Differential Parenting, Differential Pathways: Understanding the Mediators and Effects of Ethnic Variations in Parenting

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ABSTRACT
Differential Parenting, Differential Pathways: Understanding the Mediators and Effects of Ethnic Variations in Parenting
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This dissertation explores the social and cultural mediators of parenting differences between European Americans and African Americans and the processes through which parenting is related to adolescent academic achievement. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), the first study examines the interactive effect of neighborhood quality and family socioeconomic status in mediating ethnic differences in parenting behaviors. These social factors account for some of the variation in parenting behaviors between higher SES European American and African American families, but ethnic differences in these behaviors remain. In the second study using data from the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS), results show that initial ethnic differences in parental control and their trajectories over time are accounted for by variations in neighbor problems and their subsequent effect on parents’ prevention-focus. Although levels of prevention-focus are related to parents’ neighborhood context, African Americans are significantly more concerned with preventing negative outcomes for their adolescents than European American parents. The third study assesses how parents’ socialization goals mediate ethnic difference in parental control, independent of socioeconomic factors. Parents’ filial-cultural piety and success goals completely mediate ethnic differences in parental strictness but not the amount of autonomy they grant their adolescents. The final study tests a psycho-social conceptual model of how parenting behaviors influence adolescents’ school performance and if these processes differ by a function of
ethnicity. The results show that a warm and stimulating home environment is related to mastery goal orientations and study habits that foster higher academic achievement, whereas adolescents who perceive greater restrictiveness and demandingness have performance goals and study habits related to worse school performance. These patterns are consistent for European American and African American adolescents. Overall, these studies find that cultural factors, more so than social factors, explain variations in parenting behaviors, which have important implications for youth outcomes.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the United States has experienced a substantial demographic shift in which ethnic minorities now represent a significant proportion of the population, to the extent that over the next several decades they will compose the majority of all citizens (Hernandez, 2004). However, the current body of literature on family processes has not kept pace with society’s growing diversity, in that most of what we know about family influences on child development has not given adequate attention to the importance of ethnicity. Many of our current theories are largely derived from studying samples of middle-class European American families, which imposes an ethnocentric perspective on what constitutes optimal parenting behaviors for child outcomes. Studies that do give specific attention to ethnicity often use samples of low-income families. Although a significant proportion of impoverished families are ethnic minorities, most ethnic minorities do not live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). As a result, we are left with an incomplete understanding of ethnic minority families and family processes in general (Garcia-Coll, et al., 1996). Once these shortcomings in the literature are addressed, researchers and policymakers can construct better interventions and policies that can improve children’s future prospects.

In particular, the literature should move beyond documenting mean differences in parenting behaviors by group ethnicity and assuming that certain parenting practices are equally as important for the healthy development of children from different ethnic backgrounds. Rather, research needs to embody a more normative approach by seeking to understand why parents from different backgrounds exhibit varying parenting behaviors and recognizing how these parenting behaviors may differentially impact children of varying ethnicities. In other words,
what are the social, psychological, and cultural pathways in which we see certain parenting patterns and how do they vary in their effect on child outcomes as a function of ethnicity? To what extent are ethnic parenting patterns influenced by social and environmental circumstances or mediated by the different cultural goals and beliefs parents may have in rearing their children? Furthermore, what are the processes by which certain parenting behaviors predict children’s academic outcomes and how do these relationships differ by ethnicity?

The overall purpose of this dissertation is to explore the mediators of ethnic differences in parenting and the effects of parenting behaviors on adolescent outcomes using data collected from economically diverse families. In the first study, I will examine the differential and interactive effects of neighborhoods and socioeconomic status for European American and African American families. The second study tests a conceptual model of how neighborhood problems and their association with parents’ prevention-focus mediate ethnic differences in parental control and are related to changes in these behaviors over time. In the third study, I will explore how parental cognitions mediate ethnic differences in parenting behaviors, while controlling for socioeconomic status. The fourth study will examine how the effects of various parenting behaviors on academic outcomes operate through adolescents’ development of academic goal orientations and whether these relationships differ by ethnicity.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation draws upon several social-psychological, ecological, and cultural theoretical frameworks. Belsky’s (1984) process model and Bronfenbrenner’s (1986) ecological model contend that individual variations in parenting behaviors are due to differences in characteristics of the parent and the multiple contexts in which they are embedded. The process
model argues that individuals’ psychological characteristics (i.e. developmental histories and personalities) and social environments (i.e. marital relations, social networks, and occupational experiences) directly and indirectly impact parenting behaviors through the interrelationship of psychological and social influences. Bronfenbrenner’s (1986) ecological perspective extends this process model, in that other Microsystems or immediate social contexts have shown to impact individual behavior, especially parenting. Individuals’ socioeconomic status and the characteristics of the community in which they reside are also important social milieus. A main tenet of the ecological perspective, which also happens to be a significant shortcoming of the process model, is that because individuals are situated within multiple contexts, it is essential to test how these environments interactively impact behavior. Study one explores how interactions between adults’ socioeconomic status and neighborhood quality independently and interactively impact several parenting practices, such as parental support, autonomy-granting, and strictness.

Developmental niche theory (Super & Harkness, 1996) also provides a framework for the analyses. Whereas ecological perspective characterizes culture as a more distal, macrosystem-level influence on individual behavior, developmental niche theory argues that culture also acts as a proximal influencer on human behavior. According to this theory, elements of the larger cultural context are filtered down to influence parenting practices and the organization of daily life for children and families. Within the developmental niche framework, parents have implicit cultural models, defined as ethnotheories, which influence the beliefs they have about the nature of their child, their parenting role, and developmental outcomes that society values. These ethnotheories are also moderated by the characteristics of the larger social context in which the family is situated (Super & Harkness, 1996). Study three offers a model by which the goals
parents have for their children, whether based on their ethnic background or socioeconomic status, predict how parents conceptualize their parenting role and subsequent parenting behaviors.

Lastly, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) plays a role throughout all of the studies. According to this theory, human behavior is dictated by factors situated within the person and how they interact with their environment, rather than simply controlled by contextual influences. More specifically, cognitive activities intervene between environmental stimuli and eventual responses. The purpose of study two is to assess how parents’ perceptions of neighborhood problems are associated with their goals of preventing negative outcomes for their children. In turn, parents’ prevention-focus would predict how controlling parents were over their children and the changes in these behaviors over time. Study four also draws upon social cognitive theory to understand the processes by which parenting practices influence adolescent academic outcomes. This study tested the extent to which adolescents’ achievement goal orientations and study habits mediate the relationship between parenting practices and school performance and if these outcomes differ by ethnicity.

Study 1. Ethnic parenting differences, neighborhood quality, and socioeconomic status: A moderation-mediation model.

Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), I examine how social contexts (i.e. socioeconomic status and neighborhood quality) interact to account for controlling parenting behaviors in European Americans and African Americans. This study differs from the predominant approach to control for these social contexts and determine if mean differences in parenting behaviors remain across ethnic groups. Studying how SES and
neighborhood quality simultaneously influence parenting is necessary given the research on how the relationship between SES and neighborhoods differs across ethnic groups. Accordingly, the extent to which neighborhoods mediate ethnic differences in parenting may depend on the levels of family SES.

*Study 2. How neighborhood problems and parents’ prevention-focus mediate ethnic differences in parenting.*

Most research interested in understanding how neighborhood factors impact parenting contend that the prevalence of risk factors in the surrounding area is detrimental to parents’ stress levels and psychological functioning, which in turn is related to more punitive and restrictive parenting behaviors. Rarely do studies test alternative pathways through which neighborhood characteristics influence parenting. Utilizing data from the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS), I argue that the pervasiveness of neighborhood problems is related to parents’ concerns to prevent negative outcomes for their adolescents. This prevention-focus, more so than depressive symptoms, accounts for ethnic differences in controlling parental behaviors.

*Study 3. Do socialization goals explain differences in parental control between Black and White parents?*

A significant proportion of research that aims to understand the causes of parenting behaviors tends to focus on models based on psychological functioning or stress. However, these studies often do not include measures of parental social cognitions, despite the growing body of literature that supports their importance. Furthermore, no known study has tested the interrelations of these social cognitions and whether they mediate ethnic differences in parenting.
In my third study, I examine how parents’ socialization goals account for parenting differences between European American and African American parents, while controlling for socioeconomic status.

**Study 4. The role of parenting, academic goals, and study habits in academically talented students’ school achievement.**

An abundance of literature has attempted to understand the processes by which the home environment influences adolescents’ academic outcomes. Several studies have examined how certain parenting practices impact the development of adolescents’ achievement goal orientations, which in turn can impact their academic performance and pro-academic behaviors (Gonzalez, Holbein, & Quilter, 2002). However, these studies have been inadequate in examining these parenting behaviors concurrently to better ascertain their unique impact on achievement goal orientations. No known study has tested whether the relationships between parenting, achievement-goal orientations, and academic outcomes differ across various ethnic groups. The purpose of study four is to fill this void in the literature by examining how parenting behaviors influence adolescent achievement through their relationship with achievement-goal orientations and study habits. Whether these associations differed by adolescent ethnicity were also tested.

**Significance of research**

The literature has firmly established the importance of parenting behaviors on a multitude of child outcomes (Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Steinberg, 1996; Mandara et al., 2010; Mistry et al., 2002) and that ethnic differences in many of these behaviors often explain the academic (Mandara et al., 2010) and social (Mistry et al., 2002) disparities across ethnic groups that
continues to persist. However, the childrearing patterns of middle-class European American parents are too often implicitly presented as the model for which parents from other backgrounds should aspire to duplicate. This stance assumes that all children would equally benefit from these parenting behaviors and neglects to consider the reasons why parents tend to differ in their childrearing practices. The studies presented in this dissertation will better our understanding of the factors that explain why parents of different ethnic groups socialize their children the way they do and how these parenting behaviors differentially impact their children’s development.

This research is intended to better inform social policies aimed at improving the environmental contexts in which families live and contribute to the development of parenting and school programs. The findings will illuminate how parents of different ethnicities respond to varying neighborhoods conditions and economic resources, along with the subsequent effects this has on future generations. Policies can be adopted to address the structural factors that create social environments which inhibit the parenting practices that lead to healthy child development. School administrators and teachers could be more aware of how parents contribute to their children’s academic pursuits so that they can better align curricula or teacher practices accordingly. Lastly, parents may not be conscious of how the goals they have for their children or how they conceptualize their parental role contribute to their parenting behaviors and the impact this has on their children’s development. This has important implications for the development and efficacy of parenting interventions, as programs can modify their treatments so that they are more sensitive to the parental cognitions that parents have when they enter the programs.
CHAPTER 2. ETHNIC PARENTING DIFFERENCES, NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY, AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS: A MODERATION-MEDIATION MODEL

A considerable body of literature has shown how parenting practices are related to several academic (Mandara et al., 2010), social (Mistry et al., 2002), and psychological (Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Steinberg, 1996) outcomes for children. Studies have also found ethnic differences in childrearing behaviors (Bradley et al., 2001; Hill & Sprague, 1999; Julian, McKenry, & McKelvey, 1994; McLoyd et al., 2000), and that these variations account for some of the racial disparities that exist across developmental outcomes (Mandara et al., 2010). For example, one study found that differences in having a school-oriented home environment and providing children with more decision-making opportunities helped explain a significant proportion of the Black-White achievement gap (Mandara et al., 2010). As a result, understanding how and why individuals from various ethnic backgrounds parent differently needs further investigation in order to reduce racial disparities across multiple outcomes.

Empirical and theoretical research has sought to understand what social and environmental contexts predict differences in parenting behavior, especially among parents of different ethnicities (Hill, 2006). A significant proportion of the literature has focused on parents’ socioeconomic status (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005) and neighborhood contexts (Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Steinberg, 1996; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Pinderhughes et al., 2001) as determinants of childrearing behaviors among parents of different ethnicities. Although these factors do account for a significant amount of variations in childrearing behaviors across ethnic groups, they do not explain everything. Unfortunately, these studies have been limited in
their approach to understand the relationships between ethnicity, SES, neighborhoods, and parenting behaviors (Hill, 2006).

Some studies examine only one of these social contexts (i.e. solely exploring ethnic differences in SES effects on parenting) without including sufficient controls for other social contexts (i.e. neighborhoods), which is problematic given the strong relationship between SES and neighborhood (Chao & Kanatsu, 2008). Of the studies that do include both SES and neighborhood variables (Hill & Tyson, 2008), they tend to not explore how SES and neighborhood characteristics may interactively influence parenting. The effects of SES and neighborhoods on parenting are not simply additive, but also depend on the other in how they exert their influence. This is particularly relevant given that individuals’ SES and the neighborhoods in which they live are related, although this association is not uniform across ethnic groups (Alba, Logan, & Stults, 2000; Friedman & Rosenbaum, 2005; Pattillo-McCoy, 2002). Until these shortcomings in the literature are addressed, our understanding of how the intersection of ethnicity, SES, and neighborhoods impacts parents will be limited. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to address these limitations by examining the extent to which parenting differences between European Americans and African Americans are mediated by neighborhood characteristics and whether the level of mediation differs by a function of socioeconomic factors.

