

## SOCIAL-CONTEXTUAL DETERMINANTS OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOUR OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S MOTHERS AND FATHERS

---

Ana Štironja Boric<sup>1</sup>, Sanda Roščić, Maja Sedmak,  
Anja Šepčević<sup>2</sup> and Gordana Keresteš<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Primary school Tituša Brezovačkog, Zagreb, Croatia

<sup>2</sup>Center for Education, Counseling and Research, Zagreb, Croatia

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia

### ABSTRACT

*Based on Belsky's (1984) model of parenting determinants, the study examined the contribution of social-contextual factors (quality of marriage indexed by marital satisfaction, perceived social support and parent-employee interrole conflict) to individual differences in parenting behaviour of parents of preschool children. The sample of participants was made up of 130 married and employed couples with preschool children. They were asked to fill in the questionnaires on demographic factors, dimensions of parenting behavior (positive parenting, negative parenting and permissiveness), and features of social context. The results showed that by features of social context only positive parenting could be predicted, but not negative parenting and permissiveness. Marital satisfaction and social support were significant contextual predictors for positive maternal parenting. Social support was a significant predictor for positive paternal parenting. The results did not support Belsky's hypothesis of marital relationship as the key contextual determinant of parenting.*

**Key words:** marital satisfaction, parenting, social support, parent-employee interrole conflict

## INTRODUCTION

Parents are not only the first individuals with whom children develop social ties, but they also play a central role in the child's development, particularly during infancy and preschool age (Holden, 2010). Due to the increased complexity of life in the developed world, the parental role is more demanding today than it was only a few decades ago. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors which determine the quality of parenting, both for scientific and for practical reasons. Such understanding enables the creation of measures, targeted to strengthen factors with a positive impact and to weaken or eliminate those with an unfavourable effect on parental functioning.

The most frequently researched aspect of parenting is parental behaviour, i.e. intentional actions and activities by which parents provide protection and care for the child's life and guide and assist the child's development (Čudina-Obradović and Obradović, 2006). Variations in parental behaviour are usually explained by three bipolar dimensions: acceptance/rejection of the child; firm/weak behavioural control and psychological control/support of the child's autonomy (Barber, Stolz and Olsen, 2005). Some authors identify to a certain extent different dimensions of parenting behaviour in their research, usually known as positive and negative parenting (Dallaire et al., 2006; Eisenberg et al., 2005; McKee et al., 2007). Positive parenting involves emotional warmth, acceptance of the child, support of the child's autonomy, discipline with an explanation of the importance of rules and knowledge of the child's activities and whereabouts. Negative parenting pertains to hostile behaviour toward the child, harsh discipline and strict punishment, inducing feelings of guilt and emotional extortion. In addition to positive and negative parenting, the studies carried out in Croatia reveal permissiveness as an independent dimension of parental behaviour. It relates to parents' compliance with the requirements of the child (Brković, 2009; Kuterovac Jagodić, Keresteš and Brković, 2006; Sočo and Keresteš, 2011).

Jay Belsky (1984) offered a theoretical framework in which determinants of parental behaviour were grouped into three categories: parents' individual characteristics, social-contextual sources of stress and support to parental functioning and characteristics of the child. This study deals with the social-contextual determinants which include marital relationship, workplace and social network. Belsky asserts that marital relationship is the most significant source of stress and/or support to parents. Although the results of meta-analyses (Erel and Burman, 1995; Krishnakumar and Buehler, 2000) and a recent narrative review by Grych

(2002) show that different indicators of marital quality (in most studies it was marital satisfaction) are positively related to the quality of the parent-child relationship, it is yet unknown to what extent marital relationship contributes to parental behaviour when examined in constellation with other aspects of social context.

Social networks in which parents are involved are also an important source of stress and support in parental functioning. In their meta-analysis, Andresen and Telleen (1992) found that a mother's perception of available emotional and instrumental support is positively associated with various indicators of her parental behaviour. The research carried out on single-parent and two-parent families in Croatia (Raboteg-Šarić and Pećnik, 2006) reveals that different types of social support are related to different aspects of parental behaviour. The instrumental support of the social environment was positively associated with parental support, monitoring and shared decision-making with children. The emotional support of friends was associated with the parental involvement in child-rearing. Longitudinal studies show that social support is also connected with changes in parental behaviour over time. Green, Furrer and McAllister (2007) reported that the frequency of positive parent-child activities in low income families increased to a greater extent among parents who received more social support than among those who received less social support.

Belsky (1984) emphasizes the importance of the parents' workplace as the third contextual source of stress/support to parenting. Since in most families both parents work, the research examining the connection between work and parental roles are of great importance (Čudina-Obradović and Obradović, 2000). When the demands of one role interfere with the requirements of another role, the individuals experience role conflict. Frone, Russell and Cooper (1992) distinguish two directions of work and family conflict: work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. These conflicts are two independent dimensions, caused by different factors. The work to family conflict is caused by stressors related to work and predicts outcomes associated with the family environment. The family to work conflict is caused by stressors related to family and predicts outcomes associated with the workplace. In their study of preschool children's fathers, Stewart and Barling (1996) found that stronger work to family conflict is associated with paternal negative mood, more frequent punishing and rejecting of the child.

Mallard and Lance (1998) warn that different family roles should be distinguished when investigating work and family conflict. In their study they focused on the conflict between parental and employee roles and designed the Parent-Employee Interrole Conflict Scale to measure specific aspects of the conflict. By analogy to previous studies of family and work, they

distinguish two directions of conflict: work interfering with parenting and parenting interfering with work. By applying the Mallard and Lance scale on a sample of highly educated working parents of children aged 3-16 years in Croatia, Sočo and Keresteš (2011) found that, both for mothers and for fathers, stronger experience of the parenting-to-work conflict was related to more negative parenting, while the perception of the work-to-parenting conflict was not predictive for parental behaviour.

The aim of this study was to examine the relations between characteristics of the social context in which the parent-child interaction occurs and parenting behaviour of preschool children fathers and mothers. The research has covered all aspects of social context emphasized by Belsky (1984), and examined their relative contribution to the explanation of individual differences in positive and negative parenting and parental permissiveness. Since socio-demographic characteristics are also related to parental behaviour (Hoff, Laursen and Tardiff, 2002; Holden, 2010), parents' age, level of education, and number of children in a family were included in the study as control variables. Based on theoretical assumptions and the results of previous studies, we expected the parents who feel greater marital satisfaction, those who received higher social support and those with lower parent-employee interrole conflict to show more positive parental behaviour and less negative parental behaviour and permissiveness. We assumed, as well, that marital satisfaction, when compared to other contextual determinants of parenting, would explain a greater part of parental behaviour variance.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants and Procedure**

The study was conducted in five kindergartens in three Croatian cities during 2010. The selection of kindergartens was based on previous collaboration and personal contacts between the authors of the paper and the kindergarten professional teams. The first four authors were collecting data for their M.A. theses under the mentorship of the fifth author and with the help of kindergarten teachers. Upon their arrival to the kindergarten, parents were given an envelope with a letter explaining the research, and a dual battery of psychological questionnaires, one for the mother and one for the father. Parents were asked to fill in the questionnaires individually and to return them to the kindergarten in sealed envelopes within seven days.

From the total of 340 envelopes delivered, 181 (53%) were returned. After eliminating incomplete questionnaires, the total sample included 169 mothers and 154 fathers, 146 of which were married couples. Employment of both parents was observed with 130 couples. Since the study is focused on marriage and employment as contextual determinants of parental behaviour, only data collected from those 130 married couples was analyzed.

At the time when the study was carried out, the majority of the married couples in the study had two children (56.9%). More than a quarter of the couples (28.5%) had one, and 14.6% had three or more children. For parents with more children, data on parenting were collected for the oldest preschool age child. The children were 3 to 7 years old ( $M = 5.12$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ), and there was an approximately equal number of boys and girls (48% boys and 52% girls).

The age of parents ranged from 26 to 49 years. Mothers were significantly younger ( $M = 35.34$ ,  $SD = 4.17$ ) than fathers ( $M = 37.44$ ,  $SD = 4.74$ ,  $t(258) = 3.81$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Parents were educated above the Croatian average. More than half of the fathers (54.7%) and less than half of the mothers (44.6%) completed high school, while other parents had a college or postgraduate education. The difference in education between fathers and mothers is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 2.62$ ,  $p > 0.10$ ). Fathers spend significantly more time at work than mothers (hours per week spent at work for fathers:  $M=46.71$ ,  $SD=10.64$ , and for mothers:  $M=39.19$ ,  $SD = 8.69$ ;  $t(254) = 6.18$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and less time with their children (hours per week spent with children for fathers:  $M=23.26$ ,  $SD=17.03$ , and for mothers:  $M=35.07$ ,  $SD=17.15$ ;  $t(241) = -5.38$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

## Measures

The battery applied included the questionnaire on sociodemographic characteristics and a number of psychological questionnaires and scales. For the purpose of this study we analyzed data obtained by the Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Perceived Social Support Scale, the Parent-Employee Interrole Conflict Scale and the URP Parental Behaviour Questionnaire.

