was .675 with a standard error of .135. The Path B₂ unstandardized regression coefficient relating negative mood regulation and adult attachment avoidance was .00224 with a standard error of .00412. The lower and upper 95% confidence limits based on the distribution of the product, -.00436 and .00646,

contained zero and thus were not consistent with a statistically significant mediation effect.

Indirect effect of maternal bonding care to emotion regulation suppression to adult attachment avoidance. As predicted, the specific test of the indirect effect indicated that the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance was partially mediated by emotion regulation suppression. The Path A₂ unstandardized regression coefficient relating maternal bonding and emotion regulation suppression was -.0283 with a standard error of .0118. The Path B₂ unstandardized regression coefficient relating emotion regulation suppression and adult attachment avoidance was .306 with a standard error of .0470. The lower and upper 95% confidence limits based on the distribution of the product, -.01791 and -.00146, did not contain zero and thus were consistent with a statistically significant mediation effect.

Indirect effect of maternal bonding care to emotion regulation reappraisal to adult attachment avoidance. Finally, also as predicted, the specific test of the indirect effect provided support for emotion regulation reappraisal as a partial mediator influencing the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. The Path A₂ unstandardized regression coefficient relating maternal bonding and emotion regulation reappraisal was .029 with a standard error of .00952. The Path B₂ unstandardized regression coefficient relating emotion regulation reappraisal and adult attachment avoidance was -.140 with a standard error of .0559. The lower and upper 95% confidence limits based on the distribution of the product, -.00974 and -.00058,

did not contain zero and were thus consistent with a statistically significant mediation effect.

Summary

In sum, results from the present analyses illustrated partial support for proposed linear regression and mediational hypotheses. Using Baron and Kenny's mediation model (1986), it was determined that emotion regulation suppression partially mediated the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. The distribution of product test (MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2006), a more powerful test of mediation, indicated that gender role conflict, emotion regulation suppression, and emotion regulation reappraisal partially mediated the relationship between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. These results corroborated the assertion that emotion regulation suppression was a partial mediator in the model described above. In addition, gender role conflict and emotion regulation reappraisal were partially supported as partial mediators between maternal bonding care and adult attachment avoidance. However, negative mood regulation was not determined to significantly mediate the relationship between maternal care and avoidance. Therefore, quantitative findings suggested that male gender role conflict, emotional suppression, and cognitive reappraisal helped to explain the association between maternal care and avoidance.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Findings

The goal of the present investigation was to examine several hypotheses concerning relationships among parental bonding, male gender role conflict, affect regulation capacity, and adult attachment avoidance. The proposed model (see Figure 1, p. 8) was partially supported by quantitative results in the current study. The second part of this study involved qualitative interviews with a small subset of participants. The following chapter reports and discusses results from the interview portion of the study. First, critical content areas and themes that emerged through content analysis are described along with a listing of related interview questions (see Table 12, pp. 97-98). Next, several themes emerging from the interview material related to each topic area are summarized, along with relevant excerpts used to support each category.

The purpose of these interviews was to better understand the etiology of avoidance of intimacy in romantic relationships among men. The primary goal of each interview was to explore family relationships, emotional coping strategies, and masculine identity in order to more fully understand how these factors impact relational intimacy. Five areas of qualitative findings that were determined and refined are further explored below: emotional connection with parents, primary coping mechanisms, intimacy in romantic relationships, masculine identity, and link between early relationships with caregivers and later romantic involvement.

Recruitment

After completing the online questionnaire, participants were informed about the interview component of this study (see Appendix I). It was explained that the researcher

was interested in conducting individual interviews to further understand men's relationships. Participants who wanted to learn more about the interviews were directed online to relevant information (see Appendix J). Additional details were provided, including that the interviews would be audiotaped with participants' permission and would last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Participants were informed that a \$25 gift certificate would be given in exchange for completing an interview.

Participants were told that by endorsing interest in the interview component of the study they were allowing the researcher to review their responses from the online questionnaire to determine eligibility. Selection criteria were originally planned based on level of adult attachment avoidance, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver; 1998). Thirty-four individuals indicated interest and were contacted via email to assess willingness to schedule an interview. Ten of these individuals replied by email or phone and scheduled interviews at a mutually convenient time resulting in a total of ten completed interviews. Three additional individuals contacted the primary investigator after interviews were concluded and were sent email notification that they would be unable to participate because the interview portion of the study had ended.

Procedure

Interviews occurred in person and were held in a private room to promote confidentiality. Prior to beginning the interviews, all participants signed a consent form (see Appendix K) and were reminded of the voluntary nature of the study as well as limits of confidentiality. Interview content areas and questions were developed in

conjunction with the study's faculty sponsor. All pilot testing and interviews were conducted solely by the principal investigator, an advanced doctoral student in Counseling Psychology. The audiotaped interviews were then carefully reviewed for salient themes and interpretations.

The interview component of the study was designed to allow male participants to describe in their own words their experiences in relationships. For this reason, discussions were semi-structured to allow for the emergence of salient themes. Interviews were conducted by asking open-ended questions to facilitate introspection and gently probing for additional information based on participants' responses. It is likely that voluntary participation in interviews helped respondents to relate their experiences in a candid and straightforward manner. In addition, using a nonjudgmental approach may have helped to facilitate deeper exploration of personal topics, allowing interview participants the opportunity to openly discuss their lives in a safe, confidential environment.

Participants

Ten male students from the University of Texas at Austin who were originally recruited through the EDP Subject Pool participated in the interview component of the study. Nine participants ranged in age from 19 to 22 ($M = 20.56$, $SD = .88$), one participant did not record his age. Five of the young men were seniors, four were juniors, and one was a freshman. Four respondents were Caucasian / European American, two were Asian American / Pacific Islander, two were Hispanic / Latino, one was Asian Indian or Pakistani, and one was Middle Eastern / Arab. Three of the interviewees

reported being first generation citizens in the United States. Eight of the participants' parents were married; two had parents who divorced when they were 1 and 11 years old, respectively, after which they were both raised primarily by their mothers. Two of the respondents reported being involved in monogamous romantic relationships. Interviewees endorsed a wide range of adult attachment avoidance levels, ranging from the 1st to 99th percentile of the overall sample. A comparison of interview group study variable means and standard deviations with similar data from the overall sample demonstrated no systematic differences between these two groups on any measures utilized in the current study.

Descriptive Findings

To analyze qualitative responses to interview questions, the primary investigator independently reviewed all qualitative material by listening to audiotaped interviews and reviewing transcribed excerpts. Critical topic areas particularly pertinent to the investigation were selected, as well as core themes describing responses in each topic area. The primary investigator in consultation with the faculty sponsor then revised these categories and related themes. The process of creating category names and descriptions resulted in five critical topic areas with associated themes. Table 12 shows the topic areas, thematic categories within topic areas, related interview questions, and descriptive statistics regarding themes that emerged. Themes are then described and analyzed using excerpts from interview transcripts. Further discussion of the significance of the interview responses is included in the discussion section to provide additional insight regarding study outcomes.

Relationships / emotional connection with parents

Several themes were developed from interview participants' discussions of their family relationships including: caring mother, distant father, hostile / demanding mother, and angry father.

Caring mother. Six of the interviewees described a caring, supportive maternal figure, including both of the participants who had been raised for the majority of their childhoods by single mothers. One individual described his single mother as dedicated and hardworking, reporting, "There was never a time in my life when I felt like she didn't love me, or would put something else before me and my brother." He described a close relationship with his mother, mentioning that his decision regarding which graduate school to attend was based in part on living closer to her. Another participant, parented by a single mother since age 8, described himself as much closer to his mother than his father. He portrayed his mother as a loyal parent who would "pretty much do anything for my sister and I."

Table 12 (page 1)
Qualitative Interview Topic Areas and Themes

<i>Major Topic Area</i>	<i>Sample Questions</i>	<i>Thematic Sub Category</i>	<i>%^a</i>
Relationship / emotional connection with parents	“Tell me about your family, what is your family like?”	Caring mother	60%
	“What is your relationship like at this point in time with your mother / father?”	Distant father	60%
	“If you could improve your relationship with your mother / father, what would be different?”	Hostile / demanding mother	30%
		Angry father	20%
Coping strategies	“How do you cope with stress?”	Exercise	70%
	“How do you typically deal with negative emotions?”	Talking with others	70%
	“What kinds of feelings are easier / harder for you to talk about?”	Addressing problems	50%
		Holding things in	30%
		Emotional distancing / isolation	20%
Desired romantic relationship characteristics	“How would you describe the quality of your romantic relationships?”	Open communication / honesty	100%
		Activity partner / common interests	50%
	“What qualities are important to you for a partner in an intimate relationship?”	Emotional distance	50%
	“What are some of the things that can make intimate relationships difficult?”	Mutual respect / support	40%
		Closeness	30%

Note. ^a Many participant responses addressed multiple themes. Therefore, percentages reflect the percent of responses for which any part of the response fit this category. *n* = 10.

Table 12 (page 2)
Qualitative Interview Topic Areas and Themes

<i>Major Category</i>	<i>Sample Questions</i>	<i>Thematic Sub Category</i>	<i>%^a</i>
Masculine identity	“When you were little, what kind of man did you want to grow up to be?”	Provider role / being successful	60%
		Strength	60%
	“What messages did you receive from your father about how to be a man?”	Responsibility	40%
		Independence	30%
	“What does masculinity mean to you?”	Power over women / dominance	30%
		Less emotional	20%
Link between early experiences and later romantic involvement	“What is your parents’ relationship like?”	Conflictual parental relationship → avoidance of intimate relationships later in life	60%
		Closeness with mother → closeness with women later in life	40%
	“Do you believe your early relationships with your family while you were growing up have affected your romantic relationships?”	Conflictual relationship with mother → distrust of women later in life	20%
		Distant from father → detachment in relationships later in life	20%

Note. ^a Many participant responses addressed multiple themes. Therefore, percentages reflect the percent of responses for which any part of the response fit this category. *n* = 10.

Another respondent warmly described his mother as accepting and open-minded, reporting that because she “was always there and was always willing to talk, very approachable,” they were able to develop a trusting relationship. An interviewee reported that throughout his life he has been confident in his relationship with his mother, saying, “I can trust her and tell her anything.” Similarly, a participant reported, “my mom’s always been there for me so I couldn’t ask for anything more than that.” Another young man discussed his mother’s caring nature and helpful nature, explaining:

My relationship with my mother is a good one. I really love her a lot, I have so much respect for her because I notice all the things that she does for the family, it’s really amazing. I have a lot of respect for my mother and if I were ever to have any problems I would come to her because most of the time she makes it easy for me to go to her because she always talks to me and she asks me how everything is going and if I need anything.

Distant father. The majority of participants described their fathers as emotionally and/or physically disconnected from them, especially during their childhoods. Two participants with divorced parents reported spending time infrequently with their fathers (e.g., “I didn’t get opportunities to spend time with my father, or learn from him”). One described his relationship with his father as “not very strong, we don’t really communicate often... I wish he could improve on being more in tune with what’s going on in my life.” Another participant, in discussing his “twenty-one years of realizing that I’m completely different from my father,” expressed frustration at his difficulty interacting with his father:

But what do you talk about? Literally, my father and I could sit in a room like this and not say anything, because it’s the way it’s always been. We’ve never had anything to talk about. He feels he can’t speak to me because he doesn’t understand where I’m coming from.

When asked about ways in which he would like to improve his relationship with his father, one young man discussed obstacles to relating in a more connected manner:

I would want to have better communication with my dad. I guess it's just the way society works, you know, guys don't communicate that often. That's the only thing that makes it kind of awkward or uncomfortable. It's very superficial conversations about things that are going on in our lives. A lot of times my dad talks about his work. There's always something between us, we have to have something hands on to facilitate the talking between us, there's always an activity.

Another respondent talked regretfully about his paternal relationship, reporting, "My dad has always been pretty distant since I was little. I can't say I'm close to him." Explaining that his father has always been dedicated to work, an interviewee stated, "I don't have any memories of doing anything with my dad. I wasn't close to him because he was always working." Describing a similar type of relationship, another participant said, "I basically had no relationship with my dad. If I was lucky I'd see him right before I went to bed when he came home from work."