**Ethnic and SES Effects on Parenting**

Studies have shown that in comparison to European American parents, African Americans are more likely to overly regulate their children’s behaviors (Dearing, 2004; Finkelstein, Donenberg, & Martinovich, 2000), limit their children’s decision-making opportunities (Bulcroft, Carmody, & Bulcroft, 1996), and use punishments more often (Bradley,
Corwyn, McAdoo, & Garcia Coll, 2001). Similarly, other studies have characterized European Americans as being authoritative in their parenting, while African American parents tend to be more authoritarian in their parenting styles (Dornbusch et al., 1987). Although parenting is in part culturally determined (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Suizzo, 2007; Tamis-Lemonda, 2003), other social factors may contribute to differences seen in childrearing behaviors between and within ethnic groups. For example, varying childrearing behaviors thought to be due to cultural backgrounds may in fact be a product of parents’ social class. The literature on socioeconomic status and parenting has found that compared to higher SES parents, lower SES parents tend to be more controlling over their children’s behaviors (Hoff-Ginsburg & Tardiff, 1995), use more child-centered parenting behaviors (Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999), and are able to make significantly less investments in the development of their children (Duncan & Magnuson, 2003).

Using a social causation perspective, there are a variety of pathways in which family SES can impact subsequent parenting behaviors. For example, Luster, Rhoades, and Hass (1989) attributed class variations in parenting behaviors to the different parental values and beliefs these groups have. The study found that parents’ occupation, education, and income were related to parents’ greater emphasis on self-direction for their children and less on conformity, which was then predictive of maternal warmth and involvement. Other research has found that family SES can influence parenting behaviors through its impact on parent stress and mental health (Mistry et al., 2002). Studies have found that greater perceived economic pressures were related to increases in negative affect and higher levels of psychological distress, which in turn predicted more responsiveness (Mistry et al., 2002) and lower harshness in parenting (Whitbeck et al., 1997).
There are some who argue that differences in SES may actually override cultural background in explaining variations in parenting practices (Entwisle & Alexander, 1996). Social stratification theory (Garcia-Coll, et al., 1996) and subsequent empirical research (Magnuson & Duncan, 2002) have demonstrated the significant relationship between ethnicity and SES, and the literature has attempted to parcel out which aspects of parents’ social standing are related to how they socialize their children. Using data from the NLSY, McLeod and Shanahan (1993) showed that European American and African American children who lived in persistent poverty received similarly low levels of emotional responsiveness from their parents regardless of their ethnicity. Other research has shown that including measures of parents’ socioeconomic status mediated ethnic differences in home-based activities (Suizzo & Stapleton, 2007) and the amount of importance parents put on rule compliance (Cashmore & Goodnow, 1986). However, the extent to which SES can explain parenting behaviors may depend on the specific childrearing practice under investigation. Another study using urban high school students found that even when controlling for parent education, employment status, and family structure, African American parents were significantly higher on monitoring and behavioral control than European Americans (Chao & Kanatsu, 2008).

Although some consideration has been given to the extent to which parent SES may explain apparent ethnic variations in parenting, more attention is needed to address the remaining ambiguities in the literature. In particular, understanding whether SES exerts comparable effects on parenting for different ethnic groups would help explain if and why family SES variations account for ethnic differences in parenting. Relatively few studies have examined this particular question, and there is some evidence suggesting that SES influences parenting differently for
different ethnicities. One study found that financial hardship was more strongly related to greater parental stress for African Americans than European Americans and that higher levels of parental stress predicted less positive parenting behaviors for African American families than for European American families (Raver, Gershoff, & Aber, 2007). Other research has found that the relationships between ethnicity, parental stress, and harsh parental discipline were stronger between low-income European Americans and African Americans than middle-income parents (Pinderhughes et al., 2009). Although Guttman and Eccles (1999) reported no ethnic differences in how financial strain predicted less school involvement and negative parent-adolescent relationships, whether ethnicity moderates the effects of SES on parenting could depend on the specific parenting outcomes measured. Because many studies tend to investigate the effects of SES on parenting using ethnically homogenous samples and do not include other ethnic comparisons, it is difficult to distinguish between cultural and social determinants of parenting (Hill, 2006).

**Ethnic and Neighborhood Effects on Parenting**

Theoretical and empirical work on neighborhood effects tends to examine both the structural and social aspects of individuals’ environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Burton, Price-Spratlen, & Spencer, 1997; Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Wilson, 1987). From a structural standpoint, research has been interested in the economic and physical resources within a designated geographic space. These studies will use census tract data to demarcate the physical locations and demographic features of a specific area and utilize measures of poverty rates, racial mix, and availability of public services (Burton & Jarrett, 2000; Pinderhughes et al., 2001). The other line of research relies upon individual level reports of
neighborhood social dynamics and organization (Burton et al., 1997; Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). This approach has emphasized neighborhood characteristics in terms of perceived social norms and values (Jencks & Mayer, 1990) and sense of violence and safety (O’Neil, Parke, & McDowell, 2001) as perceived by the individuals living in that social setting.

Earlier studies have shown that neighborhood structural characteristics are related to parenting behaviors. Living in neighborhoods with a higher proportion of low-income neighbors is related to lower levels of parental warmth (Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1994). Observational reports of neighborhood safety are also related to European American and African American parents’ use of hostile control strategies (Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2002). Other researchers have argued that individuals’ perception of their neighborhood environment is the mechanism through which neighborhood characteristics influence parenting behaviors. For example, Simons, Johnson, Conger, and Lorenz (1997) found that the effect of community disadvantage on ineffective parenting was mediated by levels of perceived social disorganization. Other studies have also found that mothers’ perception of the physical and social neighborhood atmosphere was more predictive of their regulatory parenting behaviors than were objective interviewer ratings of neighborhood quality.

How parents socialize their children in response to their immediate environmental context has important implications for understanding ethnic differences in parenting, given that compared to European Americans, African American families are more likely to live in lower quality communities even when socioeconomic status is controlled (Alba, Logan, & Bellair, 1994). This means that parents living in high-risk neighborhoods may be more compelled to
utilize parenting strategies to counteract the potentially harmful environmental contexts rather than parenting behaviors that their cultural background or social status would normally dictate (Burton et al., 1997; Furstenberg, Cook, Eccles, Elder, & Sameroff, 1999). Here again research has attempted to disentangle neighborhood effects from ethnic ones. For example, Hill and Tyson (2008) used an economically diverse sample of European American and African American parents and found that initial ethnic differences in positive communication patterns were explained by variations in neighborhood safety. Pinderhughes et al. (2001) also found that controlling for neighborhood poverty, danger, and availability of public services mediated the original differences between European Americans and African Americans on parental warmth and disciplinary practices. However, these studies relied primarily on samples of families with young children or those living in high-risk communities, making it difficult to generalize findings to families with adolescents living in non-impoverished settings.

**Considering the Ethnicity, SES, and Neighborhood Interaction**

In trying to isolate the unique effects that SES and neighborhood characteristics have on parenting outcomes across different ethnic groups, the literature has done an admirable job understanding how individuals are situated within interrelated social contexts. However, this approach suggests the effects of SES and neighborhoods are additive and neglects to consider how these contexts interact to jointly impact parenting outcomes. Research has not fully explored how one social context augments or suppresses the effect of another. Even more problematic is the lack of attention given to how this interaction may differ by ethnic groups, given the evidence that suggests that the relationship between SES and neighborhoods is not necessarily uniform for various ethnic groups (Friedman & Rosenbaum, 2005; Pattillo-McCoy, 2002; Stults,
2000). Such analyses would illuminate how SES and neighborhoods predict certain parenting behaviors, both within and across ethnic differences, and there is an abundance of theoretical and empirical research that supports the need for this approach.

The place-stratification model posited by Alba and Logan (1991; 1993) argues that individuals are locationally sorted according to their group membership, such as ethnicity, and relative position within the social hierarchy. An important implication of this theory is that two individuals of different social strata do not experience the same residential opportunities due to discriminatory actions within the housing market. There are numerous studies showing that African Americans experience lower neighborhood quality, operationalized in a variety of ways, than European Americans of comparable socioeconomic status (Adelman, 2004; Alba, Logan, & Stults, 2000; Friedman & Rosenbaum, 2005; Pattillo-McCoy, 2002). For example, compared to their middle-class European American counterparts, middle-class African Americans live in neighborhoods that are less affluent (Alba, Logan, & Stults, 2000), have greater poverty rates (Pattillo-McCoy, 2002), and have more boarded-up homes and female headed households (Adelman, 2004). Similar results appear among studies focusing on European American and African American families living in suburban areas (Alba, Logan, & Bellair, 1994). Poor African Americans are also much more likely to live in impoverished neighborhoods than poor European Americans (Jargowsky, 2003). African Americans also live in highly segregated neighborhoods with a greater concentration of poverty than do European Americans (Massey & Denton, 1993). Yet research also suggests that higher SES minorities tend to live in neighborhoods that are more racially integrated with European Americans than their lower SES co-ethnics, meaning that
higher SES African Americans are more likely to experience similar neighborhood conditions as higher SES European Americans (Iceland & Wilkes, 2006).

On average, African Americans are more prone to experience downward economic mobility in comparison to European Americans (Hardaway & McCloyd, 2009; Orr, 2003; Wheary, 2006). This has the potential to create higher levels of residential instability and subsequent unfavorable conditions in the neighborhoods in which they reside. In accordance with social disorganization theory, high neighborhood turnover weakens attachment to neighborhoods and hinders the development of social ties among residents, thus reducing the social control within the neighborhood (Sampson & Groves, 1989). On a macro-level, this increase of social disorganization in a neighborhood can further decrease the overall neighborhood quality, exemplified by deterioration of the physical environment and increased crime (Skogan, 1990). On a more individual level, this reduced familiarity with one’s neighbors may lead parents to feel that they cannot rely on other community members to watch over their children’s behavior and look out for their well-being, or what is known as collective socialization (Sampson & Groves, 1989). As a result, parents in these settings may compensate for the relative lower levels of neighborhood social support by enforcing stricter rules with their children or limiting the amount of autonomy they grant.

In addition to these variations in neighborhood quality, neighborhood spatial location patterns also demonstrate how SES and environmental context are differentially related according to ethnicity. Although middle-class individuals reside in relatively higher quality neighborhoods than their lower SES counterparts, research has shown that middle-class African American often live in areas that are in closer proximity to neighborhoods of poor African
Americans. In a case study of the Chicago metro area, Pattillo-McCoy (2002) highlights how predominately middle-class African American neighborhoods tend to border low-income and moderate African American areas. An earlier study of racial segregation in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, Miami, and San Francisco found empirical support that well-educated African Americans live in closer proximity to less-educated African Americans, more so than European Americans (Sims, 1999). As a result, this increased exposure to lower SES peers or proximity to other neighborhood risk factors may then lead middle-class minority parents to have strict rules about who their children associate with or may increase their monitoring of their children’s whereabouts.

**Current Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine how SES and neighborhood quality independently and interactively predict several parenting behaviors and whether parent ethnicity moderates these relationships. Figure 2.1 displays the theoretical model that will be tested using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). The NLSY-79 and its child supplement survey were chosen due to its oversampling of African American families from a variety of social backgrounds. The ethnic and economic diversity within the data is a relatively more accurate reflection of the overall population than what is usually represented in empirical research, and it provides an opportunity to examine how parents from various ethnic, social, and environmental backgrounds socialize their children.

Based on the current body of theoretical and empirical literature, I hypothesized that higher levels of family SES and neighborhood quality would be related to more decision-making opportunities for adolescents, less monitoring, and fewer uses of punishment. In turn, these
social factors would significantly mediate ethnic differences in these parental controlling behaviors. Studies have also shown that on average, African Americans tend to live in lower quality neighborhoods than European Americans, even when each are of comparable economic backgrounds (Alba, Logan, & Stults, 2000; Pattillo-McCoy, 2002; Friedman & Rosenbaum, 2005), although especially among lower SES families (Jargowsky, 2003; Massey Denton, 1993). As a result, I expected that disparities in neighborhood quality between European Americans and African Americans would be significantly greater for low SES families than for higher SES ones. I also hypothesized that family SES would moderate the extent to which neighborhood quality would account for ethnic differences in parenting. The mediation model would account for more of the variance in controlling parental behaviors between low SES European Americans and low SES African Americans relative to those that are higher SES.

**Method**

**Participants**

The participants in this study included 2762 women from the original NLSY sample who had adolescents between the ages of 10 and 14 years in 2000. Approximately 61% of the sample was European American ($n = 1675$). Fifty percent of the children were male and the average age of the adolescents in the year 2000 was 13.3 ($SD = 2.7$). The mothers’ average age was 39 ($SD = 2.2$) and their average number of years of education was 12.9 ($SD = 2.2$). The average family income in 1999 was $44,000 ($SD = $40,109). Ethnic group differences and other descriptive statistics are discussed in the Results section.