### Questionnaire on Sociodemographic Characteristics

The data collected by the Questionnaire refer to parents' gender and age, city of residence, education, employment and marital status,

number of adult family members, number, gender and age of minor family members and number of hours per week spent with the child and at work.

### **Marital Satisfaction Scale**

The Marital Satisfaction Scale was designed by Keresteš, Brković and Kuterovac Jagodić (2010). It consists of 12 items, describing various positive and negative experiences in marriage (eg, "My partner is willing to listen to me when I need to talk about my worries and problems."). Answers are given on a scale from 1 (entirely inaccurate) to 4 (entirely accurate). The total score is computed as the mean across all the items. Higher scores indicate greater marital satisfaction. The analyses carried out by the authors show that the scale is a one-dimensional measure of marital satisfaction and has a high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficients for various samples are around 0.90). In this study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.88 for mothers and 0.86 for fathers.

### **Perceived Social Support Scale**

The Scale consists of four items taken from the Significant Other Subscale of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley, 1988). The items measure the perceived overall support, available from the people in the social network of an individual (e.g. "There are people from whom I often receive compliments."). Questions are answered using the scale from 1 (entirely inaccurate) to 4 (entirely accurate). The total score is computed as the mean across the four items and varies from 1 to 4. Higher results indicate higher available social support. Cronbach's alpha in this study is 0.72 for mothers and 0.64 for fathers.

### **Parent-Employee Interrole Conflict Scale**

The Parent-Employee Interrole Conflict Scale was designed by Mallard and Lance (1998), and translated into Croatian by Sočo (Sočo and Keresteš, 2011). The Scale consists of 40 items grouped into three subscales: the Work Interfering with Parenting Scale (WIP), The Parenting Interfering with Work Scale (PIW) and the General Work-Parenting Conflict Scale. Only the first two Scales were applied in the study as two separate aspects of the parent-employee conflict. The WIP Scale consists of 17 items (e.g., „My job conflicts with my role as a parent because of the time spent on work“). The

PIW Scale consists of 15 items (e.g., „My responsibilities for my child(ren) interfere with my work schedule.“). Questions are answered on the scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Total scores are formed as the means across all the pertaining items and vary from 1 to 4. On the WIP Scale, Cronbach's alpha is 0.93 for mothers and 0.94 for fathers, while on the PIW Scale it is 0.88 for mothers and 0.90 for fathers.

### **The URP Parental Behavior Questionnaire**

The Questionnaire (Keresteš, Brković and Kuterovac Jagodić, 2008) contains 29 items grouped into seven subscales of parental behaviour: warmth, autonomy granting, parental knowledge (or monitoring), inductive reasoning, intrusiveness, punishment, and permissiveness. The factor analyses, carried out on various samples of parents with children of different age, showed that warmth, autonomy granting, parental knowledge (monitoring) and inductive reasoning are grouped together in the dimension of positive parenting or parental support. Intrusiveness and punishment are grouped in the dimension of negative parenting or restrictive control. Permissiveness is a separate aspect of parental behaviour, independent from positive and negative parenting (Brković, 2009; Sočo and Keresteš, 2011). Items are answered by assessing the degree to which each statement relates to an individual as a parent (1 = not at all true for me; 4 = completely true for me). The score on each subscale and total score on dimensions of positive and negative parenting are calculated as a mean across the pertaining items. In this study we used the scores for dimensions of positive and negative parenting and permissiveness. Although the URP was originally intended to measure parenting behaviour of parents of school children and adolescents, in past research it was also applied to parents of younger children, and proved to be a reliable measure of parenting for parents of children aged 3 to 16 years (Sočo & Keresteš, 2011). In our study, Cronbach's alphas for fathers and mothers, respectively, were 0.89 and 0.87 for positive parenting dimension, 0.70 and 0.66 for negative parenting dimension, and 0.78 and 0.75 for the dimension of permissiveness.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics and Preliminary Analyses

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of results on the main variables separately for mothers and for fathers. Since the results of previous studies suggest that men and women differ in parental behaviour and measured contextual correlates of parental behaviour, we examined gender differences on those variables. Differences in marital satisfaction and parental behaviour were examined by using paired samples t-test, because spouses evaluated the same marital relationship and parental behaviour toward the same child, making these estimates dependent. Differences in perceived social support and the parent-employee conflict were examined using the t-test for independent samples, because fathers and mothers usually work in different workplaces and are involved, at least partly, in different social networks. These data, therefore, can be considered independent.

Fathers reported less positive ( $t(128) = 5.87, p < 0.001$ ) and less negative ( $t(128) = 2.34, p < 0.05$ ) parenting than mothers, while the difference in permissiveness was not statistically significant ( $t(128) = 0.40, p > 0.10$ ). Fathers were also more satisfied with marriages ( $t(128) = -2.57, p < 0.05$ ) and felt stronger work to parenting conflict ( $t(256) = -2.48, p < 0.05$ ). Differences in social support ( $t(258) = 1.53, p > 0.10$ ) and parenting to work conflict ( $t(256) = 1.31, p > 0.10$ ) were not statistically significant.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the main variables in the study for fathers and mothers

	Fathers (N=130)		Mothers (N=130)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Marital satisfaction	3.30	0.44	3.22	0.50
Social support	3.17	0.41	3.26	0.54
Work interfering with parenting	2.21	0.62	2.02	0.62
Parenting interfering with work	1.49	0.42	1.56	0.44
Positive parenting	3.32	0.38	3.53	0.33
Negative parenting	2.20	0.41	2.28	0.40
Permissiveness	2.49	0.62	2.51	0.60



### Predictors of Parental Behaviour for Mothers and Fathers

To determine the contribution of the examined social-contextual determinants of parental behaviour to the explanation of individual differences in parental behaviour, we conducted hierarchical regression analyses for each of the three dimensions of parental behaviour as a criterion, separately for mothers and for fathers. In the first step of the hierarchical regression analysis and in order to control the effects of sociodemographic variables, parents' age and education were included as predictors (with education dichotomised in categories of high school and university education), as well as the number of children in a family (divided into three categories: one, two and three or more children). In the second step, four social-contextual determinants of parenting were added: marital satisfaction, social support, work to parenting conflict and parenting to work conflict. Table 2 shows correlations between the predictor and the criterion variables. The results of hierarchical regression analyses are shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Pearson's correlations between the predictor and criterion variables used in regression analyses in the sample of mothers (N = 130, above the main diagonal) and fathers (N = 130, below the main diagonal)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	–	0.17	-0.01	-0.04	-0.06	0.10	0.08	0.10	-0.17	0.05
2	0.14	–	-0.05	0.10	0.09	-0.08	0.10	0.03	-0.00	0.02
3	0.06	-0.02	–	-0.01	0.02	-0.06	0.10	-0.15	0.24**	-0.04
4	0.02	0.01	-0.01	–	0.24**	-0.15	-0.32***	0.22*	-0.19*	-0.13
5	-0.21*	-0.04	-0.05	0.02	–	-0.29**	-0.21*	0.28**	0.01	-0.05
6	-0.14	-0.03	0.15	-0.17	-0.12	–	0.50***	-0.09	0.04	0.05
7	-0.17	-0.06	0.03	-0.21*	-0.18*	0.43***	–	-0.01	0.20*	-0.03
8	0.05	-0.10	-0.40***	0.15	0.30***	-0.19*	-0.19*	–	-0.09	0.03
9	-0.01	-0.14	0.12	-0.14	-0.23**	0.17	0.25**	-0.06	–	0.16
10	0.03	-0.05	-0.17	-0.23**	0.04	0.04	0.04	-0.02	-0.01	–

\* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.01; \*\*\* p < 0.001

Legend: 1 = age of parents, 2 = parental education, 3 = number of children, 4 = marital satisfaction, 5 = perceived general social support, 6 = work interfering with parenting, 7 = parenting interfering with work, 8 = positive parenting, 9 = negative parenting, 10 = parental permissiveness

### Predictors of Positive Parenting

Table 3. Prediction of positive parenting, negative parenting and permissiveness of mothers and fathers of preschool children from socio-demographic and social-contextual variables (results of hierarchical regression analyses)