Hostile / demanding mother. Three of the interviewees reported experiencing their mothers as overly critical. One participant described his mother as demanding, reporting, "She likes to almost run every part of my life." Another Asian-American student also described his mother as stubborn, reporting, "We have a very love and hate relationship... we butt heads." He reported feeling emotionally distant from his mother, portraying her in harsh, critical terms, "My mom's the more demanding one. She tries to be a dominant kind of person. She's loud, always trying to overpower people with her voice." Discussing his mother in a similar manner, another respondent reported that the

primary source of stress in his life is, “meeting the expectations that she has for me.” In describing his mother, he stated:

She’s concerned that I don’t currently have a girlfriend, she’s concerned that when I do get a girlfriend it doesn’t last very long, and she definitely asks me about that all the time. She’ll grill me constantly, she’s really, really concerned about that. And grades... I’m not really honest with her when I get a grade lower than “A” ‘cause she’d freak out. Churchwise, she expects me to be involved. She’s always planning for my future. I’m going to seminary after here... she’ll get concerned about [my drinking]. Yeah, everything and anything she’s concerned about.

Angry father. Two participants related memories of their fathers’ regularly behaving toward them in an angry and/or aggressive manner. One reminisced, “My father was always not around, when I was growing up my father was the one I was scared of, he had a really bad temper.” Similarly, another interviewee related, “When any of us talk to my father it’s like we’re walking on eggshells. He’s unduly sensitive and then you cross that boundary and he just explodes.” In thinking about his own relationships, this respondent expressed, “I aspire to be the father that my father was not. Very caring, soft spoken, gentle... and as a husband, I plan to be very soft spoken, my father yelled all the time.”

Coping strategies

Several themes were developed from interview participants’ discussions of their coping strategies including: exercise, talking with others, addressing problems, holding things in, and emotional distancing / isolation.

Exercise. Seven interviewees emphasized the importance of exercise in helping them to adaptively manage stress. When asked about coping, the majority of participants mentioned exercise as a primary coping strategy, discussing regular involvement in

jogging, lifting weights at the gym, and/or athletics (e.g., “I work out, it helps a lot,” “working out is important to me,” “I used to go running every time I was stressed out, just work it off”). One interviewee noted that a regular exercise routine he had started since arriving at college positively impacted his self-esteem, “I go to the gym almost every day. It’s also a self-image, self-confidence thing. When you look strong or have muscles you feel a lot better about yourself.” He further expressed his thoughts about the link between exercise and his self-confidence:

It’s definitely a good way to take an hour out, just be away from everyone, listen to music, and trying to fight with... not a person, but with weights or barbells, it’s a good way to definitely reduce any stress that I have while also building something positive.

Talking with others. Seven participants noted the importance of sharing their feelings with others (e.g., “I like to talk about my problems and get them out in the open”). However, they often expressed uncertainty regarding the usefulness of episodes of emotional expression (e.g., “I guess I talk to my roommate. I wouldn’t say it really helps, but it’s good to know there’s someone else there, that I’m not the only one worried”). Another explained, “I have some close friends that I’ll talk to about my problems, but it’s really hard to talk to them.” One participant reported that while talking with others can be useful, he tends to reach out to others only in more overwhelming circumstances, “If I’m really, really stressed I’ll talk to my mom, but that’s if I’m like, not freaking out but if I’m like, ‘I can’t accomplish anything right now so I just need to talk to somebody’.”

A few interviewees described more consistent efforts to seek support from others in both organized (e.g., bible study) and informal settings, “Sometimes friends can be a

big support... there's something about letting it all out that helps you." Others also expressed willingness to actively seek help from others:

Often I'll pick up the phone and call my mom and say, 'Mom, I'm really mad right now,' or not really for a sad thing, but just to catch up with people to remind me of home.

In discussing the significance of personal connections in his life, a participant related that talking to others about his problems has been helpful, "Me saying things out loud and hearing myself talking about things helps me to realize well, it's not that big of a deal."

Addressing problems. The majority of the men in the study described academics as a major source of stress. For many of these individuals, focusing on work and accomplishing tasks seemed to be helpful in temporarily managing anxiety. For example, one participant described himself as a "workaholic," reporting, "If there's free time I'm always finding something to do." Another discussed his tendency to procrastinate, expressing that "the best thing to do is just deal with it, just finish whatever is stressing you out." One respondent related that when feeling overwhelmed reminding himself, "Doing it day by day, moving on... knowing that it'll be over at some point," has been helpful in the past to help him manage anxiety.

Holding things in. Three participants expressed reluctance to disclose personal problems to others (e.g., "If I had a problem, my first instinct wouldn't be to go talk to my girlfriend about it... Especially being in an intimate romantic relationship, I'll have a tendency to just hold things in rather than to talk about them"). In a particularly striking example of a tendency to restrain discussion of negative emotions, in the midst of describing a variety of negative psychosomatic stress-related symptoms experienced in

part due to concern about classes, an interviewee stated, “It’s not the stress that bothers me, because I enjoy stress.” Another participant talked at length about his tendency to suppress his emotions:

I also just hold it inside of me a lot of times... I think half the time I just hold it inside and just, you know, deal with it... I think holding it inside helps me more because I can reflect on what’s wrong, what can I do to make myself feel better... There were one or two instances where I blew up. Where I guess I was under so much stress that I guess I couldn’t take it any more, and I just blew up on a couple people.

Emotional distancing / isolation. Two participants described experiencing considerable relief from isolating themselves for extended periods of time. In describing his ideal relationship, one expressed, “space is definitely a big thing... you also want to [spend time] not with that person.” Another more specifically noted that being alone was helpful when he felt stressed or overwhelmed, “I’m big on just having alone time, isolated, just being by myself. That’s pretty much all I really need, just being away from people,” after which he would reinitiate contact with others, “I’ll get kinda isolated and just kinda recharge myself, and then I’ll open back up.”

Desired romantic relationship characteristics

Discussions of interview participants’ aspirations for their romantic relationships uncovered several themes: open communication / honesty, activity partner / common interests, emotional distance, mutual respect / support, and closeness.

Open communication / honesty. When asked about components of romantic relationships important to participants, all of the men interviewed mentioned open, honest communication, particularly in helping to foster capacity to “understand the other person’s perspective.” Several participants indicated that sincerity and truthfulness had

contributed to the success of their relationships (e.g., “Without honesty you can’t really have a close relationship”). It was also noted repeatedly that although “communication takes a lot of energy and a lot of effort,” this investment, although difficult sometimes, was generally worthwhile.

Activity partner / common interests. Half of the interviewees mentioned their desire to share mutual experiences with a romantic partner (e.g., “Having someone to always share things with... go into new experiences with”). In discussing his relationship, one respondent expressed excitement that his girlfriend is willing to actively participate in his hobbies (e.g., “I think it’s pretty cool for a girlfriend to [go fishing] with me just because she knows I like it, not a lot of girls would do that”).

Emotional distance. Five respondents described encountering difficulties with attempts to manage the time and emotional energy involved in maintaining a long-term relationship. Several participants expressed discomfort spending a significant amount of time with a girlfriend (e.g., “You get tired of seeing the same person every single day”) and unwillingness to commit to a partner in a romantic relationship (“I guess that’s what makes intimate relationships tough, being dedicated to one person”). Conflict between spending time and effort on relationships and/or academics was a frequent topic of discussion among these men. For example, one interviewee explained:

The main problem was that I was worried about school, I found myself spending more time with her than at school and that really bothered me. That’s why I’m not in a relationship right now; it’s something I don’t want to have to worry about.

He discussed concerns about having a girlfriend who might attempt to initiate close emotional ties, describing his need for a partner who would understand that he was “not

going to be there for her” due to a demanding work schedule. Several men discussed romantic relationship fearfully, expressing worry that an intimate partner would negatively impact their lives (e.g., “I want someone who won’t get in my way and ruin everything whether she knows it or not”).

Relatedly, one respondent shared that he does not “want to be forced to hang out with [a girlfriend] every day, or be there when they need me all the time, so I distance myself.” He elaborated on this perspective, stating:

I would like to have an intimate romantic relationship in the future. I wouldn’t say now, and going along with my busy lifestyle, there’s a lot of other stuff in my life. I don’t think I’ve actually found a girl that would complement my lifestyle. All the girls that I’ve been dating, sooner or later along the way made hints that they wanted something long-term or serious... knowing myself and my lifestyle, it’s kind of a disservice to their time and their emotions and feelings.

Another participant related described himself as “the kind of guy who never really shows 100% of myself to anyone.” In discussing his tendency to distance himself in past relationships, he noticed that problems have resulted if a girlfriend wanted to “spend a lot of time together or... is too invested, or too caring, or too nice.” Several other interviewees also expressed ambivalence about closeness in intimate relationships. For example, in discussing his discomfort and uncertainty related to his parents’ increased level of intimacy later in life, one participant explained, “It’s just interesting seeing two people that can be together without actually getting sick of each other, it’s pretty fascinating.”

Mutual respect / support. One of the themes discussed by four participants was desire to foster an equitable romantic relationship. One of the young men spoke candidly about what he was looking for, “I definitely want an equal relationship with no one

having the upper hand, just to discuss really what's good for you and good for the other person." Another talked about lessons learned from his parents:

I think that's something I've really tried to incorporate into my relationships, that you can just go with it after someone makes a mistake and not dwell on it and hold them responsible for everything because everybody makes mistakes.

When asked about his own relationship with his girlfriend, he replied, "I think more than anything we support each other." In summing up this perspective, another interviewee stated, "Whatever you're facing in the future, it's nice to know that someone else is facing that with you."

Closeness. Only three participants directly noted enjoying the intimacy and familiarity of romantic relationships. Interestingly, none of the men who openly talked about this aspect of relational connections were currently involved in a romantic relationship. In summing up this perspective, one respondent stated, "It's the closeness that's really, really great. There's that connection that you have with someone special to whom you feel so very close, that you really can't get anywhere else."

Masculine identity

Themes discussed below expressed by respondents about masculinity and their ideas about being a man include: provider role / being successful, strength, responsibility, independence, power over women / dominance, and less emotional.

Provider role / being successful. The majority of respondents talked about pressure, both self-imposed and societal, to be "successful." In talking about men's roles in society, one participant noted, "I think society still pushes the man as the breadwinner, the man as the rock in the relationship, who always takes care of everything and provides

for the family. I think the man is still expected to work and be supported by the woman.” Another expressed that “there’s always constant competition” over women, often related to financial resources as an important indicator of success. Several men talked about associating masculinity with success (e.g., “I’m supposed to be successful, it’s the norm that society has.”). This attitude was particularly evident in one young man’s description of masculinity:

I’ve always had this idea that I am the man. I am the provider. I should make the money. I guess that’s my idea of being a man... When I was little I had this idea that women don’t work. I’m not going to stop my wife from working, but in the end I would feel like less of a man... Long term, I want her to know that I am the provider and that her primary job is the kids. And I do want kids.

Strength. Six participants discussed a need to appear strong and/or avoid looking weak. For example, an interviewee explained that, “Men usually like to stand up for themselves or they’ll feel like less of a man” and “society does say, ‘you’re a man, you should stand up for yourself’.” Another individual agreed, stating, “I think men still try to be tough and show they can always be stable.” In discussing his discomfort with expressing vulnerable emotions, a respondent described how he believes men should act:

Standing on your own, real strong character-wise, not very down. I think in a sense that crying is not really ok for a man, in certain situations I think it’s very weak looking for a man to cry around a bunch of people. It’s, I think, weak of a man to lose their temper, I think a man should be able to take control of a situation without losing his temper.

Interestingly, this interviewee had also reported that he has suffered from several episodes of major depression, which may in fact be linked to his attitudes about emotional expression.

Another participant talked about how he thinks that masculinity means that men should “be strong... make decisions, be the more aggressive one.” Earlier in the

interview, he poignantly related how his father had related to him when he was a young child, “My dad always said, ‘Be a man! Be a man!’. If I’d cry or something, he would actually get angrier that I did, and he would say, ‘Why are you embarrassing me?’, and I guess that pushed me to be more manly.” Others provided more implicit reasons that men may feel pressure to appear powerful:

I don’t think a lot of that is really spoken. You kind of realize when you’re going through school and with friends... that doesn’t seem right or that seems weak... definitely you don’t want to seem weak. Look like a dominant person who can hold his own, not really fighting, but if that ever came to you, that you could defend yourself, is something that I believe a man should be or that I thought when I was a child.