**Procedure**
Data from the NLSY is based on a list of over 150,000 households in select areas of the United States, compiled by the National Opinion Research Center. Participants were selected using a multi-stage probability national sample of youth. Beginning in 1979, the main objective of the survey was to collect data on respondents’ labor force histories and educational backgrounds. Beginning in 1986, the NLSY surveyed the participants’ children on their home lives and a variety of cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes. Every year through 1994 and then every other year thereafter, one-hour interviews with participants were conducted to collect information from adults and children. Ethnic minorities were oversampled to allow for better statistical comparisons with European American respondents.

Measures

**Socioeconomic Status.** This measure consists of three components: parent education, parent occupational prestige, and poverty level. Mothers reported on the number of years of education that she and her spouse (if any) obtained, and these responses were averaged together to represent parent education. In every assessment starting in 1979, mothers recorded their occupations as well as their spouses. The NLSY then recoded these occupations using the Census Bureau’s 3-digit 1980 Occupational Classification System which represented the amount of prestige these occupations had. The average occupational prestige of the mother and her spouse (if any) was calculated to represent parental occupational prestige. Lastly, the Poverty Income Guidelines created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services was used to determine poverty status. This indicator is adjusted for annual inflation and adjusts for family income and size. The family poverty measure represents the proportion of time the family was in poverty from the time the child was age 10 to 14. These three measures were standardized and
then averaged together to create the SES construct ($\alpha = .70$).

**Neighborhood Quality.** Mothers reported the degree to which there were specific issues in their neighborhood. The eight items asked about were: problems with abandoned buildings, crime and violence, job availability, police protection, transportation, rules and laws, neighborhood cohesiveness, and child supervision. Mothers responded using a 3-point scale from 1 (*big problem*) to 3 (*not a problem*). Higher values represent higher neighborhood quality ($\alpha = .86$).

**Decision-Making.** This measure represented the amount of freedom parents gave their children to make decisions over aspects of their daily lives. Children were also asked a series of questions with the stem, “Who usually makes the decisions about . . .” The questions were: (1) “buying your clothes,” (2) “how to spend money,” (3) “which friends to go out with,” (4) “how late you can stay out,” (5) “how much allowance you get,” and (6) “how much TV you can watch.” Instances in which the children were allowed to make the decision for each item were coded 1 and all other responses were given a 0 ($\alpha = .67$).

**Parental Monitoring.** This measure assesses the degree to which parents monitored their child’s behavior. On the Child Supplement Survey, adolescents responded to three items that represented the monitoring dimension. Using a 5-point scale, two items had the stem, “How much do you tell your parent(s) about . . .” The questions were: “where you are when you are not at home” and “who you are with when you are not at home.” A third question asked, “About how often does each parent know who you are with when you’re not at home?” ($\alpha = .71$).

**Punishment.** This measure assessed the extent to which mothers punished their children if they received bad grades in school. Mothers indicated whether they would respond to their
children’s performance with: 1) grounding, 2) give him/her chores, 3) send to room for more than one hour, 4) take away his/her allowance, and 5) take away TV, phone, or other privileges. Mothers were given a “0” or “1” and higher scores reflect a greater use of punishment ($\alpha = .75$).

**Control Variables.** Several control variables were included in the model but not depicted. The type of neighborhood (urban=1, rural=0) and child’s gender (female=1, male=0), were controlled for.

**Data Analytic Strategy**

Latent variable structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation was used to assess the direct and indirect effects of the mediation and moderated mediation model. Analyses were conducted with AMOS 16.0 (Arbuckle, 2007). Composites for each parenting measure were used as single-item indicators to the latent variable, an approach that accounts for measurement error while reducing the number of parameters needing estimation (Stephenson & Holbert, 2003). Bootstrap methods were used to derive the standard errors and p-values of the indirect effects. Multiple-group analysis was also used to test the degree to which SES moderated the mediational model between ethnicity, neighborhood quality, and parenting behaviors (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). Established criteria for the goodness-of-fit $\chi^2$, the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used to assess the model’s overall fit.

**Imputation of Missing Data**

During the collection of the NLSY data, some participants were not available during every assessment and the parenting variables were only assessed up to two times between the ages of about 10 to 14. Missing data was imputed with the expectation maximization (EM)
algorithm, which replaces missing values with iterative maximum likelihood estimations based on the available data (Arbuckle, 2007). Little’s MCAR test showed that the data were not missing completely at random, $\chi^2 (67758) = 75,877.91, p < .001$.

**Results**

The descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 2.1. SES and neighborhood quality were positively correlated and were significantly related to greater decision-making for the adolescent and parental monitoring and lower levels of punishment. Decision-making and monitoring were positively related with each other, whereas punishment had a negative association with these parenting measures. Living in an urban area was associated with less adolescent decision-making and more use of punishments, whereas being an adolescent female was related with more decision-making and monitoring and less punishment. European Americans reported significantly higher levels of SES and neighborhood quality than did African Americans. In terms of parenting, European Americans provided more decision-making opportunities, used punishments less, and monitored their adolescents more so than African Americans. African Americans were more likely to live in urban areas than European Americans.

Figure 2.2 displays how neighborhood quality related to SES differently for European Americans and African Americans. Using the mean and ±1 SD as cutpoints, SES was recoded into four categories: low SES, average-low SES, average-high SES, and high SES. Univariate analysis of variance showed that the interaction between ethnicity and SES significantly predicted mean levels of neighborhood quality ($F = 5.20, p < .001$). Tukey post-hoc comparisons showed that high SES European Americans reported the highest levels of neighborhood quality,
whereas low SES African Americans reported the lowest. Average-high SES and average-low SES European Americans reported similar levels of neighborhood quality as high SES African Americans. Low SES European Americans and average-low SES African Americans also did not significantly differ on neighborhood quality.

**Structural Equation Models**

Figure 2.1 was assessed in an iterative process. The first model assessed ethnic differences in each of the parenting behaviors, controlling for urbanicity and adolescent gender. The second model included SES and neighborhood quality as mediators of ethnicity and parenting, and a third model included an interaction between SES and neighborhood quality. The final model, shown in Figure 2.3, utilized the multiple-group analysis function to test whether SES moderated the mediation model between ethnicity, neighborhood quality, and parenting.

The unstandardized and standardized direct effect estimates for models one to three are presented in Table 2.2. Model one fit the data well, $\chi^2 (1) = .004, p < .95$, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00. The results showed that controlling for urbanicity and adolescent gender, African Americans provided fewer decision-making opportunities ($b = -.23, p < .001$), monitored their adolescents less ($b = -.24, p < .001$), and used punishments more often ($b = 1.02, p < .001$) than European Americans. Model two, with SES and neighborhood quality included as mediators, also fit the data well, $\chi^2 (1) = .004, p < .95$, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00. African Americans reported significantly lower levels of neighborhood quality ($b = -.33, p < .001$) and were of a lower SES ($b = -.49, p < .001$) than European Americans. Higher levels of neighborhood quality ($b = .08, p < .001$) and SES ($b = .07, p < .001$) predicted greater amounts of decision-making, and SES also significantly predicted more monitoring ($b = .12, p < .001$).
However, use of punishment was not significantly related to either neighborhood quality or SES. Ethnicity continued to significantly predict all three parenting outcomes, but the indirect effects for ethnicity on decision-making ($b = -0.06, p < 0.01$) and monitoring ($b = -0.08, p < 0.01$) were significant. This implies significant partial mediation. Model three, with interaction term included, also fit the data well, $\chi^2(1) = 0.004, p < 0.95$, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.00. Ethnicity was significantly associated with the SESxNeighborhood quality interaction term ($b = 0.11, p < 0.001$). In turn, this interaction term was related to fewer uses of punishment ($b = -0.17, p < 0.01$) but not decision-making or monitoring.

Multiple-group analyses were conducted in the last phase to test whether SES moderated the relationships neighborhood quality mediation model. This process entailed comparing the default model with unconstrained structural paths to a fixed model where the structural paths were constrained to be equal across low SES, average-low SES, average-high SES, and high SES families. The unconstrained model fit the data well for parenting strictness: $\chi^2(4) = 5.51, p = 0.24$, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.01. The constrained model appeared to fit the data similarly: $\chi^2(49) = 71.32, p = 0.02$, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.01. The nested model comparisons, $\Delta \chi^2(45) = 65.81, p < 0.02$ revealed a significant difference in fit between the constrained and unconstrained models, meaning that SES significantly moderated the model.

The unstandardized and standardized direct and indirect effect estimates by SES categories are presented in Table 2.3. Across the different SES categories, African Americans were associated with lower levels of neighborhood quality. Pairwise $t$-test comparisons showed that the direct effect of ethnicity on neighborhood was significantly greater for low SES families than for average-high and high SES families ($p < 0.05$). Average-low SES families also differed
from high SES families in the extent to which ethnicity and neighborhood quality were related ($p < .05$). Results showed that neighborhood quality significantly predicted greater amounts of decision-making for only average-low ($b = .09, p < .001$) and average-high SES families ($b = .13, p < .001$), and more monitoring ($b = .15, p < .01$) for average-high SES families.

Across the different SES categories, ethnicity continued to predict parenting behaviors. African Americans reported giving their children less decision-making and used punishments more often than European Americans. Ethnicity predicted differences in monitoring across each SES category, except for low SES families. Pairwise $t$-test comparisons showed that differences in use of punishment between European Americans and African Americans were significantly smaller for low SES families than high SES families ($p < .05$). Similarly, ethnic differences in monitoring were significantly smaller for low SES families than for average-high and high SES families ($p < .05$). Average-low SES families also differed from high SES families in the extent to which ethnicity related to monitoring ($p < .05$). The indirect effects showed that neighborhood quality partially mediated ethnic differences in decision-making ($b = .15, p < .01$), punishment ($b = .15, p < .01$), and monitoring ($b = .15, p < .01$) for average-high SES families, and decision-making for average-low SES families ($b = .15, p < .01$). However, significant mediation did not occur for low SES and high SES families.

**Discussion**

Ethnicity, SES, and neighborhood context are highly correlated and often confounded when trying to ascertain what influences ethnic differences in parenting behaviors (Hill & Sprague, 1999). In trying to disentangle social and cultural determinants of parenting behaviors, only a few studies have considered both SES and neighborhood factors (Hill & Tyson, 2008).
Yet these studies fail to fully integrate the perspective that individuals are simultaneously situated within multiple contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Using a large, economically diverse sample of European American and African American parents of adolescents, this study examined the extent to which the unique and interactive effects of neighborhood quality and socioeconomic status mediated ethnic differences in parenting.

The results showed that African Americans offered fewer adolescent decision-making opportunities and used punishments more often than European American parents. This supports previous research which also found that African Americans are more authoritarian in their parenting style (Dornbusch et al., 1987) and employ more restrictive parenting behaviors than European Americans (Bulcroft, Carmody, & Bulcroft, 1996; Dearing, 2004; Finkelstein, Donenberg, & Martinovich, 2000). European Americans reported higher levels of parental monitoring than African Americans. This may be related to the fact that monitoring and adolescent decision-making were positively correlated with each other. As parents allow their adolescents to make more independent decisions, they might also increase the extent to which they keep track of their child. Parents provide more autonomy to their adolescents while also ensuring that their adolescents stay within reasonable boundaries with the choices they make.

Results from the general mediation model showed that higher levels of neighborhood quality and SES were related to more adolescent decision-making and monitoring. Families that lived in neighborhoods with lower levels of social problems and were of relatively higher SES granted their children more decision-making opportunities. These findings are consistent with previous research. Parents may limit what their child is allowed to do as a protective strategy against potential risk factors in the surrounding area (Burton & Jarrett, 2000). Similarly, higher
SES parents often place a greater focus on child autonomy, and as a result may encourage their children to make more independent decisions (Luster, Rhoades, & Hass, 1989). The findings of this study also showed that higher levels of SES also predicted more parental monitoring. Monitoring is often characterized as a form of parental control, which tends to be inversely related to family SES. Monitoring children’s behavior often requires greater amounts of time and resources, especially as adolescents spend more time outside of the household (Dishion & McMahon, 1998). Families with higher incomes can perhaps afford to work fewer hours or even stay at home, which provides greater opportunities to monitor their children’s whereabouts.

The results for parents’ use of punishment yielded somewhat different results, in that family SES and neighborhood quality did not have significant main effects on levels of punishment. Rather, the interaction between these two social factors was an important predictor of punishment. The moderation-mediation model showed that neighborhood quality predicted less punishment for average-high SES families but not for lower SES families. Previous studies have shown that parents with greater levels of education use physical punishments less often (Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999; Heffer & Kelley, 1987). The findings here suggest that parents of higher SES might use fewer punishments when external environmental conditions are suitable enough to do so. Parents may see punishments as an appropriate disciplinary technique needed to reinforce the importance of rule obedience, especially in neighborhoods with a higher prevalence of risk factors.