Step		Positive parenting		Negative parenting		Permissiveness	
		Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
1	$\beta$ age of parents	0.09	0.06	-0.18*	0.00	0.06	0.05
	$\beta$ parental education	0.02	-0.11	0.07	-0.14	-0.00	-0.06
	$\beta$ number of children	-0.15	-0.41***	0.24**	0.09	-0.04	-0.16
	R	0.18	0.42	0.30	0.17	0.07	0.17
	R <sup>2</sup>	0.03	0.18	0.09	0.03	0.01	0.03
	R <sub>(cor)</sub> <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.14	0.07	0.01	-0.02	0.00
	F <sub>(3; 123)</sub>	1.34	8.72***	4.04**	1.23	0.20	1.17
2	$\beta$ age of parents	0.12	0.10	-0.20*	0.00	0.05	0.08
	$\beta$ parental education	-0.07	-0.11	0.06	-0.14	0.04	-0.06
	$\beta$ number of children	-0.19*	-0.40***	0.22*	0.07	-0.01	-0.17
	$\beta$ marital satisfaction	0.19*	0.15	-0.14	-0.13	-0.13	-0.21*
	$\beta$ social support	0.25**	0.29***	0.09	-0.17	-0.02	0.05
	$\beta$ WIP	-0.12	-0.02	-0.00	0.03	0.10	0.05
	$\beta$ PIW	0.18	-0.08	0.17	0.16	-0.15	0.01
	$\Delta R^2$	0.12	0.13	0.06	0.10	0.03	0.05
$\Delta F_{(4; 119)}$	4.09**	5.69***	2.04	3.34*	0.77	1.70	
Final regression equation	R	0.39	0.56	0.39	0.36	0.17	0.28
	R <sup>2</sup>	0.15	0.31	0.15	0.13	0.03	0.08
	R <sub>(cor)</sub> <sup>2</sup>	0.10	0.27	0.10	0.08	-0.03	0.03
	F <sub>(7; 119)</sub>	3.00**	7.56***	2.95**	2.48*	0.53	1.47

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Note: WIP = work interfering with parenting, PIW = parenting interfering with work

Sociodemographic variables did not explain the significant percentage of positive parenting variance for mothers, while social-contextual variables explained 12% of variance (9% after adjustment). Significant predictors were marital satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and social support ( $\beta = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Mothers who were more satisfied with their marriages and received higher social support, reported more positive parenting behaviour in interactions with the child. After including contextual variables, the number of children in a family also became a significant

predictor ( $\beta = - 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that mothers with fewer children behave in a more positive way. The included predictors explained 15% (10% after adjustment) of variance in positive parenting.

In the sample of fathers, socio-demographic variables explained 18% (14% after adjustment) of variance in positive parenting. The only significant predictor was the number of children ( $\beta = - 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Fathers with more children reported less positive parental behaviour. Social-contextual variables explained additional 13% of variance, and the only significant predictor was social support ( $\beta = 0.29$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Fathers with perceived higher levels of social support reported more positive parental behaviour. The included predictors explained the total of 31% of variance in father positive parenting (27% after adjustment).

### **Predictors of Negative Parenting**

Sociodemographic variables account for 9% (7% after adjustment) of variance in maternal negative parenting. The significant predictors were mother's age ( $\beta = - 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and the number of children ( $\beta = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Older mothers and mothers with fewer children reported less negative parental behaviour. Contextual variables did not contribute to variance in maternal negative parenting.

Sociodemographic variables did not explain a significant percentage of variance in paternal negative parenting. By adding contextual variables, the percentage of explained variance significantly increased (for 10%, i.e. 7% after adjustment), but none of the contextual variables were singled out as a significant predictor. Thus, negative parental behaviour of fathers cannot be predicted on the basis of selected predictors.

### **Predictors of Permissiveness**

Neither sociodemographic nor contextual variables contributed to explaining the variance in parental permissiveness of mothers. Similarly, selected predictors did not explain a significant percentage of the variance in paternal permissiveness, although marital satisfaction was singled out as an independent significant predictor ( $\beta = - 0.21$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Fathers who were more satisfied with their marriages reported less permissiveness.

## DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to examine the contribution of characteristics of the context in which parents of preschool children live and work to individual differences in their parental behaviour, and to test Belsky's hypothesis (1984) of marriage as the most influential source of stress or support in parenthood. While examining these connections, we controlled the effects of demographic variables.

The results show that the observed predictors contributed the most to the explanation of variance in positive parenting. In total, we explained 10% of variance in maternal positive parenting and even 27% of variance in paternal positive parenting. For both parents, a significant proportion of the negative parenting variance was also explained: 10% for mothers and 8% for fathers. Individual differences in permissiveness could not have been predicted by the selected predictors.

Sociodemographic variables were predictive for maternal negative and paternal positive parenting, with the number of children as the most significant single predictor. Fathers and mothers with more children reported less positive parenting behaviour. Mothers with more children reported a greater tendency to negative parenting behaviour, reflecting probably a lack of time and energy available for each child. With regard to other demographic variables, only the maternal age was predictive for negative parental behaviour. Younger mothers reported more negative parenting, probably because of lack of parental and general life experience and maturity. Relations between sociodemographic variables and parental behaviour are mainly consistent with the results of previous studies (Bornstein et al. 2006; Keresteš, 2001; Kuterovac Jagodić et al., 2006).

Aspects of the social context significantly contributed only to the explanation of the positive parenting variance, with social support as the most important predictor. Parents who perceived greater social support in their social network reported more positive emotions towards the child, greater support for the child's autonomy, greater knowledge about the child's whereabouts, closer monitoring of the child's activities, and more frequent use of positive disciplinary methods, including inductive reasoning. These findings are consistent with our hypothesis and the results of previous studies, which emphasized the importance of emotional and instrumental support for effective parenting (Andresen and Telleen, 1992; Green et al. 2007; Raboteg-Šarić and Pećnik, 2006; Woody and Woody, 2007). It seems that the knowledge that there is someone to rely on makes a person a better parent and has a positive impact on the parent-child relationship.

Marital satisfaction was predictive only for maternal positive parenting and for paternal permissiveness, but the total proportion of the explained variance for paternal permissiveness was not significant. The relationships obtained indicate that mothers who are more satisfied with their marriage behave in a more positive way towards their children, while fathers who are happier in marriage are less permissive. The direction of these relations is consistent with expectations and the results of previous studies (Erel and Burman, 1995; Grych, 2002; Krishnakumar and Buehler, 2000). However, overall results of our study do not support Belsky's hypothesis (1984) that marriage is the most important social-contextual determinant of parental functioning. Since in previous studies the contribution of marital quality to parental behaviour was not examined in the context of other determinants of parenting, it seems that marital satisfaction is a less important determinant of parenting in constellation with other predictors than when it is examined alone.

It is possible that the hypothesis of the marital relationship as the most important contextual determinant of parenting was not supported due to methodological limitations of our research. The research was conducted in urban areas, parents were contacted in kindergartens, all were employed and with higher levels of education than is the Croatian average. It is reasonable to assume that they were more satisfied with their marriages than the population of parents of preschool children or the parents with less favourable socio-economic background (unemployed, lower education level). It is possible that marital satisfaction would be more predictive for parental behaviour in a representative sample of parents with preschool children or in the sample with less favourable socio-economic status. However, it is very difficult to provide a representative sample when examining family relationships. Another methodological weakness of our study that might be partly responsible for disconfirming Belsky's hypothesis of marriage as the most important contextual determinant of parenting is the fact that both marital satisfaction and parenting were measured by self-reports, which are subject to social desirability bias. Future studies should utilize different measures for marital quality and parenting, including observational measures and reports given by various informants, and preferably use a multi-method approach.

Parent's workplace, operationalized through two separate aspects of parent-employee conflict (work interfering with parenting and parenting interfering with work) was not predictive for any dimension of parental behaviour, which is in contrast to theoretical assumptions (Belsky, 1984) and to the results of previous studies (Sočo and Keresteš, 2011; Stewart and Barling, 1996). Since the relationship between the work and parenting was

examined separately in earlier studies, i.e. isolated from other social contextual determinants of parenting, it seems that we may conclude that in the constellation of other sources of stress and support, sources of stress that stem from the parent-employee interrole conflict are less important determinants of parenting than when examined alone. This conclusion is also supported by significant bivariate correlations between some dimensions of parenting behaviour and measures of the parent-employee interrole conflict found in the present study. Other aspects of subjective perception and objective characteristics of the workplace should be examined in future research to obtain more information of the working context and to examine more extensively its relation to parental functioning.

Gender differences in parental behaviour and characteristics of the social context were not of primary interest in this research, but the results obtained are consistent with previous studies. Our results confirm earlier findings of different parental functioning for men and for women (Keresteš, 2001; Kuterovac Jagodić et al. 2006; Sočo and Keresteš, 2011). They show that mothers of preschool children use more positive but also more negative parenting behaviour, which, at least partly, reflects their greater involvement in child care (Parke, 2002). This interpretation is supported by our finding that mothers spend on average 12 hours a week more time with their children than fathers (35 hours mothers and 23 hours fathers).