In discussing his romantic relationship, one participant expressed that at times his desire to appear invulnerable had harmed his relationship with his girlfriend, noting, “It can make things worse or extend a fight” and “It doesn’t allow the true problem to get resolved.”

Responsibility. Four men explained that responsibility was a characteristic important to them, discussing how it related to their sense of masculinity. One respondent expressed, “From being the oldest son I always have to have a sense of leadership and responsibility” and, “I need to be in charge and confident. I should be able to figure out something and do it, get it done... I would have to attack the problem and address it, fix it.” Another participant explained that when he thinks about being a man, he pictures, “Someone who can take care of and be responsible in any situation, take care of themselves... self-sufficient, self-supporting.” When asked to describe family messages he received about being a man, an interviewee replied:

To me, being a man is not so much being macho. It's more taking care of everyone around you and yourself. That's what my dad taught me... If I can take care of myself, I should do it.

Independence. Three respondents discussed the importance of autonomy in their lives (e.g., "I like to be independent and resolve things by myself"). Two participants related that this tendency tends to negatively impact their relationships (e.g., "Men typically try to be more independent... so they can build up this kind of shell around them. That makes it difficult to communicate"). One young man expressed his belief that, "Men, especially ones who are dedicated to succeeding, like me, see having someone as negative, like it's bothersome." Another related that he had learned, "don't count on [friends and romantic partners] too much. I guess I'm more independent. I don't really depend on them that much."

Power over women / dominance. Several of the respondents talked about how men are taught to act in a dominant manner towards women and other men. Three men openly discussed sentiments that they were superior to women and more comfortable maintaining a position of power in their relationships (e.g., "I have certain advantages over a women in a relationship). For example, one participant explained his ideas about being a "Christian man" that he learned from his father:

For me in Christianity the male is kind of the pursuer, and kind of in charge, more or less, and the woman supports the male. My mom and my dad do that really well, and that would be something that I would look for... If the female disagrees with me, then that would be an issue for the relationship... or if the person I was with didn't see me as a masculine man... that would be frustrating.

Another interviewee discussed how his attitudes and behavior toward women negatively influence his relationships:

Being a man, when it comes to females, I get stubborn sometimes where I always would like to have the upper hand. Kinda like, it's my way. Narrow down her choices in a way. It's hard when I date someone who's kinda like, independent, that can clash.

It was explained several times that societal pressure for men to try to be dominant was pervasive, "It's something that's given to you from birth, something society tells you, to be dominant." One participant spoke openly of his dissatisfaction with the lack of respect with which he believes many men treat women, explaining:

I've seen relationships where the guy would just do stuff, like nonsense, to try to have the upper hand... A lot of guys will think, I'm not macho enough if I don't have control over my girlfriend, and I can make her do whatever I want.

Less emotional. Several men also described what they believed is a tendency for men to feel and/or express their emotions less than women (e.g., "It's just masculinity. Men are usually less emotional and women want to be comforted."). One participant discussed the negative repercussions for men who show their feelings, "Men have this whole idea against being gay, being a sissy. If I talk about emotions, I get this from my roommates, 'Hey, you're gay, man!'" Another young man talked about his childhood and how from watching his father he developed his idea of the type of man he wanted to be (i.e., "I wanted to always be stoic and never upset. I wanted to be able to just control my emotions in that way."). When asked about his current view of masculinity, he explained:

I think to an extent I still believe a man should be more stoic and be more reserved, and think things through and not be emotional. You should not be obnoxious in situations, trying to be the center of attention. Someone who's comfortable with themselves.

Link between early experiences and later romantic involvement

Exploration and qualitative analysis of interview material were used to develop themes regarding connections between early relationships with parents and subsequent impact on intimate relationship functioning. These themes include: conflictual parental relationship leading to avoidance of intimate relationships later in life, closeness with mother leading to closeness with women later in life, conflictual relationship with mother leading to distrust of women later in life, and distance from father leading to detachment in relationships later in life.

Conflictual parental relationship → avoidance of intimate relationships later in life. Six participants discussed the lingering impact of their parents' argumentative relationships. In addition, none of the individuals who described significant levels of aggression between parents during childhood were currently involved in a romantic relationship. In portraying his parents, who eventually separated and divorced, one young man said, "It really didn't make sense to me, that two adults couldn't come to some sort of agreement." Another described regular conflict between his parents (e.g., "My parents had an arranged marriage. They are always arguing... Fortunately I'm away from all that."). When describing how his parents relate to each other, a participant explained:

They argue about a lot of small things... They're not as close as they should be, they complain a lot about each other behind their backs to their children... I don't really see them as a model for a relationship.

Another interviewee described continued relational conflict between his divorced parents:

I sometimes have to be that intermediary between two sides pulling each way... A lot of things that they will disagree on, they're arguments, but not real arguments, kind of like quick things that kind of snowball together into the kind of fights that really get people mad at each other, and say things you really wouldn't want to.

In discussing his current dating relationships this participant noted, "The quality... in short they're really not good, not really one night things, but no real correspondence," and then proceeded to describe his concerns and hopes for his own romantic relationship in the future:

I hope it would be with someone that I would want to spend every moment I had with them, obviously there would be times when you would try to be as far away from them as possible... Definitely fidelity and honesty, also like I mentioned from my parents, the lack of drama and as nonconfrontational a relationship as possible, like the least amount of arguments. Not that I couldn't deal with a few, but that's something that I would definitely strive for, the least type of relationship like [my parents had].

In direct contrast to interviewees who experienced significant parental conflict during childhood, another participant, explaining the impact of his parent's relationship on his current relationship with his girlfriend stated, "I look at their relationship, trying to make things fair... I definitely, definitely look at their relationship as a positive influence on my relationship."

Closeness with mother → *closeness with women later in life*. Four participants related their relative comfort in close romantic relationships to their early supportive relationship with their mother. For example:

The relationship I've established with my mother has taught me, or developed me into a very open, communicating type of person, a value oriented, goal oriented person... so when I started a romantic relationship, it was kind of the same thing, I wanted honesty.

One respondent explained how open communication with his mother throughout his life (e.g., "I never really had to feel secretive.") contributed to his ability to relate to his

girlfriend in an honest, unguarded manner. Discussing his preference to spend time with females, another participant explained, “I’m close with my mom and I think that has a lot to do with why I identify more with women.” In describing himself in relationships, one young man stated, “I think I do tend to be very open and set on communication, which is an important quality for me because of [my mother].”

Conflictual relationship with mother → distrust of women later in life. Two interviewees described particularly challenging relationships with maternal caregivers. As discussed earlier, one respondent had discussed at length concerns about what he described as his mother’s overintrusiveness. In talking about his romantic relationships, he portrayed them as characterized by fear and discomfort:

Brief... after too long I get really skittish. I hate, hate, hate when girls start calling you every night.. This is scary, this is getting too serious... I don’t want to be stuck with the same wife for our 100th anniversary... I’ve seen a lot of good friends in serious relationships and I’m just not interested at all in what they have... Literally being together 24-7, and if not together calling each other 24-7, expected to get gifts and take you out so many times a week and all that junk, I’m not really interested in that right now... As soon as a girl starts calling me more I kind of break it off.

In summing up his previous relationships, this individual explained that they had been, “Pretty bad... brief and poor communication... I feel like girls expect more out of me that I want to give, so that creates problems.” Likewise, after describing his mother as loud and hostile, when asked about what he had learned about relationships from his parents another respondent replied, “Do not date any type of person like my mom.”

Distant from father → detachment in relationships later in life. Two respondents discussed a link between growing up with an emotionally and/or physically unavailable

father and disconnection in later relationships. The first described what he believed is a tendency for young boys to typically identify with their fathers:

I think that the male figure in their life with whom they identify the closest, so their fathers generally, will instill what they should be, and they'll see what their father's doing. I don't know if they associate that with being masculine. That's what Dad did, so that's what I'm going to do. He's a man, I'm a man. So these things are just observed instead of directly instructed.

Another participant discussed his tendency to avoid relying on others and illustrated this theme explaining, "I think that's something I learned from being raised by a single [mother], being fairly independent from day one, just being able to do it on my own."

Summary of Qualitative Findings

Content analysis indicated that the most common major categories found in participants' interviews were emotional connection with parents, primary coping mechanisms, intimacy in romantic relationships, masculine identity, and link between early relationships with caregivers and later romantic involvement. There is noteworthy overlap between thematic subcategories most frequently discussed by respondents and categories described by Mahalik et al.'s (2003) Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory, particularly regarding Emotional Control, Playboy, Dominance, Primacy of Work, and Self-Reliance masculine norms. The exploratory nature of the qualitative analysis, as well as lack of pre-formed hypotheses, indicates that results should be interpreted and generalized with caution as areas for further investigation. Themes derived from analysis of interview findings are further discussed below in relation to quantitative results.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The present study explores relationships between parental bonding, male gender role conflict, affective regulation capacity, and adult attachment avoidance. The initial objective is to describe preliminary associations among the constructs of interest. The primary focus of the study is to determine whether gender role conflict and affect regulation variables partially mediate the relationship between parental bonding variables and adult attachment avoidance. This chapter provides a review of the results, strengths and limitations of the study, as well as implications for future research and practice.

Review of Findings

The proposed model (see Figure 1, p. 8) is partially supported by the current study. A review of the main outcomes, focusing on the significance of these results in the context of previous research, is presented below. In order to separately assess respective contributions of maternal and paternal attachment bonds, correlational data are examined when applicable. Cohen (1977) has proposed guidelines for interpreting the size of correlations between variables: small (.10 - .29), medium (.30 - .49), and large (.50 - 1.00).

Relationship Between Parental Bonding and Adult Attachment Avoidance

The hypothesis that participants' levels of parental bonding would be predictive of levels of adult attachment avoidance is partially supported. As hypothesized, higher levels of maternal care are predictive of lower levels of avoidance. This outcome is consistent with associations found in previous literature between caring parenting, as measured by the Parental Bonding Instrument (Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979), and

various measures of social support seeking (see review by Parker, 1989). In addition, the relationship found between maternal care and adult attachment avoidance relates to assertions from various masculinity scholars that supportive early relationships with parents may be related to comfort with intimacy in close relationships later in life (Blazina, 2001b; Blazina & Watkins, 2000; DeFranc & Mahalik, 2002).

Contrary to prediction, levels of maternal overprotection, paternal care, and paternal overprotection are not directly predictive of levels of adult attachment avoidance. Results support past research suggesting that early relationships with mother and father uniquely influence adult relationships (Rohner, 1998). Adult attachment avoidance shows a negative correlation with medium effect size with maternal bonding care. Avoidance is also correlated with small effect sizes with maternal overprotection and paternal overprotection, as well as negatively correlated with a small effect size with paternal care. All correlations are in expected directions relative to initial hypotheses.

Results indicate that while maternal overprotection, paternal care, and paternal overprotection all show similar small effect sizes related to adult attachment avoidance, maternal care is more closely associated with avoidance of intimacy in romantic relationships, suggesting a differential effect between maternal and paternal bonding care on subsequent interpersonal style. Findings are similar to those of Gittleman, Klein, Smider, and Essex's (1998), who determined consistent, hypothesized patterns of associations between parental care and men's adult attachment styles. Men with secure styles (i.e., lower levels of avoidance) reported higher levels of care from both parents than those with fearful styles (i.e., higher levels of avoidance). However, there are

discrepancies between results of the current study and Carnelley et al.'s (1994), in which caring ratings of each individual parent were negatively related to avoidant and preoccupied styles, and both these insecure styles were positively associated with maternal overprotection, but not paternal overprotection.

The present results suggest that sex of the parent may moderate the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance in men. Although correlations are in expected directions, it is possible that maternal care is the only variable to significantly predict adult attachment avoidance due to differential sex-typed caregiving roles of participants' parents (Gottfried & Gottfried, 1988). Because the current sample consisted solely of young men who endorsed having had lasting relationships with both parents throughout childhood, these respondents may have been raised in more traditional households in terms of family structure than the general population. As such, early family of origin dynamics related to parenting from both female and male primary figures might impact associations determined between parental bonding and subsequent adult attachment avoidance in the present study.