Although neighborhood quality and SES somewhat mediated the relationship between ethnicity and these parenting behaviors, large variations in parenting remained between European Americans and African Americans. Studies by Pinderhughes and colleagues (2001;
2008) also showed that differences in neighborhood resources and social disorganization amongst families living in high-risk communities did not fully mediate ethnic differences in parental control behaviors, such as consistent discipline, monitoring, and restrictiveness. Similar results were found with smaller, economically comparable samples of young children (Hill & Tyson, 2008; Weis & Toolis, 2008) and adolescents (Chao & Kanatsu, 2008). These findings suggest that parenting differences between European Americans and African Americans are accounted for by other important factors, such as cultural models of parenting (Tamis-Lemonda, 2003; Kagitcibasi, 2005; Suizzo, 2007), more so than socioeconomic explanations.

The second purpose of the study was to assess whether family SES moderated the relationships between ethnicity, neighborhoods, and parenting behaviors. Previous studies have shown that European Americans and African Americans of similar economic backgrounds tend to live in dissimilar neighborhoods (Alba et al., 2000; Pattillo-McCoy, 2002; Friedman & Rosenbaum, 2005). The results also showed that ethnicity continued to predict levels of neighborhood quality across different SES levels. On average, African Americans reported living in neighborhoods characterized by higher levels of social disorder than did European Americans. As expected, the ethnic disparities in neighborhood quality were significantly greater among low SES families than for high SES families. Researchers have argued that racial discrimination, economic opportunity, and residential mobility patterns have contributed to poor African Americans living in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty more so than poor European Americans (Jargowsky, 2003; Massey Denton, 1993). The findings of my study show that family SES moderates the relationship between ethnicity and neighborhood quality.
Family SES also moderated the relationship neighborhood quality had with parenting behaviors. Higher levels of neighborhood quality predicted greater adolescent decision-making, more parental monitoring, and fewer uses of punishment for only average-high SES families, and these associations significantly mediated some of the ethnic differences in these parenting behaviors. Such patterns did not occur for low SES and high SES families, which differed from my original hypotheses. This implies that the effects of SES and neighborhoods on parenting are not simply additive, but also depend on each other in how they exert their influence. For example, middle-class African American parents may grant their adolescents more independence in accordance with their beliefs about adolescent autonomy. Yet if they live in or near neighborhoods with more potential risk factors, they may feel the need to use more controlling parenting behaviors than they otherwise would want.

For low SES European American and African American families, neighborhood quality did not significantly predict parents’ use of controlling behaviors. This was unexpected given that disparities in neighborhood quality were largest for this SES group. Although poor African Americans tend to live in relatively more impoverished areas than poor European Americans (Jargowsky, 2003), the neighborhood conditions both groups experience are perhaps not conducive enough for parents to be less controlling over their adolescents. Thus, accounting for any relative neighborhood advantages low SES European Americans have over low SES African Americans would not necessarily reduce ethnic differences in parental control if both groups still reside in high-risk communities.

**Limitations**
The results of this study must be interpreted in light of some limitations. The cross-sectional design of this study precludes any causal claims. It is possible that unaccounted factors might explain the relationships between ethnicity, social factors, and parenting behaviors. Differences in mental health indicators and beliefs and values about parenting could also account for variations in parenting. Additionally, individuals can self-select into certain neighborhoods based upon certain traits or characteristics that are also related to how they parent their adolescents. Another limitation was that neighborhood quality was only based upon parents’ perception of social problems. There are other neighborhood characteristics that can potentially influence parenting behaviors, such as social networks and collective efficacy, but the NLSY did not contain such measures. It would have also been beneficial to know how parents conceptualized their neighborhood boundaries. This is often an issue with secondary data analysis, and future studies should try to incorporate a broader range of neighborhood measures. Lastly, this study utilized self-report parenting measures from a single informant. Using multiple methods and informants may provide a more accurate representation of the parenting behaviors examined in this study.

Despite these limitations, this study has important implications for research and practice. In support of Bronfenbrenner (1986), future studies interested in examining how social factors are related to parenting behaviors need to include measures of both economic and environmental neighborhoods and consider their interactive effect on parenting. Individuals are simultaneously embedded within multiple social contexts, and comprehensive models of parenting behavior need to adequately represent this. The results here show that the relationship between family SES and neighborhood characteristics differ for European Americans and African Americans. In turn,
the extent to which neighborhood factors accounted for ethnic differences in parenting depended on levels of family SES. Policies and interventions seeking to promote beneficial parenting behaviors can improve their overall effectiveness by better integrating these economic and social contexts into their broader design.
CHAPTER 3. DO NEIGHBORHOOD PROBLEMS AND PARENTAL FEARS MEDIATE ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN PARENTAL CONTROL?

During adolescence, family dynamics transform in response to children’s developmental changes. As adolescents begin to explore aspects of their self-identity and desire to establish themselves as independent beings, parents must redefine how much control they should retain and the amount of independence they grant (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Research has also found that in comparison to European Americans, African American parents are less likely to grant their adolescents decision-making opportunities (Bulcroft, Carmody, & Bulcroft, 1996; Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008), tend to be more controlling of their adolescent’s behavior (Finkelstein, Donenberg, & Martinovich, 2000; Dearing, 2004; Deater-Deckard et al., 2011), and use punishments more often (Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, & Garcia Coll, 2001). Although some studies have found that the negative effects of harsh punishment and high levels of parental control are not as severe for African American adolescents as they are for European Americans (Dearing, 2004; Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1996), they are still associated with less positive outcomes for both groups (Hill & Bush, 2001). This has led many researchers to understand the factors which lead African American parents to be more controlling.

Most researchers suggest that variations in environmental factors such as income and neighborhood conditions explain the ethnic differences in parental control (Hill & Tyson, 2008; Pinderhughes, Nix, Foster & Jones, 2001; Pinderhughes et al., 2008). However, several studies found that socioeconomic factors did not explain much of the ethnic differences in parenting (Bulcroft et al., 1996). On the other hand, some studies have found that neighborhood factors such as crime and disorganization explain a significant portion of the differences between
African American and European American parents controlling behaviors, depending on the parenting measure (Pinderhughes et al., 2001; Pinderhughes et al., 2008; Hill & Tyson, 2008).

One shortcoming of these studies is that they used primarily low SES families living in urban areas. Studies also rarely test models that examine why neighborhood factors account for ethnic differences in parenting. Those that do tend to mainly test how parents’ depression (Simons, Johnson, Conger, & Lorenz, 1997; Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2002) and stress levels (Kotchick, Dorsey & Heller, 2005) mediate the relationship between neighborhood environment and parenting behaviors. However, this general approach does not consider other possible pathways through which neighborhoods can affect parenting, since parents may develop parenting strategies for their neighborhood contexts and do not simply succumb to their environments’ stressful conditions. Rather, parents may be oriented to avoid potential dangers for their children or adopt a prevention-focus and may then parent toward these end goals accordingly (Burton & Jarrett 2000, Furstenberg et al., 1999).

The purpose of this study was to test a model which argues that variations in neighborhood factors are related to a focus on preventing negative outcomes for children. The model further argues that these factors explain differences between European American and African American parents in controlling parenting behaviors during early adolescence and changes in parental control over time through late adolescence.

**Neighborhood Influences on Parenting**

Research tends to operationalize neighborhood characteristics as the social organization and dynamics that exist in individuals’ immediate external environments (Jencks & Mayer, 1990; Burton, Price-Spratlen, & Spencer, 1997). Generally measured through aggregates of
individuals’ self-report, these studies highlight how perceptions of violence and disorder (O’Neil, Parke, & McDowell, 2001) and the norms and values (Jencks & Mayer, 1990) that exist within the neighborhood influence how individuals behave.

Researchers have argued that neighborhood structural characteristics are filtered through parents’ perceptions of their environment (Burton & Jarrett, 2000; O’Neil et al., 2001; Simons et al., 1997). This perspective is in line with symbolic interaction theory which argues that an individuals’ behavior results from their interpretations and the meanings they make of their social environments (Blumer, 1969). In other words, how parents perceive their neighborhood context will ultimately inform the necessary strategies to navigate their neighborhood. Studies have generally supported this idea and have found that neighborhood characteristics are related to parenting behaviors. For example, when controlling for other family-level and individual-level variables, increased neighborhood poverty is associated with lower amounts of parental warmth (Pinderhughes et al., 2001; Klebanov et al., 1994). Other research has shown that mothers’ perceptions of neighborhood problems and lack of social control are related to supervising children’s activities and setting limits on what their child is allowed to do (O’Neil et al., 2001).

Increased exposure to neighborhood risk factors is also related to parental depression (Simons et al., 1997; Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2002) and higher stress levels (Kotchick et al., 2005). Several researchers argue that these psychological factors cause parents to be more withdrawn and less responsive to their children’s developmental needs (Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2002; Klebanov et al., 1994). Under these conditions, parents may also become more punitive or overly restrictive when regulating their children’s behavior (Pinderhughes et al., 2001; Beyers et al., 2003). For example, Simons et al. (1997) found that European American mothers’ perception of
community disorganization was positively related to feelings of depression, which in turn predicted observers’ ratings of low levels of monitoring and warmth and high levels of harsh discipline and hostility. Among a small sample of single African American mothers, Kotchick et al. (2005) showed that psychological distress mediated the relationship between perceived neighborhood stress and responsive parenting. These findings have been replicated in other studies that used samples of both European American and African American parents, although they mainly utilized low-income families with young children living in urban areas (Klebanov et al., 1994; Pinderhughes et al., 2008).

**Ethnic Differences in Neighborhoods**

Numerous studies show that African Americans experience lower neighborhood quality, defined in a variety of ways, than European Americans of comparable socioeconomic status (Alba et al., 2000; Pattillo-McCoy, 2002). For example, compared to their middle-class European American counterparts, middle-class African Americans are much more likely to live in neighborhoods that are less affluent (Alba et al., 2000) and have greater poverty rates (Jargowsky, 2003). Other research has shown that in suburban locations, even after controlling for SES factors, African Americans are more likely to be exposed to property and violent crime than European Americans (Alba, Logan, & Bellair, 1994). This may be at least partly due to the fact that middle-class African American families are more likely than European Americans to live in areas that are in closer proximity to neighborhoods of poorer individuals (Pattillo-McCoy, 2002). As a result, African American families, regardless of SES, are more likely than European Americans to have increased exposure to neighborhood risk factors.
The extent to which neighborhood factors explain parenting differences between European Americans and African Americans has depended on the parenting variable studied. Pinderhughes et al. (2001) found that controlling for neighborhood factors partially mediated initial parenting differences in warmth and consistent discipline between European Americans and African Americans. Pinderhughes et al. (2008) also found that neighborhood resources, safety, and social involvement helped explain initial differences in parental warmth, but not parental monitoring and behavioral control among families with adolescents. Another study found that neighborhood social characteristics could not fully account for initial psychological control differences between European Americans and African Americans (Hill & Tyson, 2008). Thus, it is likely that the effects of neighborhood factors depend in large part on parents’ perceptions of the neighborhood and the parenting factors assessed.

**Parental Prevention-Focus**

Examining the mediators of neighborhood characteristics on parenting solely through the lens of psychological functioning, especially within only high-risk neighborhoods, offers a limited understanding of how parents respond to their environments. This perspective tends to be more deficit-oriented and does not consider that parents are purposeful or strategic in their parenting. Parents may not necessarily succumb to environmental risk factors through adverse changes in psychological well-being and stress levels. They can also be active participants in how they navigate their surroundings. Both quantitative and qualitative research has shown that parents adopt specific childrearing strategies for their environmental conditions (Burton & Jarrett 2000; Furstenberg et al., 1999). Parents may feel the need to be more restrictive of their children’s behavior to be most effective in protecting them against risk factors present in the
neighborhood. For example, Jarrett (1997) argued that in impoverished urban communities, African American parents tend to insulate their children from dangers by restricting and monitoring who their children associate with and where they go.

Regulatory focus may help explain the effects of neighborhoods on parents’ decisions and behavior. Higgins (1998) and other subsequent studies (Liberman, Idson, Camacho, & Higgins, 1999; Sassenberg & Hansen, 2007) have found that behavior is largely motivated by promotion or prevention regulatory focuses. Individuals with a promotion-focus seek positive outcomes, whereas those with a prevention-focus are more concerned with avoiding negative outcomes. As a result, these differences in desired end states translate into concerns for advancement and growth versus worries about safety and being alert for potential dangers. Prevention-focus and promotion-focus are not mutually exclusive, as empirical work has also shown that individuals can be primed to hold either regulatory focus depending on environmental cues (Higgins, 1998).