Regarding the differences in measured aspects of the context, our findings confirm earlier results of higher marital satisfaction for men than for women (Fowers, 1991; Ng et al., 2009), but, also, their stronger perception of work interfering parenting (Byron, 2005; Pleck, 1977). Stronger work to parenting conflict for fathers than for mothers may also reflect gender differences in their relative involvement in the parent and work role. The findings in the study show that fathers spend not only more time at work and less time with their children than mothers, but they also spend twice more time at work than with children (47 compared to 23 hours per week). Mothers spend an equal amount of time in both roles (on average 35 hours per week with the child and 39 at work).

The study yielded several findings with important practical implications, which can be used in creating social policy measures directed to families with preschool children. It should be noted that, despite relatively weak connections with parental behaviour, social-contextual factors are more susceptible to change than other determinants of parenting (e.g., personality and age of parents or characteristics of the child). Therefore, they have a particular relevance to practice. Our finding that social support is predictive for positive parenting suggests that support

programs for families with preschool children can improve parental functioning, and, in turn, have a positive impact on the child development. Similarly, the findings relating to the prediction of maternal positive parenting and paternal permissiveness from marital satisfaction show that parental behaviour can be improved by improving the quality of marriage. It would be wise to inform and educate parents about the importance of these factors for parental functioning.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that features of social context in which the relationship between parents and their preschool children occur are related to positive parenting behaviour, but are not related to negative parenting behaviour and parental permissiveness. Higher perceived social support was predictive for positive parenting of both parents, and higher marital satisfaction was predictive for maternal positive parenting. The parent-employee interrole conflict was not predictive for parental behaviour in constellation of all measured features of social context of parenting. These findings have important practical implications and may be applied in creating measures of social policy directed toward families with preschool children.

## REFERENCES

- Andresen, P. A., Telleen, S. L. (1992). The relationship between social support and maternal behaviors and attitudes: A meta-analytic review. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 20(6), 753–774.
- Barber, B. K., Stolz, H. E., Olsen, J. A. (2005). Parental support, psychological control, and behavioral control: Assessing relevance across time, culture, and method. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 70(4), 1-137.
- Belsky, J. (1984). The determinants of parenting: A process model. *Child Development*, 55(1), 83-96.
- Bornstein, M. H., Putnick, D. L., Suwalsky, J. T. D., Gini, M. (2006). Maternal chronological age, prenatal and perinatal history, social support, and parenting of infants. *Child Development*, 77(4), 875-892.

- Brković, I. (2009). Fokus regulacije u odrasloj dobi i retrospektivni izvještaji o roditeljskom ponašanju. *Suvremena psihologija*, 12(2), 297-307.
- Byron, K. (2005). A meta-analytic review of work-family conflict and its antecedents. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 67(2), 169-198.
- Čudina-Obradović, M., Obradović, J. (2000). Obitelj i zaposlenost izvan kuće: međusobno ometanje i/ili pomaganje. *Revija za socijalnu politiku*, 7(2), 131-145.
- Čudina-Obradović, M., Obradović, J. (2006). *Psihologija braka i obitelji*. Zagreb: Golden marketing.
- Dallaire, D. H., Pineda, A. Q., Cole, D. A., Ciesla, J. A., Jacquez, F., LaGrange, B., Bruce, A. E. (2006). Relation of positive and negative parenting to children's depressive symptoms. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 35(2), 313-322.
- Eisenberg, N., Zhou, O., Spinrad, T. L., Valiente, C., Fabes, R. A., Liew, J. (2005). Relations among positive parenting, children's effortful control, and externalizing problems: A three-wave longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 76(5), 1055-1071.
- Erel, O., Burman, B. (1995). Interrelatedness of marital relations and parent-child relations: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118(1), 108-132.
- Fowers, B. J. (1991). His and her marriage: A multivariate study of gender and marital satisfaction. *Sex Roles*, 24(3-4), 209-221.
- Frone, M. R., Russell, M., Cooper, M. (1992). Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict: Testing a model of the work-family interface. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77(1), 65-78.
- Green, B. L., Furrer, C., McAllister, C. (2007). How do relationships support parenting? Effects of attachment style and social support on parenting behavior in an at-risk population. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 40(1-2), 96-108.
- Grych, J. H. (2002). Marital relationships and parenting. In M. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting, Vol. 4 (2nd ed.)* (pp. 203-226). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hoff, E., Laursen, B., Tardiff, T. (2002). Socioeconomic status and parenting. U: M. Bornstein (Ur.), *Handbook of parenting (2nd ed.)*, Vol. 2 (str. 231-252). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.



Holden, G. W. (2010). *Parenting: A dynamic perspective*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Keresteš, G. (2001). Spol roditelja te dob i spol djeteta kao odrednice roditeljskog ponašanja. *Suvremena psihologija*, 4(1-2), 7-24.

Keresteš, G., Brković, I., Kuterovac Jagodić, G. (2008). Upitnik roditeljskog ponašanja URP. *Neobjavljen priručnik*. Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet.

Keresteš, G., Brković, I., Kuterovac Jagodić, G. (2010). Opis metodologije projekta Ličnost i roditeljstvo tijekom tranzicije djeteta u adolescenciju. *Neobjavljen izvještaj*. Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet.

Krishnakumar, A., Buehler, C. (2000). Interparental conflict and parenting behaviors: A meta-analytic review. *Family Relations*, 49(1), 25-44.

Kuterovac Jagodić, G., Keresteš, G., Brković, I. (2006). Attachment styles of parents of adolescents and their parenting behaviour. In V. Čubela Adorić (Ed.), *15th Psychology Days in Zadar – Book of Selected Proceedings* (pp. 167-183). Zadar: University of Zadar.

Mallard, A. G. C., Lance, C. E. (1998). Development and evaluation of a parent-employee interrole conflict scale. *Social Indicators Research*, 45 (1-3), 343–370.

McKee, L., Roland, E., Coffelt, N., Olson, A. L., Forehand, R., Massari, C., Jones, D., Gaffney, C. A., Zens, M. S. (2007). Harsh discipline and child problem behaviors: The roles of positive parenting and gender. *Journal of Family Violence*, 22(4), 187–196.

Ng, K. M., Loy, J. T. C., Gudmunson C. G., Cheong W. N. (2009). Gender differences in marital and life satisfaction among Chinese Malaysians. *Sex Roles*, 60(1-2), 33–43.

Parke, R. D. (2002). Fathers and families. In M. H. Bronstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting, Vol. 3 (2nd ed.)* (pp. 27-74). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Pleck, J. H. (1977). The work–family role system. *Social Problems*, 24(4), 417–427.

Raboteg-Šarić, Z., Pećnik, N. (2006). Bračni status, financijske poteškoće i socijalna podrška kao odrednice roditeljske depresivnosti i odgojnih postupaka. *Društvena istraživanja*, 15(6), 961-985.

Sočo, M., Keresteš, G. (2011). Roditeljsko ponašanje zaposlenih roditelja: povezanost s objektivnim obilježjima posla i subjektivnim doživljajem odnosa roditeljske i radne uloge. *Društvena istraživanja*, 20 (3), 647-669.

Stewart, W., Barling, J. (1996). Fathers' work experiences effect children's behaviors via job-related affect and parenting behaviors. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 17(3), 221-232.

Woody, D. III., Woody, D. J. (2007). The significance of social support on parenting among a group of single, low-income, African American mothers. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 15(2-3), 183-198.

Zimet, G. D., Dahlem, N. W., Zimet, S. G., Farley, G. K. (1988). The multidimensional scale of perceived social support. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 52(1), 30-41.

*The paper is based on M.A. thesis of the first author and conducted under the mentorship of the last author. It is related to the research project No. 130-1301683-1400 (Parents' personality and parenting during child's transition to adolescence), supported by the Ministry of Science, Education & Sports of the Republic of Croatia.*

**Ana Štironja Borić**

Primary school Tituša Brezovačkog, 10090 Zagreb, Croatia,  
anastironja@gmail.com

**Sanda Roščić**

Zvonimira Rogoza 3, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia,  
sanda.roscic@gmail.com

**Maja Sedmak**

Augusta Cesarca 8, 35000 Slavonski Brod, Croatia,  
mojca.psy@gmail.com

**Anja Šepčević**

Center for Education, Counseling and Research,  
Trnjanska 59a, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia,  
anja.sepcevic@gmail.com

**Gordana Keresteš**

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of  
Zagreb, Ivana Lučića 3, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia,  
gkereste@ffzg.hr