Due to the fact that the avoidance dimension of adult attachment is linked to participants' internal working model of others, scores on this measure may be more directly related to time spent with each caregiver. All of the men involved in the qualitative study reported their mother as the parent in the primary caregiving role. Thus, the current results may indicate that maternal influence, particularly maternal care, is an especially important factor in the development of relational trust and comfort relying on others for support. It seems likely that the influence of parental bonding factors

impacting adult attachment avoidance enactment may shift over time if fathers spend more time invested in child rearing duties. However, at present, results indicate that although paternal bonding factors are related to avoidance of intimacy, only maternal bonding care accurately predicts subsequent adult attachment avoidance.

Relationship Between Parental Bonding and Male Gender Role Conflict

The hypothesis that participants' levels of parental bonding would be predictive of levels of gender role conflict is partially supported. In light of results described above, maternal bonding care is the only parental bonding variable directly assessed to determine if it predicts gender role conflict. As hypothesized, higher levels of maternal bonding care are predictive of lower levels of gender role conflict. Thus, maternal bonding care is negatively related to later inflexibility in enacting masculine ideologies. These results are consistent with those of previous studies that have identified negative associations between the quality of parent-child relationships and gender role conflict (Blazina & Watkins, 2000; DeFranc & Mahalik, 1999; Fischer & Good, 1998). Although the practical significance in the current research of this effect size is fairly limited, this outcome represents a notable contribution to the literature as no published studies have yet directly established theorized links between parental bonding factors and subsequent male gender role conflict.

In examining correlational results, gender role conflict is determined to be positively associated with a small effect size with maternal bonding overprotection, as well as negatively associated with small effect sizes with maternal care and paternal care. These correlations indicate that higher levels of gender role conflict are associated with

lower levels of parental care and higher levels of maternal overprotection. An identical pattern of associations is found in examining correlations between parental bonding subscales and restrictive emotionality. This is particularly significant given that restrictive emotionality is the gender role conflict factor most clearly linked to global psychological distress (Good et al., 1995), as well as being strongly associated with fear of intimacy in undergraduate men (Fischer & Good, 1997).

There is not a significant correlation between paternal overprotection and gender role conflict. Given the qualitative findings discussed above regarding fathers' almost exclusively distant and/or unavailable caregiving stances, it is possible that the relationship between paternal overprotection and gender role conflict may be impacted by levels of father's past levels of involvement in parenting, compromising the possibility of determining direct effects between variables. Results indicating that maternal and paternal care are negatively correlated with gender role conflict support Blazina's (1997) conceptualization of the fragile masculine self, in which he theorizes that insufficient parental sensitivity toward male children, due in part to gender role norms and expectations, leads to increased levels of masculinity-related conflicts later in life.

Relationship Between Parental Bonding and Affect Regulation Capacity

The hypothesis that participants' levels of parental bonding would be predictive of levels of affect regulation capacity is partially supported. As discussed above, maternal bonding care is the only parental bonding variable evaluated with respect to whether it predicts affect regulation capacity. As predicted, results indicate that more

caring, sensitive parenting by participants' mothers is related to higher levels of subsequent negative mood regulation in male offspring.

In addition, negative mood regulation is negatively correlated with small effect sizes with maternal and paternal overprotection, and positively correlated with maternal care with a small effect size. Interestingly, negative mood regulation is correlated most strongly with paternal care with a medium effect size in the positive direction, thus higher levels of negative mood regulation are related to higher levels of paternal care.

Therefore, correlational results suggest that paternal care is also an important parental bonding variable related to negative mood regulation. In once again drawing upon qualitative data, one possible explanation of this finding involves the modeling effect that caring fathers may have on their male children. It seems likely that sensitive, caring fathering might coincide with fathers who are calm and consistent, thus potentially influencing young boys to act in a similar manner. Several interview participants, especially those who described positive attachments to paternal caregivers, related a desire to model their relationships and emotional lives after their fathers.

As hypothesized, higher levels of maternal bonding care are predictive of lower levels of emotion regulation suppression. In addition, maternal care is the only parental bonding variable found to be correlated with emotion regulation suppression, while exhibiting a small effect size. Neither maternal overprotection, paternal care, nor paternal overprotection is significantly correlated with emotional suppression. Results provide compelling evidence that maternal care is the only parental bonding variable linked with maladaptive emotional inhibition, indicating that a lack of sensitive maternal

care leads to maladaptive levels of suppression. These findings highlight the apparent importance of maternal caregiving style on subsequent affect regulation capacity.

Finally, as predicted, higher levels of maternal bonding care are also predictive of higher levels of emotion regulation reappraisal, or greater cognitive reappraisal ability later in life. Closer examination of correlational results reveals that cognitive reappraisal is negatively correlated with a small effect size with maternal overprotection and paternal overprotection, and positively correlated with a similar small effect size with maternal care, but not significantly correlated with levels of paternal care. Links between parental overprotection and reduced cognitive reappraisal ability suggest that caregiver overintrusiveness may inhibit the development of adaptive self-regulatory mechanisms. These results also corroborate the relatively minor role that paternal bonding seems to play in regard to adult capacity for adaptive reappraisal in stressful situations. Again, it is possible that the effects of parental involvement, particularly concerning paternal caregiving, throughout participants' childhoods may be eclipsing significant relationships between variables in the current sample.

Nevertheless, the current results provide support for psychoanalytic theories of development (Blazina, 1997; Chodorow, 1978; Greenson, 1968; Pollack, 1995), which propose that male children's relationships with maternal (i.e., primary) caregivers may be crucial in helping to determine subsequent ability to adaptively regulate affective stimuli. Study outcomes confirm the importance of maternal bonding care on subsequent emotional suppression tendencies and cognitive reappraisal ability, demonstrating additional support for psychoanalytic models discussed above. These results strengthen

empirical evidence suggesting that societal pressure toward male independence may prompt premature emotional separation from primary caregivers, negatively impacting comfort with closeness in adult romantic relationships.

These results are particularly interesting considering more recent attention paid by attachment scholars to the influence of sensitive, caring parenting on a child's ability to effectively manage emotions (Cassidy, 1994; Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 1999). In addition, these results are generally consistent with Shaver and Mikulincer's (2002) attachment-derived, integrative model of affect regulation, which describes the impact of child-caregiver interactions on specific patterns of affect regulation strategies. This framework is based on Bowlby's originally defined attachment-related strategies of affect regulation. Results from the current study partially support Shaver and Mikulincer's proposed model asserting that early prototypical relationships with caregivers influence emotional management strategies in a predictable pattern. Outcomes indicate that differential caregiving styles lead to distinct patterns of characteristic affect regulation tendencies in offspring.

Relationship Between Male Gender Role Conflict and Adult Attachment Avoidance

The hypothesis that participants' levels of gender role conflict would be predictive of levels of adult attachment avoidance is not supported. Contrary to prediction, lower levels of gender role conflict are not predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance in the final model when controlling for maternal bonding care, negative mood regulation, emotion regulation suppression, and emotion regulation reappraisal. Although the results of the multiple regression analysis are not significant,

gender role conflict and adult attachment avoidance are positively correlated with a medium effect size in the expected direction, suggesting a meaningful association between these two variables. Although the causal relationship hypothesized between these two variables was not established, correlational results are to some extent consistent with several previous studies detailing relationships between gender role conflict and avoidance of intimacy in close relationships (Baxter & Montgomery, 1997; Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Fischer & Good, 1997; Good, Robertson, & O'Neil, 1995; Ludlow & Mahalik, 2001; Searle & Meara, 1999). The current findings provide limited support linking gender role conflict and attachment using an adult attachment measure not previously utilized together in a published study.

One prior study has directly examined gender role conflict and adult attachment, using a similar four-category, two-dimensional measure of attachment (Schwartz, Waldo, & Higgins, 2004). Schwartz et al. has established that men with insecure attachment styles show significantly higher levels of restrictive emotionality than men with secure attachment styles and that securely attached men have significantly lower levels of success, power, and competition as compared to fearful men (i.e., high levels of avoidance). Correlational results from the current investigation regarding restrictive emotionality (i.e., positive association with gender role conflict) closely mirror Schwartz's et al.'s findings. However, divergent from Schwartz et al.'s results, the Success, Power, and Competition (SPC) gender role conflict subscale is not significantly correlated with adult attachment avoidance. Though not necessarily statistically significant, it appears that participants in the current sample scored several points lower

on ratings of SPC than Schwartz et al.'s sample. This may be in part related to the fact that in the present study, men were recruited from undergraduate education classes and therefore might represent a more non-traditional segment of the population regarding SPC, thus possibly impacting research outcomes.

Relationship Between Affect Regulation Capacity and Adult Attachment Avoidance

The hypothesis that participants' levels of affect regulation capacity would be predictive of levels of adult attachment avoidance is partially supported. Contrary to prediction, higher levels of negative mood regulation are not predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance when controlling for the other variables in the multiple regression model. Although results are not supportive of a causal relationship between negative mood regulation and adult attachment avoidance, there is a statistically significant negative correlation between these variables. Thus, results are partially consistent with Catanzaro and Greenwood's findings (1994) indicating that perceived ability to regulate negative mood, as measured by the Negative Mood Regulation Scale (NMRS), is negatively related to avoidant coping (i.e., ignoring problems or addressing them indirectly), as measured by Moss et al.'s (1983) Health and Daily Living Form.

One possible rationale for these results is that factors impacting avoidance in close relationships may not be completely accessible to conscious awareness. In conceptualizing attachment theory as a contemporary psychodynamic approach according to Westen's (1998) criteria for psychoanalytic frameworks, Shaver and Mikulincer describe a "dynamic, unconscious activation of the attachment system" influencing resultant affective responses (2005, p. 30). Thus, results may be distorted due to potential

inconsistencies between participants' ratings of their perceived ability to regulate negative mood and specific, concrete emotion management related behaviors.

As predicted, both lower levels of emotion regulation suppression and higher levels of emotion regulation reappraisal are predictive of lower levels of adult attachment avoidance. These results are consistent with numerous studies that have shown coping and affect regulation strategies to differ in adaptiveness depending on attachment style (e.g., Mikulincer & Florian, 1995, 1998; Mikulincer, Florian, & Weller, 1993; Mikulincer & Orbach, 1995; Simpson, 1990). In addition, they lend further support to the assertion that affect regulation tendencies triggered in the presence of affective arousal help to shape characteristic attachment-related interpersonal patterns, including avoidance of intimacy (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Pereg & Mikulincer, 2004).

Mediating Effect of Gender Role Conflict

The prediction that gender role conflict partially mediates the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance is partially supported. Although the Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation model does not demonstrate a mediating effect of gender role conflict, the distribution of product test (MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2006), a more powerful test of mediation, indicates that gender role conflict is a significant mediator. These results suggest that gender role conflict partially mediates the relationship between maternal bonding and adult attachment avoidance. In doing so, they lend support to claims by Schwartz, Waldo, and Higgins (2004) that insecure early attachment experiences in childhood might lead men

to overidentify with traditionally masculine attitudes that subsequently impact interpersonal functioning.

The gender role conflict mediation effect lends support to Shorey and Snyder's (2006) assertion that harsh emotion socialization early in life may lead to an increased likelihood of avoidant adult attachment in men. In addition, lack of healthy (or excess of unhealthy) attachment experiences in early childhood may negatively impact the evolution of male gender identity. The outcome indicating that gender role conflict mediates the relationship between maternal care and avoidance corroborates Blazina's (1997) conceptualization that socialization pressure on boys to separate from caregivers might lead to avoidant relationships in adulthood. In addition, results provide an empirically supported rationale for the observed overlap between Blazina's description of masculine self-development and characteristic avoidant attachment strategies used by men in intimate relationships.

Mediating Effect of Affect Regulation Capacity

The prediction that affect regulation capacity partially mediates the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance is partially supported as detailed below. The prediction that emotion regulation suppression partially mediates this relationship is supported. Both the Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation model and distribution of product test (MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2006) provide support for a mediating effect of emotion regulation suppression, indicating that emotion regulation suppression is a significant mediator. These practically significant results point to the impact of emotional suppression in partly driving the relationship between

maternal bonding and subsequent avoidance in romantic relationships. In addition, the hypothesis that emotion regulation reappraisal partially mediates the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment avoidance is partially supported. Although the Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation model does not provide support for a mediating effect of emotion regulation reappraisal, the distribution of product test (MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2006) indicates that emotion regulation reappraisal is a significant mediator.