This issue of regulatory focus has rarely been used to explain parenting behaviors, but the potential link is clear. For instance, risk factors present in the community may prime parents to be more prevention-focused, in that they will be more concerned with maintaining their children’s safety than promoting their growth. This prevention-focus may then lead to specific parenting behaviors, such as restricting children’s behaviors and decisions. Conversely, parents with a promotion-focus are more likely to concentrate on the goals and successes they want for their children and will perhaps display more supportive parenting behaviors. However, no other known study has tested how parents’ regulatory focus translates into specific parenting behaviors.
The Current Study

The previous research in this area suggests that neighborhood factors and subsequent parent psychosocial variables can account for some of the parenting differences between European Americans and African American, but no known study has included parents’ prevention-focus as an alternative pathway. Furthermore, most studies used samples of predominately lower SES urban families. The current study attempted to address these limitations by using the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS) data to test a model of how neighborhood factors and parents’ focus on preventing problems account for ethnic differences in controlling parenting behaviors, independent of other demographic and psychological factors. The MADICS is unique in that it collected interview and survey data from economically and ecologically diverse African American and European American families living in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Longitudinal data on parenting behaviors were collected when adolescents were in seventh, ninth, and eleventh grade, creating the opportunity to measure trajectories of parental control and how socio-contextual and psychological factors are related to these patterns.

Based on the previous literature, I tested the model in Figure 3.1. The model argues that after controlling for family income, education, depressive symptoms, marital status, and child gender, ethnic differences in neighborhood disorder would predict higher levels of parental prevention-focus. In turn, I hypothesized that parents’ prevention-focus would be positively related to controlling behaviors, such as intrusiveness and discipline, during adolescents’ seventh grade school year and changes in parental control that occurred thereafter during the ninth and
eleventh grade. Overall, I expected that the neighborhood and psychosocial factors would account for ethnic differences and trajectories in these parenting behaviors.

**Methods**

**Participants**

The MADICS longitudinal study was conducted with economically and ecologically diverse families of seventh graders to examine adolescent development in multiple contexts (Eccles, 1997). The MADICS participants were from Prince George’s County, Maryland, a county directly east of Washington, DC. The participants were a subsample of the Adolescents in Multiple Contexts study, which surveyed all seventh grade students attending middle schools in the county district from 1990 to 1992 (Cook et al., 1999). Of the approximately 5000 students in the 1990 cohort, 1948 families were selected through stratified sampling to proportionally represent all families with seventh graders in each of the middle schools in the district. Letters were sent to homes seeking parental permission for the seventh grader, his/her parent, and older sibling, if applicable, to participate in the study. From those contacted, 1482 families agreed to participate in the smaller MADICS study. Wave 1 data were collected from the adolescents and who they designated as their primary caregiver in 1991 at the beginning of the seventh grade school year. Wave 3 was collected in 1993, the summer prior to the ninth grade school year, and Wave 4 data was collected during the eleventh grade school year.

This study consists of 803 European American and African American parent-child dyads in which parents completed the MADICS Wave 1 surveys and adolescents participated in the self-administered questionnaires for all three waves of data collection. About two-thirds of the sample was African American (n = 523), which reflects the ethnic composition of Prince
George’s County at the time of data collection. About 12% of the adolescents indicated that their primary caregiver was someone other than their mother (i.e. father, grandparent, or other relatives). For simplicity, I refer to all of these primary caregivers as “parents.” The sample was economically diverse, with the middle 50% of families having an income between $25,000 and $64,999 and 7.8% of families had a total family income below $15,000 in 1990. Parents on average had 14.1 years of education. The average age of the seventh graders in 1991 was 12.3 years old and 50% of the adolescents were male ($n = 404$).

Of the original data, there were 1483 who participated in the Wave 1, 1060 in Wave 3 (76% of the sample still living in Prince George’s County, Maryland), and 1057 in Wave 4 (71% of the original Wave 1 sample and 99% of the Wave 3 sample). Roughly 10% of these respondents identified as an ethnicity other than European American or African American, and these participants were excluded from this study. To be included in this longitudinal sample, participants needed to have responded to at least one of the items for each measure in the study across all waves of data. As some families with Wave 1 data dropped out of the study by Waves 3 and 4, I conducted independent sample t-tests to compare the families with Waves 3 and 4 data to those families without them. Results showed that families without Waves 3 and 4 data tended to have lower levels of education and income and were more prevention-focused, but they did not differ in terms of ethnicity or the other measures used in this study.

**Procedure**

At each wave, the adolescents and primary caregivers both completed a 30 minute self-administered questionnaire and participated in a face-to-face interview that lasted approximately one hour. The questionnaires and interviews included a broad range of items about parenting,
resources, and well-being for each participant (Eccles, 1997). Adolescents and primary caregivers were each paid $15 for their participation at each assessment. As often as possible, the ethnicity of the trained MADICS interviewer was matched to that of the primary caregiver.

**Measures**

**Neighborhood Problems.** During the Wave 1 self-administered survey, parents answered questions regarding the prevalence of various neighborhood problems (14 items; \( \alpha = .96 \)). These items were adapted from the Philadelphia Family Management Study (Furstenberg, Cook, Eccles, Elder, & Sameroff, 1999). Issues asked about were 1) unemployment, 2) racial tension, 3) vandalism, 4) little respect for laws and authority, 5) prostitution, 6) organized crime, 7) sexual assaults, 8) assaults/muggings, 9) gangs, 10) drug use or dealing in the open, 11) unavailable police, 12) teenage pregnancy, 13) loitering groups of teenagers, and 14) police not caring about problems. They were measured on a 3-point scale (1 = *not a problem*, 2 = *somewhat a problem*, and 3 = *a big problem*). Factor analyses determined that all the items loaded highly on a unidimensional scale and items were randomly assigned to four parcels to reduce the number of parameters needing estimation (Kishton & Widaman, 1994). For each indicator, higher values reflect a greater prevalence of neighborhood problems.

**Prevention-Focus.** During the Wave 1 face-to-face interview, parents stated how often they actively worked to prevent their child from getting involved with things that the parents worried about, such as problems with school, drugs, or other issues (5 items; \( \alpha = .70 \)). These items were adapted from the Philadelphia Family Management Study (Furstenberg et al., 1999). Parents were asked the stem, “In the past six months, how often did you ___?” and the questions were 1) “talk to him/her about your worries,” 2) “keep him/her away from these dangers,” 3)
Parental Intrusiveness. Based on items from the Philadelphia Family Management Study (Furstenberg et al., 1999), adolescents reported in the Wave 1, Wave 3, and Wave 4 self-administered questionnaires the extent to which their parents displayed restrictive and controlling behaviors. Adolescents reported how often their parents tell them what to do and how to act, ask too many questions about where they have been going/what they have been doing, have too many rules for them, and treat them more like a kid than like an adult. These four items were scored with a 5-point scale (1 = almost never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = about half the time, 4 = fairly often, and 5 = almost always). These scores were averaged to create the variable and higher values reflect more intrusiveness (Wave 1 $\alpha = .66$; Wave 3 $\alpha = .70$; and Wave 4 $\alpha = .75$).

Parental Discipline. In the Wave 1 self-administered questionnaire, adolescents reported how often their parents punished them for not following rules or receiving bad grades in school (5 items; $\alpha = .68$). These items were adapted from the Philadelphia Family Management Study (Furstenberg et al., 1999). Adolescents were asked the stem question “When you break one of your parent’s important rules, how often do they ___?” and the questions were 1) “ground you,” 2) “take away some privileges,” 3) “yell at you,” and 4) “physically punish/hit you.” Items were scored with a 5-point scale (1 = almost never, 2 = once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and
5 = almost always). These scores were averaged to create the variable and higher values reflect a greater use of discipline (Wave 1 $\alpha = .66$; Wave 3 $\alpha = .68$; and Wave 4 $\alpha = .68$).

**Control Variables.** The highest grade completed by the primary and secondary caregiver (if applicable) were averaged together to represent parents’ education level. Family income was measured using a single item from the primary caregiver interview that asked, “From all sources you mentioned, what was your total family income before taxes in 1990?” During the Wave 1 self-administered survey, parents stated the extent to which they experienced depressive symptoms over the past several months (4 items; $\alpha = .82$). Parents were asked the stem, “During the past couple of months (including today) how often have you felt ___?” and the questions were 1) “hopeless,” 2) “lonely,” 3) “like you don’t care anymore,” and 4) “depressed.” All of the items were on a 5-point scale (1 = almost never, 2 = once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = almost always). These scores were averaged to create the variable and higher values reflect higher levels of depressive symptoms. Controls for the primary caregiver’s marital status (1 = married, 0 = other) and the adolescent’s gender (1 = female, 0 = male) were also included.

**Analytic Plan**

To determine if the effects of ethnicity on parenting behaviors could be accounted for by the proposed mediators in Figure 3.1, latent growth curve (LGC) modeling using Amos 19.0 was employed (Arbuckle, 2007). LGC modeling was used to estimate the interindividual differences in intraindividual changes in controlling parental behaviors between seventh, ninth, and eleventh grades (Duncan, Duncan, Strycker, Li, & Alpert, 1999). The parenting behaviors measured at the different points in time are used as the multiple indicators to the latent intercept and slope constructs. The mean of the latent intercept represents the initial average individual level of
parenting at Time 1 (i.e. seventh grade) and the variance denotes the amount of variability in individuals’ initial level of parenting. Factor loadings for all of the indicators to the intercept are fixed to one. The mean of the latent slope signifies the average change in parenting of all individuals over time and the slope’s variance represents the interindividual differences in the rate of change. The factor loadings for the indicators identify the form of curve that appropriately depicts the rate of change across the different time points.

LCG modeling also accounts for measurement error and allows for a test of the statistical significance of the direct (i.e. non-mediated) and indirect (i.e., mediated) effects. The standard errors and p-values of the indirect effects were estimated using bootstrap methods. The covariates were included in the model to have direct effects on all endogenous variables in the model and to covary with each other and ethnicity, except for child gender, which I constrained to zero to allow for more degrees of freedom. Model fit was assessed with the goodness-of-fit $\chi^2$, the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA).

**Imputation of Missing Data**

Missing data were imputed with the Missing Value Analysis add-on module in SPSS 16.0, using the expectation maximization (EM) algorithm. This method replaces missing values with iterative maximum likelihood estimations based on the available data (Arbuckle, 2007). Less than 1.5% of each item was missing for neighborhood problems, depressive symptoms, parenting behaviors, and youth outcomes. Roughly 12% of parents’ prevention-focus was missing.

**Results**
The zero-order correlations are presented in Table 3.1. As expected, levels of adolescent reported parental intrusiveness and discipline were significantly correlated over time and with each other. Parents’ prevention-focus was also correlated with more discipline and intrusiveness over time, except for discipline during eleventh grade. Greater neighborhood problems and depressive symptoms and less family income and parent education were significantly correlated with more intrusiveness only at seventh grade. Family income was related to less discipline only at only eleventh grade. Family income and parent education were positively related to each other, with lower levels of prevention-focus and fewer reports of neighborhood problems. Lower levels of prevention-focus were also related to being married and having fewer depressive symptoms.

Table 3.2 displays the means and standard deviations for the study variables by ethnicity. The results also showed that compared to European Americans, African Americans adolescents reported higher levels of intrusiveness at each time point, but the groups only differed in discipline in seventh and ninth grade. Mean levels of discipline appeared to decline in a linear fashion across the three time points for both ethnic groups. Mean levels of intrusiveness increased between seventh and ninth grade for both groups, but by eleventh grade, intrusiveness decreased for African Americans and remained relatively unchanged for European Americans. African American parents also reported significantly greater neighborhood problems and were more prevention-focused, but had less family income and education. European Americans were more likely to be married than African Americans, but the groups did not significantly differ in reports of depressive symptoms.

Latent Growth Curve Modeling
**Unconditional Models.** The first step was to establish the unconditional LGC models (without any covariates) that best fit each individual's data for the repeated parenting measures. These unconditional LGC models were estimated separately for parental discipline and intrusiveness to determine the initial levels of these variables and their trajectories over time. Linear representations of the slopes were estimated first, with the factor loadings for seventh, ninth, and eleventh grade set to 0, 2, and 4, respectively. The linear models yielded a good fit for parental discipline, $\chi^2(1) = .08$, $p < .78$, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00. In Table 3.3, results showed the mean was 2.75 for the intercept and -.12 for the slope, both of which were statistically significant. The statistically significant slope coefficient indicates that on average, adolescents reported linear decreases in discipline across the three time points. The variance of the intercept and slope were also statistically significant, indicating that there was substantial variability in the initial levels of discipline and levels of discipline changed over time.