## SOCIJALNO-KONTEKSTUALNE ODREDNICE RODITELJSKOG PONAŠANJA OČEVA I MAJKI PREDŠKOLSKE DJECE

---

### SAŽETAK

*Na temelju modela odrednica roditeljstva (Belsky, 1984) ispitan je doprinos obilježja socijalnog konteksta u kojem se zbiva odnos roditelj-dijete (zadovoljstva brakom, percipirane socijalne podrške te sukoba roditeljske i radne uloge) s individualnim razlikama u roditeljskom ponašanju roditelja predškolske djece. U istraživanju je sudjelovalo 130 parova zaposlenih roditelja predškolske djece koji su ispunili upitnike o demografskim karakteristikama, roditeljskom ponašanju (pozitivno i negativno roditeljstvo te popustljivost) i obilježjima socijalnog konteksta. Pokazalo se da je na temelju socijalnog konteksta moguće predvidjeti pozitivno roditeljsko ponašanje, ali ne i negativno roditeljsko ponašanje i popustljivost. Značajni prediktori majčina pozitivnog roditeljstva bili su zadovoljstvo brakom i socijalna podrška, a očeva pozitivnog roditeljstva socijalna podrška. Rezultati nisu podržali hipotezu Belskog o bračnom odnosu kao najznačajnijoj kontekstualnoj odrednici roditeljstva.*

***Cljučne riječi:** bračno zadovoljstvo, roditeljstvo, socijalna podrška, sukob roditeljske i radne uloge*

### UVOD

Roditelji su ne samo prve osobe s kojima dijete stvara socijalne veze, već i osobe koje imaju najvažniju ulogu u djetetovu razvoju, osobito u dojenačkoj i predškolskoj dobi (Holden, 2010). Zbog sve složenijih uvjeta života u razvijenom svijetu, roditeljska je uloga danas znatno zahtjevnija nego prije nekoliko desetljeća. Stoga je, kako iz znanstvenih tako i iz praktičnih razloga, važno poznavati činitelje koji određuju kvalitetu roditeljstva. Takvo poznavanje omogućuje kreiranje mjera usmjerenih na jačanje činitelja koji imaju povoljan, a slabljenje ili uklanjanje onih koji imaju nepovoljan učinak na roditeljsko funkcioniranje.

Roditeljsko ponašanje, koje se odnosi na namjerne postupke i aktivnosti koje roditelj provodi kako bi osigurao zaštitu i brigu za djetetov

život te vođenje i pomaganje djetetova razvoja (Čudina-Obradović i Obradović, 2006), najviše je istraživani aspekt roditeljske uloge. Varijacije u roditeljskom ponašanju najčešće se opisuju trima bipolarnim dimenzijama: prihvaćanje/odbacivanje djeteta, čvrsta/slaba kontrola djetetova ponašanja te psihološka kontrola/podržavanje djetetove autonomije (Barber, Stolz i Olsen, 2005). Neki su autori u svojim istraživanjima identificirali ponešto drugačije dimenzije roditeljskog ponašanja, koje se najčešće nazivaju pozitivno i negativno roditeljstvo (Dallaire i sur., 2006; Eisenberg i sur., 2005; McKee i sur., 2007). Pozitivno roditeljstvo uključuje emocionalnu toplinu, prihvaćanje djeteta, podržavanje djetetove autonomije, discipliniranje uz objašnjenje važnosti postojanja pravila i znanje o djetetovim aktivnostima, a negativno roditeljstvo neprijateljska ponašanja prema djetetu, prisilno discipliniranje, strogo kažnjavanje, izazivanje osjećaja krivnje i emocionalno ucjenjivanje. U istraživanjima u Hrvatskoj uz pozitivno i negativno roditeljstvo kao zasebna dimenzija roditeljskog ponašanja izdvojila se popustljivost, odnosno roditeljevo udovoljavanje djetetovim zahtjevima (Brković, 2009; Kuterovac Jagodić, Keresteš i Brković, 2006; Sočo i Keresteš, 2011).

Jay Belsky (1984) ponudio je teorijski okvir kojim je odrednice roditeljskog ponašanja grupirao u tri skupine: individualne osobine roditelja, socijalno-kontekstualne izvore stresa i podrške roditeljskom funkcioniranju te osobine djeteta. Socijalno-kontekstualne odrednice, kojima se bavi ovaj rad, obuhvaćaju bračni odnos, radno mjesto i socijalnu mrežu, pri čemu Belsky drži da je bračni odnos najznačajniji izvor stresa ili podrške roditeljima u roditeljskoj ulozi. Iako rezultati meta-analiza (Erel i Burman, 1995; Krishnakumar i Buehler, 2000) i noviji pregledni radovi (npr. Grych, 2002) pokazuju kako su različiti indikatori kvalitete braka (u većini istraživanja radi se o bračnom zadovoljstvu) pozitivno povezani s kvalitetom odnosa roditelj-dijete, nema spoznaja o tome uolikoj mjeri bračni odnos pridonosi roditeljskom ponašanju kad se razmatra zajedno s drugim činiteljima socijalnog konteksta.

Socijalne mreže u koje su roditelji uključeni također su važan izvor stresa i podrške u roditeljskom funkcioniranju. Andresen i Telleen (1992) su meta-analizom utvrdili da je majčina percepcija dostupne emocionalne i instrumentalne podrške pozitivno povezana s različitim indikatorima njezina roditeljskog ponašanja. U istraživanju jednoroditeljskih i dvoroditeljskih obitelji iz naše zemlje, Raboteg-Šarić i Pećnik (2006) pokazale su kako su različite vrste socijalne podrške povezane s različitim aspektima roditeljskog ponašanja. Instrumentalna podrška socijalne okoline bila je pozitivno povezana s roditeljskom podrškom, nadzorom i zajedničkim odlučivanjem s djecom, dok je emocionalna podrška prijatelja bila povezana s roditeljskom

uključenošću u odgoj. Longitudinalna istraživanja pokazuju kako je socijalna podrška povezana i s promjenama u roditeljskom ponašanju tijekom vremena. Primjerice, Green, Furrer i McAllister (2007) izvijestile su da se u obiteljima s niskim primanjima učestalost pozitivnih aktivnosti s djetetom više povećala kod roditelja s više nego kod onih s manje socijalne podrške.

Radno mjesto roditelja treći je kontekstualni izvor stresa ili podrške roditeljstvu čiju važnost ističe Belsky (1984). Kako su u većini obitelji s djecom oba roditelja zaposlena, istraživanja povezanosti radne i roditeljske uloge od velike su važnosti (Čudina-Obradović i Obradović, 2000). Kada zahtjevi jedne uloge onemogućavaju ispunjavanje zahtjeva druge uloge, govori se o sukobu uloga. Frone, Russell i Cooper (1992) istaknuli su kako je potrebno razlikovati dva smjera sukoba posla i obitelji koji su određeni različitim činiteljima i imaju različite ishode: sukob radne s obiteljskom ulogom i sukob obiteljske s radnom ulogom. Ometanje obiteljske uloge radnom uzrokovano je stresorima na poslu, a predviđa ishode u obiteljskom životu. Za razliku od toga, ometanje radne uloge obiteljskom uzrokovano je stresorima unutar obitelji i predviđa ishode na poslu. U istraživanju očeva predškolske djece Stewart i Barling (1996) utvrdili su da je jači doživljaj ometanja obiteljskog života poslom povezan s očevim lošijim raspoloženjem te s više kažnjavanja i većim odbacivanjem djeteta.

Mallard i Lance (1998) upozorili su da je u istraživanjima sukoba posla i obitelji potrebno razlikovati različite obiteljske uloge. U svom radu usmjerili su se na sukob radne i roditeljske uloge te su konstruirali skalu za mjerenje sukoba tih uloga. Analogno ranijim istraživanjima obitelji i posla, oni razlikuju dva smjera sukoba: ometanje roditeljske uloge radnom i radne uloge roditeljskom. Primijenivši skalu Mallarda i Lancea u uzorku visokoobrazovanih zaposlenih roditelja djece u dobi od 3 do 16 godina iz naše zemlje, Sočo i Keresteš (2011) pronašle su da je kod roditelja oba spola jači doživljaj ometanja radne uloge zahtjevima roditeljstva povezan s više negativnog roditeljstva, dok doživljaj ometanja roditeljske uloge radnom nije bio prediktivan za roditeljska ponašanja.

Cilj ovog rada bio je ispitati povezanost karakteristika socijalnog konteksta u kojem se zbiva odnos roditelj-dijete s roditeljskim ponašanjem očeva i majki predškolske djece. Radom smo obuhvatili sve aspekte socijalnog konteksta čiju važnost ističe Belsky (1984) i ispitali njihov relativni doprinos objašnjenju individualnih razlika u pozitivnim i negativnim roditeljskim ponašanjima te roditeljskoj popustljivosti. Kako su sociodemografski faktori također povezani s roditeljskim ponašanjem (Hoff, Laursen and Tardiff, 2002; Holden, 2010), u istraživanje smo kao kontrolne varijable uključili dob i obrazovanje roditelja te broj djece u obitelji. Na temelju teorijskih postavki i rezultata ranijih istraživanja očekivali smo da će

roditelji koji su zadovoljniji brakom, oni s većom percipiranom socijalnom podrškom te oni s manjim sukobom radne i roditeljske uloge pokazivati više pozitivnih roditeljskih ponašanja, a manje negativnih roditeljskih ponašanja i popustljivosti. Također smo pretpostavili da će zadovoljstvo brakom objašnjavati veći dio varijance roditeljskog ponašanja od ostalih kontekstualnih odrednica roditeljstva.