These findings reinforce claims that socialization pressures on male children to distance themselves from their caregivers (and vice-versa) lead to distinctive affect modulation strategies (Blazina, 1997, 2004), which then impact interpersonal relationships. Contemporary theorists have proposed that early failures of child-caregiver attachment relationships likely impair the right brain's regulatory stress and coping functions, negatively impacting interpersonal aptitude and resultant mental health (Perry, Pollard, Blakley, Baker, & Vigilante, 1995; Schore, 2001). In light of empirically supported conceptualizations (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2003), current results indicate that affect regulation capacity influenced by maternal care is significantly related to avoidance of close interpersonal relationships. Findings support Mikulincer, Shaver, and Pereg's (2003) assertion that attachment theory is an especially useful framework in understanding individual differences in affect regulation.

With respect to negative mood regulation, neither the Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation model nor the distribution of product test (MacKinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2006) provide support for a mediating effect of negative mood regulation,

indicating that negative mood regulation is not a significant mediator. However, bivariate correlations between negative mood regulation and all other key study variables are statistically significant in expected directions. Thus, it is possible that negative mood regulation is not a significant indicator of adult attachment avoidance due to high levels of shared variance with the other study variables.

According to Shaver and Mikulincer (2003), because interpersonal styles and strategies used to manage emotional distress vary markedly, ability to manage negative affect and associated emotional regulation styles likely influence resultant adult attachment enactment. However, current outcomes suggest that perceived ability to regulate negative mood, although correlated with emotion regulation suppression and reappraisal, may likely operate on distinct affective and behavioral pathways. With respect to emotion regulation suppression and reappraisal, results provide additional support regarding attachment and psychoanalytic literature in identifying important connections between early caregiver-child relationships, affect regulation capacity, and subsequent interpersonal tendencies.

Strengths of the Study

One of the primary assets of the current study is the inclusion of a developmental contextual model integrating psychological and sociocultural factors. This framework allows for a more nuanced analysis of dynamic, reciprocal influences on interpersonal functioning compared to standard correlational research designs typically used to examine the constructs of interest. The present investigation is particularly relevant given the frequent proposal by masculinity researchers for increased attention to be paid

to the etiology and maintenance of maladaptive relational factors related to traditional masculinity (Levant, 1996; Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Rochlen, 2005).

Importantly, this research design allows for tentative determination of cause and effect relationships among parental bonding, gender role conflict, affect regulation capacity, and adult attachment avoidance. The conditions required for assessing causation between variables were monitored in the current study in fulfilling James and Brett's (1984) recommendation that researchers attend to these considerations before conducting mediational tests used to support causal inferences. Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004) have described the following criteria for establishing causal links: (a) there is an association between the two variables, (b) the association is not spurious, and (c) the cause precedes the effect in time. MacKinnon and Dwyer (1993) have emphasized the use of mediational research to provide information about underlying change mechanisms critical to influencing outcomes. By testing mediating roles of gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity, current findings contribute useful information to the evaluation and development of potential counseling interventions. Although the present study is not experimental in nature, it can be concluded that the causal model described above is consistent with the data (Kraemer et al., 2001), lending corroboration to an empirically supported developmental contextual model describing the evolution of adult attachment avoidance.

In addition, the current study addresses interpersonal aspects of the impact of parental bonding, gender role conflict, and affect regulation in a relational context. Studying the influence of these factors on men's subsequent level of avoidance of

intimacy in close relationships furthers investigation on the effect of characteristic male relational style on others, including family members and romantic relationship partners, an often neglected area of research (O'Neil, 2004; Rochlen & Mahalik, 2004).

Furthermore, the use of multiple affect regulation measures (i.e., Negative Mood Regulation Scale and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire Suppression and Reappraisal subscales) allows for a detailed examination of the similarities and differences in the relationships between these surveys and other variables under consideration. Thus, the current study further validates proposed relations between specific negative mood regulation strategies, as well as more generalized affective management patterns, and adult attachment orientation. Results support and further validate Shaver and Mikulincer's (2002) integrative theoretical framework detailing from an attachment perspective how early relationships with caregivers impact specific affect regulation strategies.

Recently, Good, Thomson, and Brathwaite (2005) called for the development of interventions to address the psychological needs of men who restrict their emotions. More specifically, Good et al. proposed that areas to be further considered include connections between men's interpersonal problems and styles of emotional expression, as well as the evaluation of interventions focused on male emotional restriction. The current study is significant in this context because it provides much needed information to support empirically validated treatment approaches for men who may struggle with emotional intimacy. Furthermore, in a recent review article Wong and Rochlen recommended that male emotional behavior be viewed not as a stable property, but

instead as “a multidimensional construct with many causes, modes, and consequences” (2005, p. 62). The authors advocated that investigations of male emotional behavior be integrated with emotion-based theory and research, which the current study directly addresses. The present findings lend initial empirical support to Wong and Rochlen’s proposal that Kennedy-Moore and Watson’s (1999) process model of emotional expression, which describes how internal affective experience is translated into overt emotional expression, be used to better understand men’s emotional lives.

Lastly, the qualitative component offered participants the opportunity to speak in greater depth regarding their attitudes and beliefs concerning the hypotheses under investigation. This allowed the investigator a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships among masculine gender role norms and the constructs under examination in the current study. Supporting quantitative data analysis, interview findings indicate that early experiences with caregivers impact later intimate relationship functioning in conceptually meaningful ways. In addition, data from these open-ended questions are helpful in further elucidating predictions that were not confirmed and tailoring directions for further empirical investigation.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. First, the generalizability of this study is limited by its predominantly Caucasian, non-clinical, male college student sample. Future research with a wider and more diverse population is warranted in this area and current results should be interpreted with care given the socially constructed nature of constructs being examined. This is especially relevant given qualitative results

suggesting considerable differences in family structure and male gender socialization patterns based on cultural background and socio-economic status. Additionally, a number of methodological limitations may have an impact on the study's power to observe effects of interest. Because this research relies largely on self-report measures, demand characteristics, although potentially alleviated because of online data collection, may negatively influence data quality.

Measurement error is also important to consider, due in part to issues related to the use of theoretically based instruments. It is important to note that findings regarding interrelationships between parental bonding, gender role conflict, affect regulation, and adult attachment avoidance should be interpreted in light of limitations of study instruments. For example, although the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS; O'Neil, 1986) is the most common assessment of male psychological experience within the traditional counseling literature, uncertainty has surfaced concerning possible limitations related to validity (Good, Robertson, & O'Neil, 1995; Rogers, Abbey-Hines, & Rando, 1997). Although questions remain, more recent research has supported the structural validity of the GRCS and suggested that the original four-factor model is appropriate for analysis (Moradi et al., 2000).

In addition, significant overlap has been determined between the Negative Mood Regulation Scale and depressive symptomology as measured by the Beck Depression Inventory (Catanzaro, 1994). Results indicate that these instruments are correlated but distinct constructs, suggesting that associations described above between negative mood regulation strategies and gender role conflict, emotion regulation, and parental bonding

may be better explained by measures of depression rather than negative mood regulation. It has also been suggested that self-report measures of adult attachment effectively target more conscious aspects of working models (Shorey & Snyder, 2005). Therefore, participant response to the Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver; 1998) may contain bias due to a lack of conscious awareness of certain attachment-related aspects of identity. Finally, researchers have described potential errors that may occur depending on the manner in which a person's internal working model affects how interpersonal information is attended to, accessed, and retrieved (Zeanah & Zeanah, 1989). Varying attachment styles lead to distinctive memory strengths and weaknesses (Crittenden, 1997), which likely affect retrospective memories of parental bonding in this study.

Although causal determinations were earlier described as a strength of the present research, limitations of cause and effect conclusions based on correlational and regression analyses are also important to discuss in relation to current findings. Frazier, Tix, and Barron's (2004) recommendations for utilizing mediation to assess causation were followed in the current research. However, there are limits to the degree to which causal relationships between study variables can be concluded. This is especially true given that the present study does not incorporate experimental manipulation, therefore limiting causal inferences due to nonexperimental data (Cohen et al., 2003; Hoyle & Smith, 1994; Kraemer et al., 2001). In addition, omitted variables producing both the mediator and outcome may bias the interpretation of mediational analyses if they are not included in the statistical model (James & Brett, 1984; Kenny et al., 1998).

A significant obstacle in working with the variables under investigation is the difficulty associated with attempting to empirically examine the interplay among several socially constructed, dynamically interactive constructs. For example, men's roles and sociocultural definitions of "traditional masculinity" are constantly evolving, along with characteristic strategies for regulating emotional experience. Because the meaning of masculinity differs depending on cultural context, it remains malleable and changeable, leading to varied expectations and demands on men (Kimmel, 1994, 2001; Messner, 1997; Omi & Winant, 1994). In a similar manner, evaluations of caring or overprotective parenting shift dramatically over time, resulting in the subjective nature of the appropriateness of different parenting styles depending upon cultural and historical context. Furthermore, there is flexibility in attachment style throughout the lifespan (Sroufe, Egeland, Carlson, & Collins, 2005), possibly due to experiences as varied as productive psychotherapeutic work or traumatic life events. As quantitative data were collected at a single point in time, understanding of the changing relationships among parental bonding, gender role conflict, affect regulation capacity, and adult attachment avoidance is limited.

Mikulincer and Shaver (2003) have described the potential impact of cohort effects on attachment, discussing how even current events can initiate the activation of previously latent internal working models. Furthermore, they described how although each person has a dominant attachment style, it may exist concurrently with alternative working models that differentially impact interpersonal functioning under specific interpersonal circumstances. This problem is complicated by the fact that attachment

relationships with primary caregivers may be reinforced or mitigated through significant instances of either care and support, or harsh mistreatment, from other attachment figures (e.g., other relatives, romantic partners).

In addition, problems related to measuring attachment in a college-aged sample should be noted. Assessing attachment in an age-appropriate manner during adolescence is especially difficult due to emerging systems of self-understanding and social cognition shaping complex attachment relationships (Thompson & Raikes, 2003). During adolescence, attachment behaviors become increasingly influenced by connections with peers rather than caregivers (Furman & Buhrmester, 1992; Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). At present there is limited understanding of how multiple attachment relationships may differentially impact relational representations of adolescents compared to preschoolers and older adults (Dwyer, 2005; Thompson & Raikes).

Lastly, as noted before, the value of qualitative results from the current study is chiefly descriptive. These results are intended as an initial narrative that may be used to advance future empirical research and should be interpreted and generalized with caution.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings and limitations of the present study present several implications for future masculinity and interpersonal relationship research. First, it may be helpful in the future to use structural equation modeling to provide a more detailed picture of the links between study variables. Next, cultural differences in gender socialization, gender role expectations, and masculinity enactment should be investigated with respect to the variables under investigation. Numerous masculinity researchers have highlighted the

importance of recognizing the enormous complexity within male cultures related to multiple aspects of men's identities (Connell, 1995; Smiler, 2004; Wade, 1999). Because distinct gender expectations emerge from specific cultural contexts (e.g., see Kimmel, 2000; Mead, 1935), future research could examine cultural differences in gender role conflict and adult attachment style. Qualitative findings suggest that the incorporation of contextual variables including acculturation status and religious beliefs and/or practices might further clarify results from the current study.

It will also be important for research to extend beyond college-aged samples in order to determine whether relationships among variables in the current study are applicable to older men. Future studies could examine age as a moderator variable that may influence the constructs described above. Previous research has shown associations between emotion and attachment to be similar among older adults to those documented in young adults (Consedine & Magai, 2003). Although adult attachment styles overlap considerably with childhood attachment patterns linked to early experiences with caregivers, research has shown that gender role conflict subscales may vary depending on age (Cournoyer & Mahalik, 1995). A longitudinal study would assist in examining how and why these variables influence each other through the course of development. This type of research could be used to guide prevention efforts geared toward interventions addressing gender role conflict and affect regulation deficits, potentially modifying maladaptive interpersonal styles earlier in life.

It will be useful to further consider the impact of parental influence on constructs of interest in the current study. An important variable to consider in future research is

parental involvement, as suggested by qualitative findings depicting differences in maternal and paternal caregiving availability throughout childhood. As discussed above, it is likely that family structure might impact relational dynamics between parents and children. Although the Parental Bonding Instrument (Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979) assessed participants' perceived levels of maternal and paternal care and overprotection, it would be useful to directly measure the degree to which each parent regularly participated in child rearing and parenting activities. For example, Ahron and Wallisch's (1987) Parental Involvement Scale could be used to retrospectively examine respondents' perceptions of both mothers' and fathers' involvement in parental responsibilities during childhood. This type of exploration could be especially useful in helping to decipher complex interrelationships between early parenting factors, particularly the degree of paternal involvement in childrearing, and interpersonal dynamics in men.