However, a linear slope yielded a poor fit for parental intrusiveness, $\chi^2(1) = 25.68$, $p < .00$, CFI = .87, TLI = .66, RMSEA = .10. Rather, the trajectory for parental intrusiveness was best represented when including an additional slope estimate with the parameters set to the natural log of linear slope factor loadings +1 (i.e. 1, 1.10, and 1.61 for seventh, ninth, and eleventh grade, respectively). Shown in Table 3.3, the model fit the data very well for intrusiveness, $\chi^2(1) = .18$, $p < .67$, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00. Results showed the mean was 2.44 for the intercept and .51 for the slope, both of which were statistically significant. The statistically significant slope coefficient indicates that on average, adolescents reported nonlinear increases in intrusiveness across the three time points. The variances of the intercept and slope were also statistically significant, indicating that there was substantial variability in the
initial levels of intrusiveness and much variability in how levels of intrusiveness increased over time.

**Conditional Models with Ethnicity as a Covariate.** In the next part of the analysis, ethnicity was set to predict these best-fitting models for each of the parenting variables to test the extent to which European Americans and African Americans differed in their initial levels of parental intrusiveness and discipline and their trajectories in these behaviors over time. As shown in Table 3.4, the model fit the data well for parental discipline with ethnicity included, $\chi^2 (2) = 11.54, p < .00, CFI = .98, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .06$. European Americans were significantly lower than African Americans in initial levels of discipline ($b = -.17, p < .01$) and showed a relatively less decrease in their use of discipline relative to African Americans over time ($b = .06, p < .01$). For parental intrusiveness, the model also fit the data well with ethnicity included, $\chi^2 (1) = .07, p < .79, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00$. European Americans were significantly lower than African Americans in initial levels of intrusiveness ($b = -.32, p < .001$), but the groups did not significantly differ in their rates of change over time ($b = -.01, p = .93$).

**Full Mediation Model.** The final phase of the analysis was to determine if neighborhood problems and prevention-focus, independent of SES factors, depressive symptoms, and other demographic variables, mediated the relationships between ethnicity and the slopes and intercepts of discipline and intrusiveness. This model is shown in Figures 3.2 and 3.3 for both parenting outcomes. The proposed model fit the data well for discipline, $\chi^2 (97) = 183.60, p < .00, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .03$ and for intrusiveness, $\chi^2 (94) = 170.98, p < .00, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .03$. The unstandardized and standardized estimates are shown in Table 3.5. European Americans were less likely than African Americans to live in
neighborhoods with higher levels of problems \((b = -.09, p < .05)\) and were less likely to be prevention-focused \((b = -.91, p < .001)\). Greater reports of neighborhood problems were related to higher levels of parents’ prevention-focus \((b = .21, p < .001)\).

Higher levels of parents’ prevention-focus was positively related to both the intercept \((b = .31, p < .001)\) and slope \((b = -.06, p < .01)\) of parental discipline. This suggests that parents with higher levels of prevention-focus are more likely to be perceived by their children as using more discipline during seventh grade. It also suggests that parents who reported a greater prevention-focus decreased less significantly in their use of discipline relative to those who reported lower levels of prevention-focus. Ethnicity and reports of neighborhood problems were not significantly related to the intercept and slope of discipline. However, ethnicity was significantly indirectly related to the slope \((b = .05, p < .01)\) and intercept \((b = -.28, p < .01)\). This suggests that the model significantly mediated how ethnicity is related to initial levels of and changes in use of discipline over time. Neighborhood problems were also significantly indirectly related to the intercept \((b = .07, p < .01)\) and the slope \((b = -.01, p < .01)\).

Higher levels of parents’ prevention-focus was positively related to the intercept of the intrusiveness \((b = .20, p < .001)\) but not the slope \((b = .02, p = .31)\). This suggests that individuals with higher levels of prevention-focus are more likely to be more intrusive than those who are less prevention-focused, but levels of prevention-focus do not account for how parents change in their intrusiveness over time. Ethnicity and neighborhood problems were not significantly related to the intercept or slope. An examination of the indirect effects showed that ethnicity was significantly indirectly relate to the intercept \((b = -.19, p < .01)\) but not the slope \((b = -.01, p = .87)\). These results suggest that the model significantly mediated the relationships
between ethnicity and initial levels of intrusiveness. Neighborhood problems were also significantly indirectly related to the intercept \((b = .04, p < .01)\) but not the slope.

**Discussion**

When trying to account for ethnic differences in parenting, previous research has mainly tested if neighborhood factors accounted for parenting differences between European Americans and African Americans (Pinderhughes et al., 2001; Pinderhughes et al., 2008; Hill & Tyson, 2008) or investigated the processes through which neighborhoods impact parenting (Simons et al., 1997; Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2002). However, studies rarely combine both approaches. I proposed a model in which ethnicity would predict neighborhood problems, which would then be associated with levels of prevention-focus. In turn, prevention-focus would be related to initial levels of controlling parenting behaviors in seventh grade and how these behaviors changed over time through eleventh grade. Overall, the data provided strong support for the theoretical model.

Consistent with my hypothesis, neighborhood problems, primarily through their influence on parental prevention-focus, mediated initial levels of ethnic differences on each of the controlling parenting behaviors studied. As previous studies have shown, regardless of SES, African Americans in this study lived in lower quality neighborhoods than European Americans (Alba, Logan, & Stults, 2000; Pattillo-McCoy, 2002). In light of such neighborhood conditions, African Americans were more likely to adopt a prevention-focus in their parenting. This prevention-focus was in turn associated with parents being more disciplinarian and more intrusive with their children’s behavior. Parents who were more highly prevention-focused also displayed significantly less decreases in discipline over time than those who were not as prevention-focused. This is consistent with other studies which have also shown that dangerous
neighborhood conditions can force parents to restrict what their children can do and with whom they associate (O’Neil et al., 2001; Burton & Jarrett 2000, Furstenberg et al., 1999). Researchers have argued that these are specific strategies parents consciously undertake (Jarrett, 1997), yet few studies have empirically tested why parents utilize this approach. My results suggest that the controlling behaviors parents employ in response to their environmental conditions are perhaps due to the extent to which they adopt a prevention-focus.

Another interesting finding was that African American parents were more likely to be prevention-focused independent of neighborhood problems and the control variables, and this association accounted for most of the ethnic differences in controlling parenting behaviors. It may be the case that African American parents are more prevention-focused in response to other neighborhood characteristics not included in this study, such as lower levels of collective socialization (Jencks & Mayer, 1990). When parents believe they cannot rely on other neighbors to help look after their children, they may feel that much more responsible and be more vigilant about preventing potential problems for their children.

Ethnic differences in prevention-focus may also result from unique ecological demands stemming from racial discrimination. For instance, as part of the racial socialization process, African American parents may convey messages to children about racial barriers or emphasize the need to distrust others in interracial interactions (Hughes et al., 2006). African American parents may also be concerned with preventing their children from confirming negative stereotypes and may thus parent with the goal of avoiding these undesirable outcomes. These discrimination-related concerns may therefore make African American parents more prevention-
focused in their childrearing than European Americans, beyond other social-contextual factors (Sassenberg & Hansen, 2007).

Another purpose of this study was to examine the trajectories of controlling parenting behaviors over time. Intrusiveness displayed a nonlinear trend of increasing between seventh and eleventh grade, but that discipline tended to steadily decrease during this time period. This suggests that as adolescents grow older, parents appear to use less behavioral control and more psychological control. With adolescents spending more time away from their parents’ direct supervision, it may become more difficult for parents to directly regulate their child’s behavior (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Rather, parents may increasingly pressure their adolescents to act in accordance with parental expectations when they are not in their parents’ physical proximity (Barber et al., 2005). This may be especially true in relation to potential decisions that can have negative consequences for their adolescents’ safety and health. For example, using a longitudinal sample of middle-class African American families, Smetana et al. (2004) found that parents’ ratings of their adolescents’ autonomy over prudential issues (i.e. safety or health-related decisions) remained unchanged at ages 13 and 15, and only significantly increased when the adolescent was 17 years old.

Previous studies have examined how aspects of parental control change over time with predominantly European American (Qin, et al., 2009) and African American samples (Smetana et al., 2004), but no known study has specifically how their trajectories compare. The results showed that European Americans and African Americans were similar in how they increased in intrusiveness over time but that their use of discipline declined at somewhat different rates between seventh and eleventh grade. However, this ethnic difference disappeared once parents’
prevention-focus was included in the model. Taken together, these findings support previous studies which have examined how parental control changes over time (Qin, et al., 2009; Smetana et al., 2004) and further suggest that European Americans and African Americans are similar in these trajectories.

Limitations

It is important to mention a few study limitations. First, the neighborhood, psychological, and initial levels of parenting measures were assessed during the same wave of data collection, which precludes the ability to assert causality between ethnicity and the other factors included in this study. It is possible, for example, that parents make changes in their prevention-focus based on parenting practices they have used in the past. Second, parenting measures with somewhat low reliabilities were used in this study, although I utilized structural equation modeling to help account for some of the measurement issues. Third, this study relied primarily on adolescent reports of parenting behaviors. Although this study was interested in assessing how adolescents ultimately experienced parenting, this method may inflate the relationships between these variables. Lastly, because this sample utilized European American and African American adolescents, the findings may not be applicable to families with younger children or of different ethnicities.

Study Implications

There are several important research and intervention implications based on this study’s results. Whereas previous literature tends to emphasize aspects of parents’ psychological functioning as the main explanation of how neighborhood characteristics influence parenting behaviors (Simons et al., 1997; Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2002), my findings suggest that parents are
more purposeful in how they choose to rear their child in certain environmental contexts. My results show that parents may adopt controlling behaviors to keep their child safe and away from dangerous circumstances. Future studies should consider other adolescent and motivational processes that explain how parents’ perceptions of their neighborhood surroundings translate into specific parenting behaviors.

My findings also help provide a better understanding why parents from different ethnic backgrounds vary in their childrearing behaviors. Studies have characterized African Americans as being more discipline oriented and controlling than European Americans (Finkelstein et al., 2000; Dearing, 2004), but this study clearly shows that these behaviors are related to living in neighborhood conditions that are on average more dangerous than what European Americans experience. As such, research and intervention efforts should be sensitive to these contexts when understanding the determinants of parenting and differences between European Americans and African Americans in childrearing behaviors.
CHAPTER 4: DO SOCIALIZATION GOALS EXPLAIN DIFFERENCES IN PARENTAL CONTROL BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE PARENTS?

Adolescence is the developmental period in which children seek both connectedness with and autonomy from their families and begin to develop a sense of individuation (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). As adolescents spend more time outside of the home and away from parent supervision, parents must establish a new balance of how much decision-making opportunities they grant to their adolescents and the extent to which they should place limitations on what their adolescents are allowed to do. The extent to which parents meet their adolescents’ developmental needs can influence a variety of developmental outcomes (Steinberg & Morris, 2001).

Researchers have long been interested in understanding why parents from different ethnic backgrounds exhibit varying patterns of parental control. For instance, several studies have found that in comparison to European Americans, African American parents are less likely to grant their children autonomy in decision making (Bulcroft, Carmody, & Bulcroft, 1996; Goldstein, Davis-Kean, & Eccles, 2005) and tend to be more controlling of their children’s behavior (Dearing, 2004; Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008). Many researchers argue that socioeconomic factors explain these variations in parenting (Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, & Garcia Coll, 2001; Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Steinberg, 1996; Weis & Toolis, 2008). Because income (Chao & Kanatsu, 2008) and neighborhood characteristics (Pinderhughes, Nix, Foster & Jones, 2001) are related levels of parental control, accounting for ethnic differences in these factors would mediate ethnic parenting differences. Other studies have adopted a cultural framework. These studies suggest that African Americans tend to have interdependent socialization goals while European Americans have more independence-oriented goals, and this
explains their different levels of parental control (Kagitçibasi, 2005; Suizzo, Robinson, & Pahlke, 2008; Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 2007).

However, there have been few attempts to disentangle socioeconomic and cultural factors to explain parenting differences (Chaudhuri, Easterbrooks, & Davis, 2009; Suizzo et al., 2008). Most studies assess whether ethnicity remains a significant predictor of parenting behaviors after controlling for SES (Chao & Kanatsu, 2008; Pinderhughes et al., 2001; Weis & Toolis, 2008). When SES factors did not account for all the ethnic differences in parenting, researchers concluded that cultural differences explained the remaining variation (Bulcroft, Carmody, & Bulcroft, 1996; Weis & Toolis, 2008). However, these constructs were never directly assessed, and ethnicity was simply used as a proxy for cultural differences. Thus, the primary purpose of this study was to directly test the assumption that ethnic differences in socialization goals will account for ethnic differences in parental goals, net of SES. Another possibility is that SES and socialization goals interact to explain parenting differences (Suizzo, 2007; Weis & Toolis, 2008). Thus, a secondary purpose was to assess the degree to which the mediation model is moderated by SES.