## METODE

### Sudionici i postupak

Istraživanje je provedeno u pet dječjih vrtića iz tri hrvatska grada tijekom 2010. godine. Uzorak izabranih vrtića bio je prigodan, a izbor se temeljio na ranijoj suradnji autorica rada sa stručnim timovima u vrtićima. Uz pomoć odgojiteljica podatke su prikupile prve četiri autorice rada u svrhu izrade diplomskih radova, pod mentorstvom pete autorice. Apsolventice su roditeljima u vrijeme dolaska u vrtić uručivale koverta koje su sadržavale pismo s opisom istraživanja i dvije baterije psihologijskih upitnika, jednu za majku i jednu za oca. Roditelji su zamoljeni da upitnike ispune nezavisno od partnera i da ih u zatvorenim kovertama vrate u vrtić u roku od sedam dana.

Od ukupno 340 uručenih koverti vraćena je 181 (53%). Neke baterije upitnika bile su u potpunosti ili velikim dijelom nepopunjene pa je ukupan uzorak nakon odbacivanja tih upitnika činilo 169 majki i 154 oca, od čega 146 bračnih parova. U 130 bračnih parova oba su roditelja bila zaposlena. Kako je ovaj rad usmjeren na brak i posao kao kontekstualne odrednice roditeljskog ponašanja, u obradu podataka uključeno je tih 130 bračnih parova.

U vrijeme ispitivanja većina bračnih parova imala je dvoje djece (56,9%). Nešto više od četvrtine parova (28,5%) imalo je jedno, a 14,6% troje ili više djece. Roditelji koji su imali više djece podatke o roditeljskom ponašanju davali su u odnosu na najstarije dijete predškolske dobi. Dob ciljne djece kretala se od 3 do 7 godina ( $M = 5,12$ ;  $SD = 1,11$ ). Broj dječaka i djevojčica bio je podjednak (48% dječaka i 52% djevojčica).

Dob roditelja kretala se od 26 do 49 godina pri čemu su majke bile značajno mlađe ( $M = 35,34$ ;  $SD = 4,17$ ) od očeva ( $M = 37,44$ ;  $SD = 4,74$ ;  $t(258) = 3,81$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). Roditelji su bili iznadprosječno obrazovani u odnosu na hrvatsku populaciju. Nešto više od polovice očeva (54,7%) i nešto manje od polovice majki (44,6%) završilo je srednjoškolsko obrazovanje, dok su ostali imali završenu višu školu, fakultet ili poslijediplomsko obrazovanje.

Razlika u obrazovanju očeva i majki nije bila statistički značajna ( $\chi^2 = 2,62$ ;  $p > 0,10$ ). Očevi su u usporedbi s majkama provodili značajno više vremena na poslu (prosječan broj sati tjedno provedenih na poslu bio je 46,71 za očeve,  $SD = 10,64$  i 39,19 za majke,  $SD = 8,69$ ;  $t(254) = 6,18$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ), a manje s djecom (prosječan broj sati tjedno provedenih s djecom bio je 23,26 za očeve,  $SD = 17,03$  i 35,07 za majke,  $SD = 17,15$ ;  $t(241) = -5,38$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ).

### **Mjerni instrumenti**

Primijenjena baterija upitnika sadržavala je upitnik o sociodemografskim podacima te veći broj psihologijskih upitnika i skala od kojih su u ovom radu analizirani podatci dobiveni primjenom Skale zadovoljstva brakom, Skale percipirane socijalne podrške, Upitnika sukoba radne i roditeljske uloge te Upitnika roditeljskog ponašanja URP.

#### **Upitnik o sociodemografskim podacima**

Upitnikom su prikupljeni podatci o spolu i dobi roditelja, mjestu stanovanja, obrazovanju, radnom i bračnom statusu, broju odraslih članova obitelji, broju, spolu i dobi maloljetnih članova obitelji te broju sati tjedno provedenih s djetetom i na poslu.

#### **Skala zadovoljstva brakom**

Skalu zadovoljstva brakom konstruirale su Keresteš, Brković i Kuterovac Jagodić (2010). Sastoji se od 12 čestica kojima su opisana različita pozitivna i negativna iskustva u braku (npr. »Moj partner je spreman saslušati me kada imam potrebu razgovarati o svojim brigama i problemima.«). Odgovori se daju na skali od 1 (*uopće ili gotovo uopće nije točno*) do 4 (*potpuno ili gotovo potpuno je točno*), a ukupni rezultat formira se kao prosjek procjena na svim česticama. Viši rezultat označava veće zadovoljstvo brakom. Analize koje su provele autorice skale pokazale su da je skala jednodimenzionalna i da ima visoku unutarnju konzistenciju (Cronbachovi alfa koeficijenti za različite se uzorke kreću oko vrijednosti 0,90). U ovom istraživanju Cronbachov alfa iznosi 0,88 za majke i 0,86 za očeve.

### **Skala percipirane socijalne podrške**

Skala se sastoji od četiri čestice preuzete iz subskale *Significant Other* skale *Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support* (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet i Farley, 1988). Česticama se mjeri percipirana ukupna podrška dostupna u socijalnoj mreži pojedinca (npr. »Postoje ljudi od kojih često dobivam pohvalu.«). Na pitanja se odgovara na ljestvici od 1 (*potpuno netočno*) do 4 (*potpuno točno*). Ukupni rezultat formira se kao prosječna procjena rezultata na četiri čestice i kreće se od 1 do 4. Viši rezultat govori o većoj percipiranoj socijalnoj podršci. Cronbachove alfe u ovom istraživanju iznose 0,72 za majke i 0,64 za očeve.

### **Upitnik sukoba radne i roditeljske uloge**

Upitnik sukoba radne i roditeljske uloge razvili su Mallard i Lance (1998), a na hrvatski ga je jezik prevela Sočo (Sočo i Keresteš, 2011). Skala se sastoji od 40 čestica raspoređenih u tri skale: Skalu sukoba radne uloge s roditeljskom, Skalu sukoba roditeljske uloge s radnom i Skalu općeg sukoba roditeljske i radne uloge. U ovom radu primijenjene su samo prve dvije skale, kao dva odvojena aspekta sukoba rada i roditeljstva. Skala sukoba radne s roditeljskom ulogom sadrži 17 čestica (npr. »Moj posao ometa moju roditeljsku ulogu zbog sati provedenih na poslu.«), a Skala sukoba roditeljske s radnom ulogom 15 čestica (npr. »Moje roditeljske odgovornosti ometaju moj raspored na poslu.«). Na sve čestice odgovara se na ljestvici od 1 (*uopće nije točno za mene*) do 4 (*u potpunosti je točno za mene*). Rezultat na svakoj skali formira se kao prosjek procjena na pripadajućim česticama i kreće se od 1 do 4. Za Skalu sukoba radne uloge s roditeljskom Cronbachove alfe u ovom istraživanju iznose 0,93 za majke i 0,94 za očeve, a za Skalu sukoba roditeljske uloge s radnom 0,88 za majke i 0,90 za očeve.

### **Upitnik roditeljskog ponašanja URP**

Upitnik (Keresteš, Brković i Kuterovac Jagodić, 2008) sadrži 29 čestica raspoređenih u sedam subskala roditeljskog ponašanja: toplina, autonomija, roditeljsko znanje ili nadzor, induktivno rezoniranje, intruzivnost, kažnjavanje i popustljivost. Faktorske analize provedene u različitim uzorcima roditelja, s djecom različite dobi, pokazale su da se toplina, autonomija, nadzor i induktivno rezoniranje grupiraju zajedno u dimenziju pozitivnog roditeljstva ili roditeljske podrške, a intruzivnost i kažnjavanje u dimenziju negativnog roditeljstva ili restriktivne kontrole, dok



je popustljivost zaseban aspekt roditeljskog ponašanja, odvojen od pozitivnog i negativnog roditeljstva (Brković, 2009; Sočo i Keresteš, 2011). Na čestice se odgovara procjenama stupnja u kojem se svaka tvrdnja odnosi na pojedinca kao roditelja, na ljestvici od 1 (*uopće nije točno za mene*) do 4 (*u potpunosti je točno za mene*). Rezultat na svakoj subskali, kao i na dimenzijama pozitivnog i negativnog roditeljstva, računa se kao prosjek bodova na pripadajućim česticama. U ovom radu koristili smo rezultate na dimenzijama pozitivnog i negativnog roditeljskog ponašanja te popustljivosti. Iako je URP originalno namijenjen mjerenju roditeljskog ponašanja roditelja školske djece i adolescenata, primjenjivan je i na roditeljima mlađe djece. Ranija istraživanja pokazala su da Uпитnik pouzdano mjeri roditeljsko ponašanje roditelja djece u dobi od 3 do 16 godina (npr. Sočo i Keresteš, 2011). U ovom istraživanju za dimenziju pozitivnog roditeljstva Cronbachove alfe bile su 0,89 u uzorku očeva i 0,87 u uzorku majki, za dimenziju negativnog roditeljstva 0,70 u uzorku očeva i 0,66 u uzorku majki, a za dimenziju popustljivosti 0,78 u uzorku očeva i 0,75 u uzorku majki.