Qualitative interviews also demonstrated a link between parental conflict and subsequent discomfort in participants' romantic relationships. Past research has shown that parental conflict behavior is negatively related to relationship satisfaction in offspring (Feeney, 2004, 2006). Future studies should thus incorporate measures of conflict and/or conflict-centered communication between parents in order to determine links between parental conflict and child-caregiver bonds, gender role conflict, affect regulation capacity, and adult attachment avoidance. For example, the Marital Conflict Scale (Lopez, 1991) could be used to assess participants' endorsement of conflict, tension, and instability in their parents' relationships in relation to other constructs of interest in the current study.

Previous research has indicated that affect regulation variables and related psychological outcomes are closely related to alexithymia, which has been noted to closely resemble the interpersonal patterns of emotionally inexpressive men (Levant, 2001). Alexithymia is defined as a clinical condition in which people have difficulty recognizing and describing their feelings due to impoverished emotional capacity. Due to the critical nature of affective regulation in attachment theory, several studies have examined the relationship between attachment styles and alexithymia (Scheidt et al., 1999; Troisi, D'Argenio, Peracchio, & Petti, 2001). This research has shown that alexithymia is closely related to insecure working models of attachment that impact thought patterns as well as knowledge of feelings (Shorey & Snyder, 2006), and thus should be incorporated into prospective research designs.

Future studies should incorporate additional masculinity measures (e.g., Gender Role Stress Scale (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987), Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Mahalik, Locke, & Ludlow, 2003) to assess their relationships with the constructs examined in the current research. Thus, it may be helpful to assess how men's cognitive appraisal of threats in specific situations that challenge their adherence to masculine gender roles and/or level of conformity to traditional masculine norms might impact the relationship between parental bonding and adult attachment enactment. In addition, although adult attachment avoidance has been strongly linked with maladaptive interpersonal consequences (Collins & Read, 1990; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Simpson, 1990), specific relational outcome indicators such as relationship satisfaction and relationship quality should be utilized. This research would allow more direct

measurement of associations between romantic relationship functioning, gender role conflict, and affect regulation levels in order to build on the clinical utility of the current study. In addition, links between parental and peer attachment in college-aged samples should be investigated in relation to the constructs of interest in the current study in order to further clarify their respective contributions to overall attachment security in adolescents and young adults.

Finally, the research described above should also be undertaken with the inclusion of female samples in order to compare relationships between variables by sex. Although it had previously been commonly accepted that men are less emotionally expressive compared to women, a review article examining the evidence for sex differences in emotionality concluded that these differences tend to be small, inconsistent, and largely restricted to specific situational contexts (Wester, Vogel, Pressley, & Heesacker, 2002). By examining both men and women (using appropriate gender role measures to examine women, e.g., Mahalik et al.'s (2005) Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory) with regard to the study detailed above, it will be possible to determine how both male and female gender roles impact relationships between early parental involvement, emotion related variables, and subsequent interpersonal functioning.

Clinical Implications and Concluding Comments

Men are socialized in a specific culture, with values, norms, and customs to which they are expected to conform (Liu, 2005). There is a significant body of research that has connected masculine gender socialization with increased risk for mental health problems and resistance to seeking help (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Good & Wood, 1995; O'Neil,

Good, & Holmes, 1995). More specifically, evidence has suggested that conflict or stress resulting from adherence to traditional conceptions of masculine gender roles is positively related to psychological problems (Blazina & Watkins, 2000; Good et al., 1995). In addition, men with higher levels of gender role conflict have been found to experience higher levels of anxiety and depression (Good et al., 1996; Good & Wood, 1995; Sharpe & Heppner, 1995). Therefore, in order to develop culturally congruent psychotherapeutic interventions it will be important to remain attentive to issues particularly relevant to men (Lui, 2005).

In discussing working with men in counseling, it has been suggested that therapists utilize a multicultural perspective to assess variability within males (Liu, 2005; McCarthy & Holliday, 2004; Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1992). This point of view may foster clinical awareness of specific gendered scripts that can impact avoidance of intimacy in close relationships and therefore improve culturally appropriate treatment for men. Drawing on results from the current study, assessment of the extent to which male clients experience gender role conflict and difficulties with affect regulation, especially regarding emotional suppression, might assist therapists in the development of relevant intervention strategies to address men's interpersonal difficulties. In addition, because internal working models of attachment styles act as templates influencing how clients perceive and respond to others (Liotti, 2002), significant predictors in the current study may be used to anticipate relational challenges and more appropriately respond to individuals depending upon attachment orientation.

Results from this dissertation offer empirical support for attachment and psychoanalytic theories of interpersonal development proposing that early bonds with caregivers influence later interpersonal connections. A review of the associations in the current study between maternal bonding care and subsequent adult attachment avoidance offers confirmation regarding assertions concerning the importance of early parental emotional involvement (e.g., “Infants who do not receive responsiveness, including those pushed toward precocious independence, will later show dependency problems” (Sroufe, Egeland, Carlson, & Collins, 2005, p. 37)). Many masculinity researchers have suggested that increased awareness of the dysfunctional aspects of traditional masculinity can improve intimate relationships and psychological services for men (Burn & Ward, 2005; Pollack, 1995). Relatedly, the current results show promise in helping efforts to curtail potentially problematic aspects of masculine socialization that often foster intergenerational transmission of maladaptive gender role expectations for men.

The results of this research can be used to improve the design of psychotherapy outcome studies. Findings indicate that thirty percent of the variance in adult attachment avoidance can be accounted for by maternal bonding care, gender role conflict, and the three affect regulation capacity variables explored in the current study. In a review article describing clinical applications of adult attachment conceptualizations, Shorey and Snyder (2006) emphasized the importance of considering individual differences in attachment in future treatment outcome research. It has been suggested that clinical interventions be designed and tested to help men become more comfortable with interdependence instead of counterdependence (Good, Thomson, & Brathwaite, 2005).

Psychological treatment addressing the impact of cultural and societal influences on interpersonal patterns may help male clients to better understand and reassess habitual patterns of interpersonal avoidance.

It has been noted that there is a lack of fit between the culture of therapy and expectations surrounding masculinity (Rochlen, 2005). Several psychotherapeutic models emphasizing the importance of male gender roles have been developed to address this incongruity (Brooks, 1998; Gilbert, 1999; Good, Gilbert, & Scher, 1990; Mahalik, 1999, 2005a, 2005b). Both individual and group treatment approaches have been created that include gender role specific clinical conceptualizations and treatment plans (Brooks, 1998; Mahalik, 2005; Richmond & Levant, 2003). Results from the current research indicate potential benefits to incorporating explicit affect regulation strategies and interventions with existing gender sensitive treatment approaches.

In addition, several studies with nationally representative samples of adolescents and young adults have consistently linked attachment styles with *DSM-IV* clinical and personality disorders (Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Mickelson et al., 1997). Differences in psychopathology levels were typically found to be in expected directions between securely and insecurely attached groups. Attachment theory therefore has important implications for psychotherapy outcomes (Harris, 1997). Studies indicate that attachment style may be made more or less cognitively accessible through targeted treatments and interventions (Shorey & Snyder, 2006). These indications of attachment style malleability are promising, and in light of the current study hopefully will spur

efforts to intentionally target gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity in modifying maladaptive interpersonal orientations.

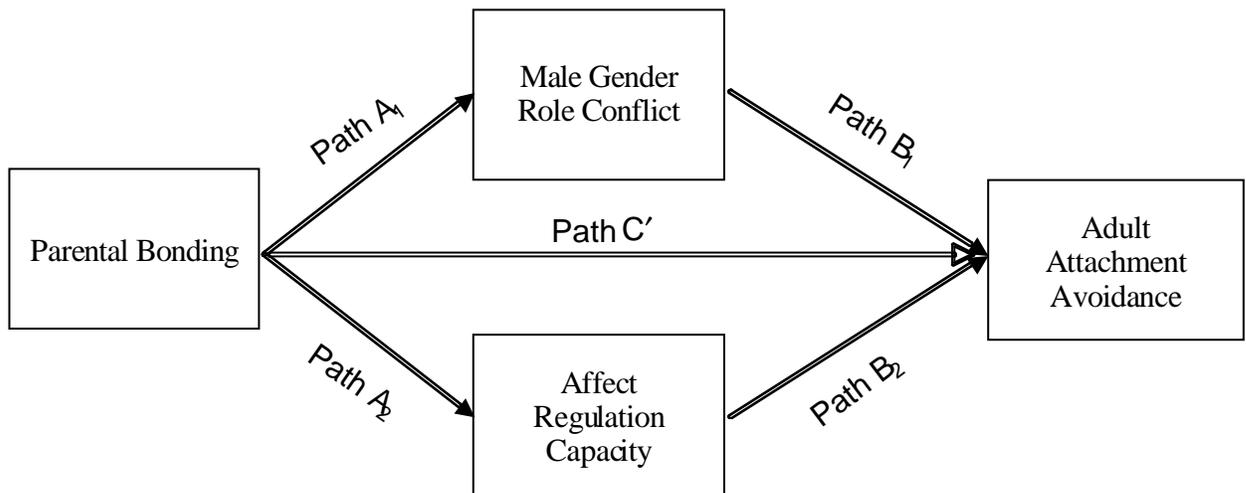
It is recommended that researchers and clinicians interested in male relational development focus on helping men to balance dual innate needs for autonomy and affiliation. Researchers and theorists have described how men are increasingly encountering situations requiring higher levels of interpersonal involvement, emotional awareness, and relational skills than most men acquire through traditional gender socialization experiences (Bergman, 1995; Levant, 1996; Pollack, 1995). Through habitual societal reinforcement of stereotypical traits including stoicism, interpersonal dominance, and self reliance, men may become ashamed of and resistant to feeling vulnerable and sharing intimacy with others (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Pollack, 1995). As a result, men are often ambivalent about close romantic relationships (O'Neil et al., 1986). It is hoped that results from the current study will be used to help men attain secure attachments based on confidence in available emotional support instead of rigid overreliance on self-sufficiency.

To conclude, the present research is the first known study to investigate associations among several of the constructs of interest, including the relationship between parental bonding and male gender role conflict. Results of this study identify significant mechanisms underlying the development of men's maladaptive discomfort with intimacy in adulthood. Findings from the qualitative analysis provide additional insight into links between study variables, confirming the importance of caring relationship with caregivers, particularly mothers, on subsequent comfort with intimate

relationships. Significant mediational effects of masculine gender role conflict and affect regulation capacity demonstrate possible key points of intervention for therapists working with men presenting with relational difficulties linked to early parental bonding relationships.

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Hypothesized relationships among variables.



Appendix A

[THIS WILL BE THE FIRST SCREEN PARTICIPANTS SEE WHEN THEY REACH THE STUDY WEBSITE]

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS STUDY

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This study is divided into two parts. Most participants will only be involved in Part I of the study. During Part I, all participants will voluntarily complete an online survey. All survey responses will be tracked with a survey identification number that will be kept separate from any identifying information in order to maintain confidentiality of your responses. Based on your responses to the survey questions you may or may not be eligible to participate in a subsequent part of this research study. Further details about the second part of the study, including eligibility requirements for participation and procedures for indicating interest in participation, will be offered upon completion of Part I. If you are eligible and indicate interest in Part II, you may be invited to participate in the second part of the study. Participation in both parts of this study is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

By clicking the NEXT icon below you will be taken to a consent form for Part I of this study. Once you have read through the consent pages you will be asked to indicate your agreement to participate. You will also have the option of printing a copy of the consent form or requesting that a copy be emailed to you for your reference. If you have questions about this study you would like to discuss prior to participation please contact the Principal Investigator (the person in charge of this research) at the number provided on the following pages before deciding whether or not to take part. **You should be aware that some of the questions that will be asked of you are personal. You are therefore advised to complete this study in a private place where others cannot view the questions or your responses.**

**Informed Consent to Participate in Research
The University of Texas at Austin
Online Survey Study**

Title of Research Study: Men and Interpersonal Relationships

Principal Investigator:

Lee Land, M.A., Doctoral Student, Department of Educational Psychology

Faculty Sponsor:

Aaron Rochlen, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Educational Psychology,
(512) 471-0361

Contact Information: landleestudy@hotmail.com
(512) 417-4980

Funding source: Not applicable

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to understand the links between life experiences and interpersonal relationships in college age men. A maximum of 300 students will participate in this study.