**Parental Cultural Models, Cognitions, and Behaviors**

Figure 4.1 illustrates the basic mediation model that motivates this study. The model suggests that ethnic differences in parental control are primarily explained by differences in parental goals. Parents derive goals for their children’s development from their cultural and socioeconomic environments. They then utilize parental behaviors and strategies to meet their goals (Suizzo et al., 2008; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2007). In support of this idea, studies show that parental goals are related to a variety of parenting behaviors, including parenting style (Chao,
2000), discipline strategies (Hastings & Grusec, 1998), and parent-child interactions (Liu et al., 2005). For example, parents who have self-development goals for their children are more likely to be involved in their children’s education (Chao, 2000). Studies have also shown that parents with child-centered goals tend to be more responsive, less controlling, and use more reasoning than do those with parent-centered goals (Hastings & Grusec, 1998). Unfortunately, no known study has specifically examined how parents’ independent or interdependent socialization goals are related to their parenting behaviors.

Most goal theories distinguish parents based on their cultural models of parenting, or the frameworks which guide their ideas about what constitutes effective childrearing (Suizzo, 2007). Two main cultural models have been described. The independence model is associated with the values of personal choice, intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and self-maximization, leading to the goal of autonomy and independence. The interdependent model emphasizes the values of connection to family and others, group orientation, and respect and obedience, leading to relatedness goals (Tamis-Lemonda et al., 2007; Oyserman et al., 2002).

The prevailing notion is that European Americans tend to prefer an independence model, while African American parents are more likely to have interdependence or relatedness goals (Suizzo et al., 2008; Tamis-Lemonda et al., 2007). However, the independent-interdependent framework may not accurately portray how African Americans approach their parenting. Oyserman et al. (2002) found that compared to European Americans, African American parents were more collectivistic but no less individualistic oriented in their approach to childrearing. Other theoretical and empirical studies show that African American parents embody an autonomous-interdependence model, in that they value aspects from both independence and
interdependence goals and prioritize both agency and relatedness for their children (Suizzo et al., 2008; Kagitçibasi, 2005). Parents’ Africentric value-system, which developed from African Americans’ shared historical and cultural experiences, can help explain African Americans’ autonomous-interdependent classification. This Africentric worldview reflects African American parents’ belief in self-determination, collective responsibility, spirituality, and cooperation (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Boykin & Toms, 1985). Concurrent with this research, in this study I expected to find European American and African American parents would both highly endorse independence goals, but that African Americans would be more likely to have goals which emphasize deference to and relatedness with one’s family and cultural background.

There is also research suggesting that African Americans may in fact endorse certain aspects of individualism more so than European Americans. For example, African Americans are more likely to promote achievement and success for their children than European Americans (Suizzo, 2007). This goal of success, which emphasizes educational attainment and social status, is related to individualism and self-maximization, but is considered distinct from aspects of independence and autonomy (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). Qualitative and quantitative studies have shown that African Americans encourage education and achievement in response to racial discrimination (Sanders, 1997; Suizzo et al., 2008). Conversely, European American parents may not be as likely to promote the goal of success for their children because they do not have to contend with discrimination and have a stronger confidence in the economic system from which they have already benefited.

Socioeconomic status has also been found to influence both the goals that parents have for their children as well as their parenting behaviors (Lamm & Keller, 2007; Luster, Rhoades, &
Haas, 1989). For instance, middle-class parents tend to stress independence or autonomy more than working class parents who more highly value obedience (Luster, et al, 1989). At the same time, parents with fewer years of education are more likely to emphasize the goal of success, such as being wealthy, renowned, or highly educated (Suizzo, 2007). These differences in values influence how parents treat their children, with parents who value autonomy and independence encouraging self-direction and initiative in learning, while less autonomy oriented parents are more likely to act as direct instructors to their children and encourage obedience and conformity (Hoff-Ginsberg & Tardif, 1995). Given the stark differences in SES between African and European American parents, it is very possible that culture and SES are confounded.

A related possibility is that socioeconomic status will moderate the relationship between ethnicity, socialization goals, and parenting. As individuals simultaneously occupy sociocontextual and cultural environments, the effects of individuals’ social class and ethnic group may be interactive rather than additive. For example, Weis and Toolis (2008) found that low SES European Americans displayed less parental control than did low SES African Americans, but higher SES European American and African American parents did not differ. The same study also found that high SES European American and African American parents did not differ in warmth, but low SES European Americans displayed more warmth than low SES African Americans. Another study by Suizzo (2007) showed that less educated African Americans were more likely than European Americans to endorse power and achievement goals for their young children, but as years of education increased, both groups were similar in their emphasis of this socialization goal. Thus, ethnic differences in parental goals and behaviors may depend on the level of SES.
The Current Study

To help disentangle ethnicity from SES, this study tested two related models in a sample of African American and European American parents of adolescents. The first model suggests that ethnic differences in parenting behaviors are mediated or explained by parental goals. Based on prior research, I predicted that compared to European Americans and independent of SES factors, African American parents would be more likely to endorse goals of cultural-filial piety and success, but that the groups would not differ on the goal of independence. In turn, greater independence goals would be associated with parents providing more autonomy to their adolescents and being less restrictive over their behaviors, while cultural-filial piety and success goals would have the opposite association. I also expected that family SES would moderate the mediation model. I hypothesized that differences between European Americans and African Americans would be smaller for higher SES families than for lower SES ones. In light of the greater group differences for lower SES parents, I expected the socialization goals would have a stronger mediational role for lower SES families compared to higher SES parents.

Methods

Participants

This sample was comprised of 209 European American and 111 African American parents of adolescents 10 to 18 years of age. The mean age of the parents was 50.0 years. Approximately 71% reported that they were married. The reported median total family income for European Americans was $130,000 ($SD = $106,286) and ranged from $12,000 to $555,000, whereas African Americans had a median total family income of $87,000 ($SD = $79,332), ranging from $12,000 to $350,000. Approximately 70% of European Americans and 35% of
African American parents (and their spouse, if applicable) had at least a bachelor’s degree. The mean age of the adolescents was 15.9 years and 42% of the adolescents were male.

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited from a large urban metropolitan area primarily through public middle schools and high schools. I purposely sampled individuals from more affluent neighborhoods in order to increase the proportion of middle and upper income African Americans in the study. Contact was made with the parent organizations and multi-cultural centers affiliated with the schools. After giving their approval, letters and postings in bimonthly school newsletters explaining the study were sent to prospective parents. Parents were allowed to fill out the survey online, request that a hard copy be mailed to them directly, or complete the survey at their adolescent’s school on a designated date. Parents were compensated for their participation and were told that additional money would be donated to the parent organizations and multi-cultural centers.

**Measures**

**Parental Goals.** Items from the Goals and Values in Adulthood Questionnaire (Suizzo, 2007) were used to measure the extent to which parents felt it was important for their adolescents to have certain values or characteristics when they were older. Parents were asked a series of questions with the stem, “How important do you feel it is for your adolescent to have each of these goals or values as an adult?” and items were assessed using a 4-point scale (1 = not important to 4 = extremely important). **Independence Goals** (7 items, European American \( \alpha = .80 \), African American \( \alpha = .87 \)) refer to parents’ desire for their adolescents to be independent, determined, and self-reliant. **Filial-Cultural Piety Goals** (5 items, European American \( \alpha = .69 \),
African American $\alpha = .72$) pertains to parents wanting their adolescents to have respect for parents, elders, and those who are senior to him or her, and to possess religious, cultural, and ethnic pride.\textit{Success Goals} (4 items, European American $\alpha = .73$, African American $\alpha = .74$) pertains to parents’ desire for their adolescents to attain social, economic, and educational success.

**Parenting Behaviors.** Parents reported on how often they exhibited certain parenting behaviors with their adolescents using items adapted from the Children’s Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (Schaefer, 1965) and were assessed using a 4-point scale (1 = almost never to 4 = very often).\textit{Autonomy-Granting} (4 items, European American $\alpha = .77$, African American $\alpha = .70$) refers to how much freedom and choice they gave their adolescents.\textit{Strictness} (9 items, European American $\alpha = .74$, African American $\alpha = .78$) is related to how much parents restricted what their adolescents are allowed to do and what their adolescents decide.

**Socioeconomic Status.** Parents’ socioeconomic status was measured using a composite of three variables. Adapted from Whitbeck et al. (1991),\textit{Economic Security} (8 items, $\alpha = .86$) measured how often parents felt his or her family had the money it needed for: a home, clothing, household items, a car, food, medical care and recreational activities. Parents were also asked how stressed they were over the family’s financial situation. The items were assessed using a 4-point scale (1 = almost never to 4 = very often). Parents also reported their highest level of education at the time of the survey and that of their spouse, if applicable. Their answers were coded from 1 (did not attend school) to 10 (doctoral degree). Bachelor’s degree was coded as 7.\textit{Parent Education} represented the average level of schooling in the household. Lastly,\textit{Family Income} represented the total annual income earned by the parents and their spouse, if applicable.
These three variables were standardized and averaged to create the family socioeconomic status measure (European American $\alpha = .72$, African American $\alpha = .65$).

**Demographic Variables.** Adolescents’ age, gender, and the school in which they attended were also controlled for in the model.

**Analysis Plan**

Latent variable structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation was conducted using AMOS 16.0 (Arbuckle, 2007) to test direct and indirect effects of the mediation and moderated mediation models. Bootstrap methods were used to derive the standard errors and p-values of the indirect effects. To reduce the complexity of the model given the number of variables, composites of each factor were used as indicators of latent variables using standard methods. Thus, each indicator’s residual was set to the variance of the composite multiplied by the error variance (i.e. $1 - \alpha$) and the path from the indicator to its respective latent variable was fixed to the square root of the composite’s reliability. This approach accounts for measurement error while reducing the number of parameters needing estimation (Stephenson & Holbert, 2003). Multiple-group analysis was also used to test the degree to which SES moderated the mediation model (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). Nested models and pairwise comparisons were used to assess SES as a moderator. Established criteria for the goodness-of-fit $\chi^2$, the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used to assess the model’s overall fit.

**Results**

The zero-order correlations of the study variables for the full sample are presented in Table 4.1. The goal of filial-cultural piety was positively related to the goals of independence
and success, which were only marginally correlated with each other. Parental strictness and autonomy-granting were negatively associated and were significantly related to each of the parental socialization goals. The goals of filial-cultural piety and success were related to greater strictness and less autonomy-granting. The goal of independence was correlated with both greater autonomy-granting and strictness. Autonomy-granting was positively related to family SES, while strictness had the opposite relationship. Family SES was negatively associated with the goals of filial-cultural piety and success and had a marginal positive correlation with the goal of independence. Adolescent age and gender were also associated with several of the study variables. Age and being male were positively related to parental autonomy-granting and less strictness and negatively associated with success socialization goals. Being male was also correlated with greater independence socialization goals and age was negatively related to the goal of filial-cultural piety.

Table 4.2 presents the means, standard deviations, and independent samples t-tests for each main study variable for European Americans and African Americans. The groups differed on all but one study variable. As expected, European and African Americans did not differ on the socialization goal of independence, but African Americans were more likely to have the goal of filial-cultural piety for their adolescents. African Americans also tended to have the goal of success more so than European Americans. The two groups significantly differed in their parenting, in that compared to African Americans, European Americans were less strict and provided more autonomy. Lastly, European Americans had higher SES than African Americans.

Structural Equation Models
My SEM analyses proceeded in three steps. I first computed the ethnic differences in each of the parenting behaviors, controlling for family SES. Next, I introduced the three socialization goals to test the full mediation model. Lastly, I tested whether family SES moderated the mediation model.

The independent direct effects of ethnicity and SES on each parenting variable are shown in Table 4.3. Compared to European Americans and controlling for family SES, African Americans were stricter ($b = .40, p < .001$) and granted less autonomy ($b = -.44, p < .001$). Greater family SES also predicted less strictness ($b = -.14, p < .001$) and more autonomy-granting ($b = .21, p < .001$), independent of parent ethnicity. These models explained 30% of the variance for autonomy-granting and 24% of the variance for strictness.

I next tested the full mediation model shown in Figure 4.1. Because European and African Americans did not significantly differ on the goal of independence, this pathway was constrained to be zero. The model fit the data well, $\chi^2(2) = 5.36, p < .07$, CFI = 1.00, TLI=.94, RMSEA = .07, and explained 56% and 45% of the variance in parental strictness and autonomy-granting, respectively.

The parameter estimates of the model on parental strictness and autonomy-granting are displayed in Table 4.4. Compared to European Americans, African Americans were more likely to have filial-cultural piety ($b = .62, p < .001$) and success goals ($b = .62, p < .001$) for their adolescents. Family SES was not significantly associated with any of the parental socialization goals. The goals of filial-cultural piety ($b = .42, p < .001$) and success ($b = .10, p < .05$) predicted greater parenting strictness, but the goal of independence was not significantly related. These parental socialization goals mediated the effects of ethnicity on parenting strictness. The direct
effects of ethnicity on strictness was no longer significant, but there was a significant indirect effect ($b = .32, p < .01$). The direct and indirect effects of family SES on strictness were not significant.