## REZULTATI

### Deskriptivna statistika i preliminarne analize

U tablici 1 prikazane su aritmetičke sredine i standardne devijacije rezultata na glavnim varijablama, posebno za majke i očeve. Kako rezultati ranijih istraživanja sugeriraju da se muškarci i žene razlikuju u roditeljskom ponašanju i mjerenim kontekstualnim korelatima roditeljskog ponašanja, ispitali smo spolne razlike u tim varijablama. Razlike u zadovoljstvu brakom i roditeljskom ponašanju provjerili smo t-testom za zavisne uzorke, jer se radi o bračnim partnerima koji su procjenjivali isti bračni odnos i roditeljsko ponašanje prema istom djetetu, zbog čega te procjene nisu nezavisne. Razlike u percepciji socijalne podrške te sukobu rada i roditeljstva ispitali smo t-testom za nezavisne uzorke, budući da otac i majka u pravilu rade na odvojenim radnim mjestima i uključeni su, barem dijelom, u različite socijalne mreže pa se ti podaci mogu smatrati nezavisnima.

Očevi su izvijestili o manje pozitivnog ( $t(128) = 5,87; p < 0,001$ ) i negativnog ( $t(128) = 2,34; p < 0,05$ ) roditeljskog ponašanja od majki, dok razlika u popustljivosti nije bila statistički značajna ( $t(128) = 0,40; p > 0,10$ ). Očevi su također bili zadovoljniji brakom ( $t(128) = -2,57; p < 0,05$ ) i osjećali su jači sukob radne s roditeljskom ulogom ( $t(256) = -2,48; p < 0,05$ ). Razlike

u socijalnoj podršci ( $t(258) = 1,53$ ;  $p > 0,10$ ) i sukobu roditeljstva s radom ( $t(256) = 1,31$ ;  $p > 0,10$ ) nisu bile statistički značajne.

Tablica 1.

### **Prediktori roditeljskog ponašanja majki i očeva**

Kako bismo utvrdili doprinos ispitivanih socijalno-kontekstualnih odrednica roditeljskog ponašanja objašnjenju individualnih razlika u roditeljskom ponašanju proveli smo hijerarhijske regresijske analize za svaku od tri dimenzije roditeljskog ponašanja kao kriterij, posebno za majke i očeve. S ciljem kontrole učinaka sociodemografskih varijabli, u prvom koraku u regresijsku su jednadžbu kao prediktori uvedene varijable dobi i obrazovanja roditelja (dihotomiziranog u kategorije srednjoškolskog i visokoškolskog obrazovanja) te broja djece u obitelji (trihotomiziranog u kategorije jednog, dvoje te troje ili više djece). U drugom koraku dodane su četiri socijalno-kontekstualne odrednice roditeljstva: zadovoljstvo brakom, socijalna podrška, sukob roditeljske s radnom ulogom i sukob radne uloge s roditeljskom. U tablici 2 prikazane su korelacije između prediktorskih i kriterijskih varijabli, dok su rezultati hijerarhijskih regresijskih analiza prikazani u tablici 3.

Tablica 2.

### **Prediktori pozitivnog roditeljstva**

Sociodemografske varijable nisu objasnile značajan postotak varijance pozitivnog roditeljstva majki, dok su socijalno-kontekstualne varijable objasnile značajnih 12% varijance (9% uz korekciju). Značajni prediktori bili su zadovoljstvo brakom ( $\beta = 0,19$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) i socijalna podrška ( $\beta = 0,25$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ). Majke koje su bile zadovoljnije brakom i one koje su percipirale više socijalne podrške izvijestile su da u interakciji s djetetom iskazuju više pozitivnih roditeljskih ponašanja. Nakon uvrštavanja kontekstualnih varijabli broj djece u obitelji također je postao značajan prediktor ( $\beta = - 0,19$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ), pokazujući kako majke s manjim brojem djece primjenjuju više pozitivnih roditeljskih ponašanja. Ukupno su uvršteni prediktori objasnili 15% (10% uz korekciju) varijance pozitivnog roditeljstva.

U uzorku očeva sociodemografske varijable objasnile su 18% (14% uz korekciju) varijance pozitivnog roditeljstva očeva, a značajan prediktor bio je samo broj djece ( $\beta = - 0,41$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). Očevi s većim brojem djece izvijestili

su o manje pozitivnog roditeljskog ponašanja. Socijalno-kontekstualne varijable objasnile su dodatnih 13% varijance, a jedini značajan prediktor bila je socijalna podrška ( $\beta = 0,29$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). Očevi koji su percipirali veću socijalnu podršku izvijestili su o više pozitivnog roditeljskog ponašanja. Ukupno su uvršteni prediktori objasnili 31% (27% uz korekciju) varijance.

Tablica 3.

### **Prediktori negativnog roditeljstva**

Sociodemografske varijable objasnile su 9% (7% nakon korekcije) varijance negativnog roditeljstva majki, a kao značajni prediktori izdvojili su se dob roditelja ( $\beta = -0,18$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ) i broj djece ( $\beta = 0,24$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ). Starije majke i majke s manjim brojem djece izvijestile su o manje negativnog roditeljstva. Kontekstualne varijable nisu doprinijele objašnjenju varijance negativnog roditeljstva majki.

Sociodemografske varijable nisu objasnile značajan postotak varijance negativnog roditeljskog ponašanja očeva. Uvođenjem kontekstualnih varijabli postotak objašnjene varijance značajno je porastao (za 10%, odnosno 7% nakon korekcije), ali se ni jedna kontekstualna varijabla nije izdvojila kao značajan prediktor. Dakle, na temelju izabranih prediktora nije moguće predviđati negativno roditeljsko ponašanje očeva.

### **Prediktori popustljivosti**

Sociodemografske niti kontekstualne varijable nisu pridonijele objašnjenju varijance roditeljske popustljivosti majki. Slično, izabrani prediktori nisu objasnili značajan postotak varijance očeve popustljivosti, iako se kao samostalan značajan prediktor izdvojilo zadovoljstvo brakom ( $\beta = -0,21$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). Očevi koji su bili zadovoljniji brakom izvijestili su o manjoj popustljivosti.

## **RASPRAVA**

Cilj rada bio je ispitati doprinos obilježja konteksta u kojem roditelji žive i rade objašnjenju individualnih razlika u njihovu roditeljskom ponašanju i odgojnim postupcima prema djetetu predškolske dobi te provjeriti hipotezu Belskog (1984) o braku kao najutjecajnijem izvoru stresa ili podrške

roditeljima u roditeljskoj ulozi. Pri provjeri ovih povezanosti kontrolirali smo učinke sociodemografskih varijabli.

Rezultati su pokazali da je svim ispitanim prediktorima moguće objasniti najviše varijance pozitivnog roditeljstva: ukupno 10% za majke i čak 27% za očeve. Kod oba je roditelja objašnjena i značajna proporcija varijance negativnog roditeljstva (ukupno 10% za majke i 8% za očeve), dok individualne razlike u popustljivosti nije bilo moguće predviđati izabranim prediktorima.

Sociodemografske varijable bile su prediktivne za majčino negativno i očevu pozitivno roditeljsko ponašanje, uz broj djece kao najznačajniji pojedinačni prediktor. Očevi i majke s većim brojem djece izvijestili su o manje pozitivnih roditeljskih ponašanja, a majke i o većoj sklonosti negativnim roditeljskim ponašanjima, što vjerojatno odražava manjak vremena i energije koje ti roditelji imaju na raspolaganju za svako pojedino dijete. Od ostalih sociodemografskih varijabli samo je još dob majke bila prediktivna za njezina negativna roditeljska ponašanja, pri čemu su mlađe majke, vjerojatno zbog nedostatka roditeljskog te općeg životnog iskustva i zrelosti, izvijestile o većoj primjeni negativnih roditeljskih postupaka i ponašanja. Povezanosti sociodemografskih varijabli s roditeljskim ponašanjima uglavnom su u skladu s rezultatima ranijih istraživanja (Bornstein i sur., 2006; Keresteš, 2001; Kuterovac Jagodić i sur., 2006).