What will be done if you take part in this research study?

- Should you decide to participate, you will be asked to provide some demographic information and complete six self-report measures on a web-based research site.
- Make sure you are in a private, comfortable place where you can answer these questions honestly.
- When you come to the end of a page simply click on the NEXT icon to be led through the survey.
- At the end of the survey be sure to follow directions carefully to ensure that you receive the appropriate credit for your participation. If you have any questions regarding this survey or if you experience any technical difficulties please email landleestudy@hotmail.com.

The Project Duration is: The time it takes to complete this survey will vary, but should take no more than forty-five minutes to one hour.

What are the possible discomforts and risks?

Some of the questions you will be asked are personal in nature and concern your private thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Taking the time to reflect upon these questions may elicit discomfort and bring into awareness uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. Specifically, this survey will be asking you about your thoughts and feeling about being a man (as well as to estimate your father's), your attitudes about your relationship with your parents and your relationships in general, and the ways in which you respond to stress and express your feelings. If you complete this survey in an environment where others are able to see your responses, you may put yourself at risk for negative social consequences. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you complete this survey in a private setting. You may decide at any time not to answer specific questions or to terminate the study. If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may call the Principal Investigator at the number listed above.

For some individuals the questions being asked may elicit discomfort that persists beyond the time-frame of this study. This is a research study and treatment will not be provided. The following services are available to help alleviate any discomfort you might experience as a result of participation:

UT Counseling and Mental Health Center, (512) 471-3515
UT 24 Hour Telephone Counseling Hotline, (512) 471-CALL
Texas Health and Human Service Information and Referral Hotline, 211

What are the possible benefits to you or to others?

Study results can be provided upon request. While personal benefits of participating may be minimal, each participant is helping to further understanding of an important psychological issue.

If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything?

There is no cost for participation in this study.

Will you receive compensation for your participation in this study?

You will receive no compensation for participating in this study other than class credit to fulfill your research requirement.

What if you are injured because of the study?

There is no likelihood of physical injury with participation in this study.

If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin. If you decide you do not wish to participate in this study, please consult with the subject pool coordinator for alternative ways to satisfy your research requirements.

How can you withdraw from this research study and who should you call if you have questions?

If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact the principal investigator: Lee Land at (512) 417-4980. You should also call the principal investigator for any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research. You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have complaints, concerns, or questions about the research, please contact Lisa Leiden, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, or the Office of Research Compliance and Support at (512) 471-8871.

How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?

Your responses to Part I of the study will remain confidential. You will be asked to submit your participant survey identification number when you start the survey in order to receive credit for your participation. **A document with your survey identification number and identifying information will be stored separately from your survey responses to ensure your confidentiality.**

You are strongly encouraged to complete this survey in a private area where others cannot view your responses. All information gathered during Part I of this study will remain confidential and will only be viewed by the researcher. All documents, databases, and materials associated with this study will be password protected and stored in a locked file accessible only to the researcher. If the results of this research are published or presented at professional meetings, your identity will not be disclosed.

At the end of Part I you will receive more information about Part II of this study. If you are interested in Part II you will be asked to click on the I AM INTERESTED IN PART II icon at the end of Part I. **By doing this, you will be permitting the researcher to review your responses to Part I to ensure your eligibility for Part II and to contact you by**

email about participating in Part II. Steps taken to ensure your privacy and confidentiality as a participant as well as the confidentiality of the research data for those who participate in Part II will be outlined in a subsequent consent form.

If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, then the University of Texas at Austin will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

Will the researcher benefit from your participation in this study? There is no benefit to the researcher for your participation in this study beyond publishing or presenting the data.

By clicking the NEXT icon below you are indicating your consent to the above procedures and acknowledge you have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks. You are also acknowledging that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study and are not waiving any of your legal rights. Please note that in order to receive credit, you MUST follow the instructions on the last page of this survey. If you wish to print a copy of this consent form for your records you may do so now. If you are unable to print at this time, you may request a copy of this consent form by emailing landleestudy@hotmail.com

If you have any questions about the consent form or do not wish to participate, please contact the principal investigator of this study and DO NOT take this survey.

Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire

Age:

Year in School:

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate student
- Other: please specify: _____

Ethnic Background:

- African American
- Asian American / Pacific Islander
- Asian Indian or Pakistani
- Caucasian / European American
- Hispanic / Latino
- Middle Eastern / Arab
- Native American or Alaska Native
- Bi-Cultural: _____
- Other: _____

Family of Origin:

- Are both your parents alive? YES/NO
- If not, which parent is deceased? MOTHER/FATHER/BOTH
- How old were you when your first parent died? _____ years old
- If both parents are deceased, how old were you when your second parent died? _____ years old
- Are your parents still married? YES/NO
- If not, how old were you when their marriage ended? _____ years old

Appendix D

Gender Role Conflict Scale

Instructions: In the space to the left of each sentence below, write the number which most closely represents the degree that you Agree or Disagree with the statement. There is no right or wrong answer to each statement; your own reaction is what is asked for.

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

6

1. _____ Moving up the career ladder is important to me.
2. _____ I have difficulty telling others I care about them.
3. _____ Verbally expressing my love to another man is difficult for me.
4. _____ I feel torn between my hectic work schedule and caring for my health.
5. _____ Making money is part of my idea of being a successful man.
6. _____ Strong emotions are difficult for me to understand.
7. _____ Affection with other men make me tense.
8. _____ I sometimes define my personal value by my career success.
9. _____ Expressing feelings makes me feel open to attack by other people.
10. _____ Expressing my emotions to other men is risky.
11. _____ My career, job, or school affects the quality of my leisure or family life.
12. _____ I evaluate other people's value by their level of achievement and success.
13. _____ Talking (about my feelings) during sexual relations is difficult for me.
14. _____ I worry about failing and how it affects my doing well as a man.
15. _____ I have difficulty expressing my emotional needs to my partner.
16. _____ Men who touch other men make me uncomfortable.
17. _____ Finding time to relax is difficult for me.
18. _____ Doing well all the time is important to me.
19. _____ I have difficulty expressing my tender feelings.
20. _____ Hugging other men is difficult for me.
21. _____ I often feel that I need to be in charge of those around me.
22. _____ Telling others of my strong feelings is not part of my sexual behavior.
23. _____ Competing with others is the best way to succeed.
24. _____ Winning is a measure of my value and personal worth.
25. _____ I often have trouble finding words that describe how I am feeling.
26. _____ I am sometimes hesitant to show my affection to men because of how others might perceive me.
27. _____ My needs to work or study keep me from my family or leisure more than I would like.
28. _____ I strive to be more successful than others.

Gender Role Conflict Scale (cont.)

- 29. _____ I do not like to show my emotions to other people.
- 30. _____ Telling my partner my feelings about him/her during sex is difficult for me.
- 31. _____ My work or school often disrupts other parts of my life (home, family, health, leisure).
- 32. _____ I am often concerned about how others evaluate my performance at work or school.
- 33. _____ Being very personal with other men makes me feel uncomfortable.
- 34. _____ Being smarter or physically stronger than other men is important to me.
- 35. _____ Men who are overly friendly to me, make me wonder about their sexual preference (men or women).
- 36. _____ Overwork and stress, caused by a need to achieve on the job or in school, affects/hurts my life.
- 37. _____ I like to feel superior to other people.

Appendix E

Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire

The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale, please note that the rating scale has been modified in this questionnaire:

Disagree Strongly		Neutral or Mixed			Agree Strongly	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. _____ I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
2. _____ I worry about being abandoned.
3. _____ I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners. (n)
4. _____ I worry a lot about my relationships.
5. _____ Just when my partner starts to get close to me I find myself pulling away.
6. _____ I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
7. _____ I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
8. _____ I worry a fair amount about losing my partner.
9. _____ I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
10. _____ I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.
11. _____ I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back.
12. _____ I often want to merge completely with romantic partners, and this sometimes scares them away.
13. _____ I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
14. _____ I worry about being alone.
15. _____ I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner. (n)
16. _____ My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
17. _____ I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
18. _____ I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.
19. _____ I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner. (n)
20. _____ Sometimes I feel that I force my partners to show more feeling, more commitment.
21. _____ I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
22. _____ I do not often worry about being abandoned. (n)
23. _____ I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
24. _____ If I can't get my partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.

Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire (cont.)

- 25. _____ I tell my partner just about everything. (n)
- 26. _____ I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
- 27. _____ I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner. (n)
- 28. _____ When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.
- 29. _____ I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners. (n)
- 30. _____ I get frustrated when my partner is not around as much as I would like.
- 31. _____ I don't mind asking romantic partners for comfort, advice, or help. (n)
- 32. _____ I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.
- 33. _____ It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need. (n)
- 34. _____ When romantic partners disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.
- 35. _____ I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance. (n)
- 36. _____ I resent it when my partner spends time away from me.

Note: Negative items are denoted by (n) for reverse scoring prior to computation of statistics

Appendix F

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire

People have different ways of experiencing and handling emotions. Using the following 7-point scale, please answer the following questions about yourself by indicating the extent of your agreement.

Strongly disagree			Neutral				Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

1. When I want to feel more positive emotion (such as joy or amusement), I change what I'm thinking about.
2. I keep my emotions to myself.
3. When I want to feel less negative emotion (such as sadness or anger), I change what I'm thinking about.
4. When I'm feeling positive emotions, I'm careful not to express them.
5. When I'm faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me stay calm.
6. I control my emotions by not expressing them.
7. When I want to feel more positive emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation.
8. I control my emotions by changing the way I'm thinking about the situation I'm in.
9. When I'm feeling negative emotions, I'm careful not to express them.
10. When I want to feel less negative emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation.

Appendix G

Negative Mood Regulation Scale

This is a questionnaire to find out what people believe they can do about upsetting emotions or feelings. Please answer the statements by giving as true a picture of your own beliefs as possible. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers. Remember, the questionnaire is about what you believe you can do, not about what you actually or usually do. Be sure to read each item carefully and show your beliefs by marking the appropriate number.

1. *Strongly disagree*
2. *Mildly disagree*
3. *Agree and disagree equally*
4. *Mildly agree*
5. *Strongly agree*

1. I can usually find a way to cheer myself up.
2. I can do something to feel better.
3. Wallowing in it is all I can do. (n)
4. I'll feel ok if I think about more pleasant times.
5. Being with other people will be a drag. (n)
6. I can feel better by treating myself to something I like.
7. I'll feel better when I understand why I feel bad.
8. I won't be able to get myself to do anything about it. (n)
9. I won't feel much better by trying to find some good in the situation. (n)
10. It won't be long before I can calm myself down.
11. It will be hard to find someone who really understands. (n)
12. Telling myself it will pass will help me calm down.
13. Doing something nice for someone else will cheer me up.
14. I'll end up feeling really depressed. (n)
15. Planning how I'll deal with things will help.
16. I can forget about what's upsetting me pretty easily.
17. Catching up with my work will help me calm down.
18. The advice friends give me won't help me feel better. (n)
19. I won't be able to enjoy the things I usually enjoy. (n)
20. I can find a way to relax.
21. Trying to work the problem out in my head will only make it seem worse. (n)
22. Seeing a movie won't help me feel better. (n)
23. Going out to dinner with friends will help.
24. I'll be upset for a long time. (n)
25. I won't be able to put it out of my mind. (n)
26. I can feel better by doing something creative.
27. I'll start to feel really down about myself. (n)

Negative Mood Regulation Scale (cont.)

- 28. Thinking that things will eventually be better won't help me feel any better. (n)
- 29. I can find some humor in the situation and feel better.
- 30. If I'm with a group of people, I'll feel "alone in a crowd." (n)

Note: All items have the same stem: "When I'm upset, I believe that..."
Negative items are denoted by (n) for reverse scoring prior to computation of statistics

Appendix I

[THIS SCREEN WILL APPEAR ONCE PARTICIPANTS HAVE COMPLETED ALL THE QUESTIONNAIRES IN PART I]

Thank you for your participation in Part I of this research study!