Aspekti socijalnog konteksta značajno su pridonijeli objašnjenju varijance samo za pozitivno roditeljstvo, uz socijalnu podršku kao najvažniji prediktor. Roditelji koji su percipirali veću socijalnu podršku u svojoj socijalnoj mreži izvijestili su o više pozitivnih emocija usmjerenih prema djetetu, jačoj podršci djetetovoj autonomiji, boljem poznavanju i čvršćem nadzoru djetetovih aktivnosti te većoj primjeni pozitivnih disciplinskih postupaka, uključujući induktivno rezoniranje. Ovaj nalaz u skladu je s očekivanjem i rezultatima ranijih istraživanja koji su ukazali na važnost emocionalne i instrumentalne podrške za učinkovito roditeljstvo (Andresen i Telleen, 1992; Green i sur., 2007; Raboteg-Šarić i Pećnik, 2006; Woody i Woody, 2007). Čini se kako spoznaja da se imaju na koga osloniti pojedince čini boljim roditeljima i povoljno se odražava na njihov odnos s vlastitim djecom.

Zadovoljstvo brakom bilo je prediktivno samo za pozitivna roditeljska ponašanja majki i očevu popustljivost, pri čemu ukupna proporcija objašnjene varijance očeve popustljivosti nije bila značajna. Dobivene povezanosti pokazuju kako majke koje su zadovoljnije brakom u odnosu s djetetom primjenjuju više pozitivnih roditeljskih ponašanja, dok su očevi koji svoj brak procjenjuju boljim manje popustljivi. Smjer ovih povezanosti u skladu je s očekivanjima i rezultatima ranijih istraživanja (Erel i

Burman, 1995; Grych, 2002; Krishnakumar i Buehler, 2000), ali ukupno naši rezultati ne podržavaju hipotezu Belskog (1984) o bračnom odnosu kao najvažnijoj socijalno-kontekstualnoj odrednici roditeljskog funkcioniranja. Kako se u ranijim istraživanjima doprinos kvalitete braka roditeljskom ponašanju nije ispitivao u kontekstu drugih odrednica roditeljstva, čini se kako je u konstelaciji s drugim prediktorima bračno zadovoljstvo manje važna odrednica roditeljstva nego kad se razmatra samostalno.

Metodološke specifičnosti i ograničenja našeg istraživanja također su mogli rezultirati nepotvrđivanjem hipoteze o bračnom odnosu kao najznačajnijoj kontekstualnoj odrednici roditeljstva. Naše istraživanje provedeno je u urbanim sredinama, roditelji su regrutirani putem dječjih vrtića i svi su bili zaposleni te više razine obrazovanja od hrvatskog prosjeka. Stoga je opravdano pretpostaviti da su bili zadovoljniji brakom od populacije roditelja predškolske djece ili od roditelja nepovoljnijeg socio-ekonomskog statusa (nezaposlenih, niže obrazovne razine). Moguće je da bi u reprezentativnom uzorku ili u uzorku roditelja nepovoljnijeg socio-ekonomskog statusa bračno zadovoljstvo bilo prediktivnije za roditeljsko ponašanje. Nažalost, kad se ispituju obiteljski odnosi, reprezentativne uzorke vrlo je teško osigurati. Druga metodološka slabost koja je također mogla doprinijeti nepotvrđivanju hipoteze o bračnom odnosu kao najznačajnijoj kontekstualnoj odrednici roditeljstva odnosi se na činjenicu da smo i bračno zadovoljstvo i roditeljsko ponašanje mjerili samoiskazima roditelja, koji su podložni davanju socijalno poželjnih odgovora. U budućim istraživanjima poželjno je primijeniti različite mjere kvalitete braka i roditeljstva, uključujući mjere opažanja i izvještaje drugih procjenjivača, te po mogućnosti primijeniti više-metodski pristup.

Radno mjesto roditelja, operacionalizirano mjerama sukoba roditeljske s radnom i radne s roditeljskom ulogom nije se pokazalo prediktivnim ni za jednu dimenziju roditeljskog ponašanja, što je suprotno teorijskim očekivanjima (Belsky, 1984) i rezultatima ranijih istraživanja (Sočo i Keresteš, 2011; Stewart i Barling, 1996). Kako je u ranijim istraživanjima povezanost posla i roditeljstva ispitivana samostalno, odnosno odvojeno od ostalih kontekstualnih odrednica roditeljskog ponašanja, čini se da možemo zaključiti kako su u konstelaciji ostalih izvora stresa i podrške izvori stresa koji proizlaze iz sukoba radne i roditeljske uloge manje važna odrednica roditeljskog ponašanja nego kad se razmatraju samostalno. Takav zaključak podupiru i značajne bivarijantne korelacije između nekih dimenzija roditeljskog ponašanja i mjera sukoba roditeljske i radne uloge dobivene u ovom istraživanju. Kako bi se potpunije obuhvatio radni kontekst i ispitala njegova povezanost s roditeljskim funkcioniranjem, uz sukob radne i roditeljske uloge u budućim bi istraživanjima bilo poželjno ispitati i druge

aspekte subjektivnog doživljaja posla i objektivnih karakteristika radnog mjesta.

Spolne razlike u roditeljskom ponašanju i obilježjima konteksta nisu od središnjeg interesa u ovom radu, ali su dobiveni nalazi u skladu s rezultatima ranijih istraživanja. Naši rezultati potvrdili su ranije nalaze o razlikama u roditeljskom funkcioniranju muškaraca i žena (Keresteš, 2001; Kuterovac Jagodić i sur., 2006; Sočo i Keresteš, 2011), pokazavši kako majke predškolske djece primjenjuju više pozitivnih, ali i negativnih roditeljskih ponašanja, što barem dijelom odražava njihovu veću uključenost u skrb o djeci (Parke, 2002). Ovakvo tumačenje podržava i naš nalaz da majke s djecom u prosjeku provode 12 sati tjedno više nego očevi (majke 35 sati, a očevi 23 sata tjedno).

Što se tiče razlika u mjerenim aspektima konteksta, naši rezultati potvrdili su ranije izvještaje o većem zadovoljstvu brakom muškaraca u odnosu na žene (Fowers, 1991; Ng i sur., 2009), ali i njihovu jačem doživljaju ometanja roditeljskog funkcioniranja poslom (Byron, 2005; Pleck, 1977). Jači sukob posla s roditeljstvom očeva u usporedbi s majkama također može odražavati spolne razlike u uključenosti u roditeljsku i radnu ulogu. U našem istraživanju očevi su, u usporedbi s majkama, ne samo provodili više vremena na poslu, a manje s djecom, već su na poslu provodili dvostruko više vremena nego s djecom (47 u odnosu na 23 sata tjedno), dok je kod majki vrijeme posvećeno tim dvjema ulogama bilo podjednako (u prosjeku 35 sati tjedno s djetetom i 39 na poslu).

Nekoliko rezultata ovog istraživanja ima važne praktične implikacije i mogu se primijeniti u kreiranju mjera socijalne politike usmjerenih na obitelji s predškolskom djecom. Pritom je važno istaknuti kako su unatoč razmjerno slaboj povezanosti s roditeljskim ponašanjem, socijalno-kontekstualni činitelji podložniji promjenama od ostalih determinanti roditeljstva (primjerice ličnosti i dobi roditelja ili karakteristika djeteta) te su stoga od posebne važnosti za praksu. Nalaz o prediktivnosti socijalne podrške za pozitivno roditeljstvo roditelja oba spola sugerira kako se programima podrške obiteljima s predškolskom djecom može pospješiti roditeljsko funkcioniranje, a time i razvoj djece. Slično, nalaz o prediktivnosti zadovoljstva brakom za majčino pozitivno roditeljstvo i očevu popustljivost govori kako se podizanjem kvalitete bračnog odnosa može pospješiti i roditeljsko ponašanje. Roditelje bi također bilo uputno informirati i educirati o važnosti ovih činitelja za njihovo roditeljsko funkcioniranje.

## ZAKLJUČCI

Rezultati prikazanog istraživanja pokazali su kako su obilježja socijalnog konteksta u kojem se zbiva odnos roditelja i njihove predškolske djece povezana s pozitivnim roditeljskim ponašanjima, ali ne i s negativnim roditeljskim ponašanjima i roditeljskom popustljivošću. Veća socijalna podrška bila je prediktivna za pozitivno roditeljstvo oba roditelja, a veće zadovoljstvo brakom za majčino pozitivno roditeljstvo. Doživljaj sukoba roditeljske i radne uloge nije bio prediktivan za roditeljsko ponašanje u konstelaciji svih mjerenih obilježja socijalnog konteksta. Ovi nalazi imaju važne praktične implikacije i mogu se primijeniti u kreiranju mjera socijalne politike usmjerenih na obitelji s predškolskom djecom.

*Rad se temelji na diplomskom radu prve autorice izrađenom pod mentorstvom zadnje autorice i dio je znanstvenog projekta »Ličnost roditelja i roditeljstvo tijekom tranzicije djeteta u adolescenciju« koji podupire MZOŠ RH (broj projekta 130-1301683-1400)*