The following referral sources are available if you would like to speak with someone about your reactions to the content of this study:

UT Counseling and Mental Health Center, (512) 471-3515

UT 24 Hour Telephone Counseling Hotline, (512) 471-CALL

Texas Health and Human Service Information and Referral Hotline, 211

IMPORTANT INFORMATION BELOW!

You have almost completed Part I of the research study. Please read carefully in order to ensure the researcher will be able to provide your research credit. **Your answers to the survey will remain confidential and will be identified by your survey identification number.**

Information about Part II of this study is offered on the next page. All participants who are selected for Part II of the research study will receive a \$25 gift certificate for forty-five minutes to one hour of participation. For more details about Part II click the SUBMIT AND CONTINUE icon.

If you do not wish to participate in Part II, click the FINISH icon to exit this survey.

Appendix J

[THIS SCREEN WILL APPEAR IF PARTICIPANTS CLICK THE ‘SUBMIT AND CONTINUE’ ICON AFTER COMPLETING PART I OF THE STUDY]

INFORMATION ABOUT PART II OF THIS STUDY

This page provides additional information about Part II of this research study to help you decide if you are interested in participating. The second part of this study will involve in-person, individual interviews. The purpose of the interview is to allow participants to discuss their relationship experiences in their own words. All interviews will be conducted by the Principal Investigator and will be scheduled prior to the end of the Spring 2006 semester at each participant’s convenience. The interviews will last approximately forty-five minutes to one hour. With each participant’s permission, the interviews will be audiotaped, but audiotaping is not required for participation. Eligible individuals who are selected and complete an interview will receive a \$25 gift certificate.

HOW DO I INDICATE INTEREST IN PART II?

If you are interested in participating in an interview, please click on the I AM INTERESTED IN PART II icon below. By indicating your interest, you are giving the researcher permission to contact you to schedule an interview. **You are also giving the researcher permission to review your responses to the survey questions in Part I of this study to ensure your eligibility.**

The researcher aims to conduct between 10 to 12 individual interviews. Because more individuals may indicate interest in an interview than slots allotted, it is possible you may not be contacted for an interview. The researcher will assess your eligibility for an interview by reviewing your responses to Part I of this study and then randomly select eligible participants for an interview. In the event that you are not contacted, but still wish to discuss your experiences, you may visit the UT Counseling and Mental Health Center free of charge. To schedule an appointment at the Counseling Center call: 471-3515. The following crisis and information services are also available:

UT 24 Hour Telephone Counseling Hotline, (512) 471-CALL
Texas Health and Human Service Information and Referral Hotline, 211

CONFIDENTIALITY

When you indicate interest in Part II, you will be contacted by an email that will be tracked by a numerical code that will also be placed on the survey you completed for Part I of the study. Once your code is assigned, any identifying information provided in Part I will be deleted from your survey. A document linking your name and contact information to your numerical code will be stored separately from your survey in a

locked file drawer available only to the Principal Investigator. This document will be destroyed at the end of the study. Further details about procedures for ensuring your confidentiality throughout the interview process will be explained in person. You will have an opportunity to provide your full informed consent or to decline participation in person as well. Your participation in an interview is entirely voluntary and you can discontinue this study at any time.

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

If you would like to be considered for an interview, please click on the I AM INTERESTED IN PART II icon below. If you are not interested in participating in an interview, click the FINISH icon to exit this survey. If you are unsure if you are interested in an interview and have further questions, please contact Lee Land, Principal Investigator, at (512) 417-4980 or [**landleestudy@hotmail.com**](mailto:landleestudy@hotmail.com)

If you indicate interest in an interview but are not selected you will receive an email informing you of this fact.

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix K

IRB# 2006-07-0069

Informed Consent to Participate in Research The University of Texas at Austin Interview

You are being asked to participate in a research study involving a live interview. This form provides information about the study. The Principal Investigator (the person in charge of this research) will provide you with a copy of this form to keep for your reference and will also describe this study to you and answer any questions you may have. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Title of Research Study: Men and Interpersonal Relationships

Principal Investigator:

Lee Land, M.A., Doctoral Student, Department of Educational Psychology, (512) 417-4980

Faculty Sponsor:

Aaron Rochlen, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Educational Psychology,
(512) 471-0361

Contact Information: landleestudy@hotmail.com

(512) 417-4980

Funding source: Not applicable

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to understand the links between life experiences and interpersonal relationships in college age men. During Part I of this study (which consisted of an online survey) a maximum of 300 students were expected to participate. Only 10 to 12 students will participate in Part II of this study, which involves an interview. The purpose of the interviews is to learn from men more about their experiences in close relationships.

What will be done if you take part in this research study?

Should you choose to participate in the interview, you will be asked to discuss your relationship experiences. The principal investigator may ask you some questions about your relationships, but will also allow you to discuss aspects of your relationships that are

most relevant for you. With your permission, the interview will be audiotaped. The interview will take no more than one hour. You may choose to stop your participation at any time. Your participation is voluntary and you are not required to answer any questions you do not want to.

The Project Duration is: The interview will take forty-five minutes to one hour.

What are the possible discomforts and risks?

There is a possibility that you may experience emotional distress while discussing your experiences in the interview. For some participants, the discussion may bring into awareness uncomfortable thoughts or feelings. Specifically, the researcher will ask you to discuss their early relationships with caregivers, style of relating in intimate relationships, and understanding of how these may be related, as well as to discuss what you would like others to understand about men's relationships. The researcher may also refer to your responses from the questionnaires in Part I of this study and ask you to consider how these responses may be related to your relationships. At any time, you may decide not to answer specific questions or may terminate the study. If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may ask questions of the Principal Investigator at any time during this interview session.

This is a research study and treatment will not be provided. If the questions being asked elicit discomfort that persists beyond the time-frame of the interview, you are encouraged to utilize mental health resources. The following services are available to help alleviate any discomfort you may experience as a result of participation:

UT Counseling and Mental Health Center, (512) 471-3515
UT 24 Hour Telephone Counseling Hotline, (512) 471-CALL
Texas Health and Human Service Information and Referral Hotline, 211

What are the possible benefits to you or to others? Study materials can be provided upon request. While personal benefits of participating may be minimal, each participant is helping to further understanding of an important psychological issue.

If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything? There is not cost for participation in this study..

Will you receive compensation for your participation in this study? You will receive a \$25 gift certificate for participating in this study.

What if you are injured because of the study? There is no likelihood of physical injury with participation in this study.

If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin.

How can you withdraw from this research study and who should you call if you have questions?

If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact the principal investigator: Lee Land at (512) 417-4980. You should also call the principal investigator for any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research. You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have complaints, concerns, or questions about the research, please contact Lisa Leiden, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, or the Office of Research Compliance and Support at (512) 471-8871.

How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?

You have previously given the researcher permission to link your responses from Part I of the online survey to your identifying information. To ensure your confidentiality, the researcher has assigned a numerical code to all your documents related to this study. A document linking your name to your number code will be kept separately in a locked file drawer accessible only to the Principal Investigator. This document will be destroyed at the completion of this study. All data collected during the interview will also remain confidential. If you agree to have your interview session audiotaped, your tape will be labeled with your number code so that no personally identifying information will be visible on it. Interview tapes will be kept in a locked cabinet in the Principal Investigator's office and will be used only by the Principal Investigator for the purposes of this study. All tapes will be destroyed at the completion of the study. If the results of this research are published or presented at professional meetings, your identity will not be disclosed. All interviews will be conducted in a private room to further ensure your confidentiality.

As required by the ethical standards in psychology and Texas law, please note the following exceptions to confidentiality:

- If your questionnaire responses from Part I or your responses to this interview indicate that you are in imminent danger or harming yourself or someone else.
- If you disclose the physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of a minor, a dependent, or a person aged 65 or over. This may apply to you, your children, parents, or other individuals identified during the interview.
- If you disclose that a therapist has behaved in a sexually inappropriate manner towards you, your identity may be revealed and a report to the licensing board and possibly to law enforcement must be filed outlining the offending therapist's behavior.

If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, then the University of Texas at Austin will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

Will the researcher benefit from your participation in this study? There is no benefit to the researcher for your participation in this study beyond publishing or presenting the data.

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent **Date**

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Printed Name of Subject **Date**

Signature of Subject

Date

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

If you agree to have your interview audiotaped, please sign below:

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Appendix L

Dissertation Qualitative Interview

On tape BEFORE interview starts do the following:

My name is _____ and today is _____. Interview with _____. [*state your name, the date of the interview, and the participant's code number*]

Interview guide

Thanks for taking the time to meet today. This research project is essentially trying to understand the relationship experiences of men in college. I'm going to be asking you questions, some will be more personal than others. In general, they will be about your experience of being a man and how this has affected your relationships. Most of the interview will look at the ways that you deal with stress, your family relationships while growing up, messages you may have received about being a man, and how these have impacted your current relationships. In answering these questions please keep in mind that no identifying information will be included with your data, so I really encourage you to be as open and honest as you can. Do you have any questions before we get started? I also want to let you know that if you feel uncomfortable with any questions or want to take a break, let me know and we can stop the interview. O.K. I'm going to start the tape now.

Relationship with friends

First, I would like to learn a little bit about your day to day life and friendships in college?

Can you tell me a little about your close friendships?

What is your relationship with him/her/them like?

What kinds of things do you enjoy doing together?

In thinking about your friendships, what are some of the things that are most important to you about your relationships with close friends?

Do you have specific goals or values about being a good friend, and what are they?

Why are these important to you?

Family

Next, I'm interested in learning more about your family relationships.

Tell me about your family, what is your family like?

[Ask about siblings, but focus on relationships with parents]

Can you describe your mother/father?

What is your relationship like at this point in time with your mother/father?

If you could improve your relationship with your mother/father, how would that look? What would be different?

What is your parents' relationship like?

What have you learned about relationships from your parents?

Growing up

In the next part of the interview I'd like to step back a little bit. I'm interested in learning a bit about your life while you were growing up.

Thinking back to your childhood, how would you describe yourself as a child?

As a child, what was your relationship with your parents like?

[Probe for relationships with parents while growing up...]

Did you feel close to your father and to your mother?

Did you feel closer to one parent than to the other? If so, why?

When you were little, what kind of man did you want to grow up to be?

Where did these ideas about being a man come from?

What messages did you receive from your father about how to be a man?

Stress & coping

I'm now going to ask a few questions about the role of stress in your life.

What are some things that typically cause some stress in your life?

How do you cope with stress?

How do you typically deal with negative emotions?

What kinds of feelings are easier/harder for you to talk about with others?

Romantic relationships

Now I'll be asking more about your romantic relationships.

Are you currently involved in a romantic relationship?

[If yes]: Please describe your current relationship?

[If no]: What about past romantic relationships? What have they been like?

[If also no]: What kind of relationship would you like to have in the future?

How would you describe the quality of your romantic relationship?

What have been some of the best parts of your close romantic relationships?

What have been some of the hardest parts of your close romantic relationships?

What qualities are important to you for a partner in an intimate relationship?

What are some of the things that can make intimate relationships difficult?

Masculine identity

Now I have a few questions about how being a man influences your relationships.

What does it mean to you to be a man? What does masculinity mean to you?

How does your view of being a man influence your relationships?

Do you think men and women tend to act differently in romantic relationships?

If so, why are men sometimes like that in their relationships?

Closing questions / comments

I have one last question for you. I'm particularly interested in learning more about your perspective on how you think your early relationships have affected the relationships you've had later in life. Do you believe your early relationships with your family while you were growing up have affected your romantic relationships?

If so, how?

O.K., before wrapping up, do you have any final comments that would help me to better understand men's relationships?

Thank you so much for your time.

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VITA

Lee Nathaniel Land was born in Demarest, New Jersey on April 4, 1976, the son of Hara Beth Land and Douglas Seth Land. After completing his work at Northern Valley Regional High School, he entered Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Cornell University in May 1998. During the following two years he was employed as a counselor working with adolescents with special needs at a residential treatment facility in Southborough, Massachusetts. In August 2000 he entered the Lynch School of Education at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, where he received the degree of Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling in May 2002. In August 2002, he entered the graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin to pursue a doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology in the Department of Educational Psychology. He will complete his pre-doctoral internship at the University of Oregon Counseling and Testing Center in Eugene, Oregon.

Permanent Address: 1736 West Broadway Ave. Eugene, Oregon 97403

This dissertation was typed by the author.