A different pattern emerged when examining the model for autonomy-granting. The goal of independence ($b = .43, p < .001$) predicted greater autonomy-granting, but the goals of filial-cultural piety and success did not have a significant relationship. Furthermore, the direct effects of both ethnicity ($b = -.22, p < .05$) and family SES ($b = .14, p < .001$) continued to significantly predict autonomy-granting. The indirect effects of ethnicity and family SES on autonomy-granting were not significant, which suggests that parental socialization goals did not significantly mediate the relationships between these factors and autonomy-granting.

Multiple-group analyses were conducted in the last phase to test whether family SES moderated the relationships between ethnicity, parental socialization goals, and parenting behaviors. Median splits ($n = 160$ for each group) were used to create lower SES (-2.37 to .06) and higher SES (.07 to 2.00) groups. This process entailed comparing the default model with unconstrained structural paths to a fixed model where the structural paths were constrained to be equal across lower and higher SES parents. The unconstrained model fit the data well: $\chi^2(4) = 4.71, p = .32$, CFI = 1.00, TLI = .99, RMSEA = .02. The constrained model appeared to fit the data similarly: $\chi^2(29) = 22.68, p = .79$, CFI = 1.00, TLI = .99, RMSEA = .02. The nested model comparisons, $\Delta \chi^2(25) = 17.97, p < .84$ revealed no significant difference in fit between the constrained and unconstrained models, meaning that SES did not significantly moderate the model.

**Discussion**
Most prior research suggest that because SES and ethnicity are highly correlated and often confounded (Hill & Sprague, 1999), SES likely accounts for the reason African American parents score higher on measures of parental control than European American parents. The results of this and most recent studies did not support this notion. Similar to other studies (Chao & Kanatsu, 2008; Weis & Toolis, 2008), I found that a large ethnic variation in parental control remained even after SES was accounted for. Ethnic differences in parental goals accounted for much of the parenting differences, but it depended on the specific outcome.

The extent to which parental socialization goals related to parenting strictness and autonomy-granting generally supported my hypotheses. As expected, parents who placed a greater emphasis on the goal of independence also tended to provide more autonomy to their adolescents. Similarly, a stronger endorsement of filial-cultural piety goals was related to a greater use of strict parenting behaviors. These findings support previous studies. Parents may feel it is important to grant certain freedoms and decision-making opportunities to their adolescents to foster their development into autonomous and self-reliant adults in the future. However, parents may also restrict their adolescents’ behavior to encourage their deference and obedience to family and group norms (Tamis-Lemonda et al., 2007; Oyserman et al., 2002).

Interestingly, the goal of success was related to greater parenting strictness but did not significantly predict autonomy-granting. Other studies have shown that by encouraging adolescents’ success and achievement, parents also promote certain aspects of individualism and independence (Suizzo, 2007; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). My findings suggest that to achieve this specific socialization goal, parents may create a firm and structured environment for their adolescents rather than allow their adolescents freedom to make their own choices. This may be
due to parents’ beliefs that hard work and discipline are required to achieve success and that adolescents need strict rules to stay on this trajectory (Suizzo et al., 2008). Studies have also shown that parents who are highly academically demanding also tend to be more disciplinarian in their parenting style (Spera, 2005). Thus, although the goal of success is more closely related to promoting a child’s independence, parents may use more strict parenting behaviors toward reaching this developmental goal.

Previous studies have also argued that parental autonomy-granting and strictness are not polar opposites of each other on the parenting spectrum; that being less strict is not necessarily the equivalent of providing more autonomy (Skinner, Johnson, & Snyder, 2005). This perhaps explains why in this study, although the goal of independence was related to more autonomy-granting, it did not have a significant association with parenting strictness. Similarly, success and filial-cultural piety goals predicted greater parenting strictness, but was not related to autonomy-granting. Although parents may want their adolescents to be independent in the future, they also understand that allowing their adolescents unilateral decision making may have negative consequences on their adolescents’ development (Dearing, 2004). Parents give developmentally appropriate levels of autonomy while setting boundaries for what their adolescents are allowed to do. In this sense, restricting adolescents’ behaviors to some degree is a component of parents socializing their adolescents toward independence. Similarly, studies have shown that the goal of filial-cultural piety is compatible with parents providing more autonomy to their adolescents. Parents believe that promoting independence and individuality in adolescents also helps foster their sense of relatedness (Tamis-Lemonda et al., 2007). By encouraging individual achievement,
adolescents may then be able to share their success with others and foster their sense of relatedness.

Consistent with my hypothesis, parental socialization goals mediated the ethnic differences in parental strictness, even when controlling for socioeconomic factors. Although social class is inversely related to parenting strictness (Luster et al., 1989), my results show that ethnic variations in strictness are primarily a function of cultural differences and not economic factors. African Americans in my sample were more likely to endorse the goal of filial-cultural piety, which was related to a greater use of strict parenting. Other studies also found that African American parents prioritize the goals of connectedness and conformity (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Boykin & Toms, 1985; Suizzo, 2007), which are related to parental discipline strategies (Hastings & Grusec, 1998). This is in accordance with African American parents’ Africentric value-system, in that they socialize their children to develop a sense of family unity and collective responsibility (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Boykin & Toms, 1985). Parents may feel they need to ensure that their children’s behavior is in accordance with the needs of the family and larger community. By focusing more on discipline and behavioral control, parents may feel they are instilling a respect for authority.

Counter to my expectations, parental goals only partly explained the ethnic differences in autonomy-granting. Although the groups were not expected to differ on the goal of independence, I hypothesized that ethnic variations in the goals of success and filial-cultural piety would account for some of the parenting differences. This hypothesis was not supported. This suggests that parents perhaps do not view providing autonomy as a means toward achieving success and filial-cultural piety goals for their adolescents. For example, although parents may
stress obedience and respect for one’s elders, this may not necessarily infringe on the amount of choices they give to their adolescents over certain aspects of their lives. In fact, Africentric values emphasize both aspects of family unity and individual self-expression (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Boykin & Toms, 1985). Similarly, parents may utilize other parenting behaviors, such as academic socialization or school involvement to fulfill their goals of success (Suizzo et al., 2008). Overall, this may explain why ethnic differences in autonomy-granting were not accounted for by variations in success and filial-cultural piety goals.

It may also be that socio-contextual factors other than the ones included in this study can account for ethnic differences in parental autonomy-granting. For example, numerous studies show that African Americans experience lower neighborhood quality than European Americans of comparable socioeconomic status (Alba, Logan, & Stults, 2000). Compared to their middle-class European American counterparts, middle-class African Americans are much more likely to live in neighborhoods that are less affluent and have greater poverty rates. As a result of this relative increased exposure to neighborhood risk factors, African Americans may be more protective of their adolescents and reduce their child’s decisions making opportunities. For instance, studies have shown that mothers’ perceptions of neighborhood problems are related to supervising children’s activities and setting limits on their activities (O’Neil, Parke, & McDowell, 2001).

Another finding was that European Americans and African Americans did not differ on the goal of independence for their adolescents. This is consistent with previous studies that show they were similar in their independence and self-reliance orientations (Oyserman et al., 2002; Suizzo, 2007) and that African American families also greatly endorse aspects of self-
determination (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Boykin & Toms, 1985). However, compared to European Americans, the African Americans in my sample tended to value the goal of success, which emphasizes self-enhancement, power, and achievement. Other studies have found that African Americans stress education as a means of social and economic mobility and as a protective factor against racial discrimination (Suizzo et al., 2008). Thus, the findings in this study further support the claim that African Americans highly value independence for their adolescents, and in some instances, may do so more than European American parents.

The final purpose of this study was to ascertain the interactive effect of socioeconomic status on socialization goals and parenting behavior. I did not find evidence that SES moderated the mediating role of parental goals. Although family SES was correlated with the socialization goals parents had for their adolescents, this did not alter the extent to which ethnicity was related to these measures. Lower and higher SES European American and African American parents did not statistically differ in their endorsement of independence goals, but African Americans tended to promote filial-cultural piety and success goals more so than European Americans across both SES levels. These results are similar to those by Suizzo (2007) who also reported a non-significant interactive effect of ethnicity and education on tradition/conformity and agency/self-direction socialization goals. Unlike Suizzo (2007), my results also showed that family SES did not moderate the relationship between ethnicity and success goals. This difference may be due to sampling, as this study focused on adolescents rather than young children. Parents of young children may have more idealistic or abstract socialization goals when their children are very young, while parents of adolescents may possess socialization goals that are more specific to
their socioeconomic conditions or specific life circumstances (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003).

It is important to mention a few study limitations. The cross-sectional design precludes the ability to assert causality between ethnicity, parental goals, and parenting behavior. It is possible that parents’ goals for their children can be influenced by how well their parenting behaviors meet their children’s needs. Future research should look to experimental designs to better understand how varying parental cognitions can elicit specific parenting behaviors. Earlier work by Hastings and Grusec (1998) offers an appropriate example of this, but more research is needed to draw definitive conclusions on how parent cognitions and behaviors are interrelated. Another limitation of this study is the use of parent self-reports for all the parenting measures. Lastly, the generalizability of the findings may also have issues as all of my participants lived in a large city. It is possible that parents living in rural or suburban areas will have different socialization goals for their children.

**Conclusion and Implications**

Despite these limitations, my findings may have important implications for researchers and practitioners. There is a multitude of parent training programs focused on teaching parents the necessary skills needed to become better parents and to foster the healthy development of their children, but studies show mixed results for their overall effectiveness (Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008). Social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) argues that behavioral changes often require modifications to cognitive patterns. Teaching parents “best practices” for childrearing can perhaps be augmented by adapting them to the socialization goals parents have or how they see their role in raising their children. The results presented here suggest that
programs can be improved by increasing the attention given to parental cognitions to maximize their potential for making long-term changes in their participants’ parenting practices.

One important implication of the current findings concerns the way in which African American parenting behaviors are characterized. African Americans parents are often described as authoritarian in their parenting style (Dearing, 2004; Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008), even though they have parenting goals that would seemingly correspond to a more authoritative approach. African American and European American parents endorsed independence goals to the same extent, yet this was not related to similar usage of autonomy-granting behaviors. This perhaps suggests that African American parents utilize parenting behaviors other than autonomy-granting in an effort to instill independence in their adolescents or perhaps there are other socio-contextual conditions, such as neighborhood conditions, independent of cultural or economic factors that inhibit African American parents from providing autonomy to their adolescents. Future studies should explore the extent to which parents are aware of additional obstacles that inhibit rearing their children in accordance with their goals and whether they would change aspects of their parenting if these obstacles did not exist.
CHAPTER 5: THE ROLE OF PARENTING, ACADEMIC GOALS, AND STUDY HABITS IN ACADEMICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS’ SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

The degree to which the home environment relates to adolescents’ school performance has long been a research focus in various fields (Spera, 2005). Despite the progress in this area, an insufficient number of studies have focused on identifying the specific parenting practices related to achievement among academically talented adolescents. Academically talented adolescents are those who have the ability to perform exceptionally well in traditional educational settings, yet a common misconception among parents and educators is that academically talented students automatically possess the motivation to succeed academically (Feldman & Piirto, 2002). In light of the large number of talented students dropping out of their high-ability curriculum tracks or failing to graduate from high school altogether (Wyner, Bridgeland, & Dilulio, 2007) and the drastic underrepresentation of many ethnic minorities in gifted academic programs (Konstantopoulos, Modi, & Hedges, 2001), it is unfortunate that not enough attention has been given to this area.

Reviews of empirical research conducted over the past several decades concluded that a variety of parental behaviors, such as parental involvement, monitoring, and warmth are significant predictors of adolescent achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Spera, 2005). Other studies have also shown that the amount of cognitive stimulation provided at home and academic socialization are also positively related to academic performance (Suizzo & Soon, 2006; Mandara, Varner, Greene, & Richman 2009). However, studies examining the role of parenting among academically talented adolescents tend to focus on either educational-oriented behaviors, such as cognitive stimulation or parents’ academic expectations (Rathunde, 1996; Weissler &
Landau, 1993) or broader aspects of the home environment, such as family cohesion or parenting styles (Morawska & Sanders, 2008; Garn, Matthews, & Jolly, 2010). Rarely do studies incorporate multiple dimensions of parenting, and it is therefore difficult to ascertain the unique influence specific parenting behaviors have on talented adolescents’ achievement.

Another shortcoming of the current body of literature is that only a few studies have investigated the mediators of parenting among high-achieving adolescents. There is not a clear understanding of how the home environment and parenting may exert its influence on academic achievement. Even in normative samples, studies have only examined a few possible psychosocial mediators such as motivation and goals (Grolnick, Ryan & Deci, 1991; Wentzel, 1998). It is not fully known if school related behaviors such as study skills and habits mediate the effects of parenting or academic motivation. This is especially the case in ethnically diverse samples, as the vast majority of studies examining mediators of parenting on achievement have used almost exclusively rural or suburban European American samples (e.g., Grolnick et al., 1991; Wentzel, 1998) or poor inner city African American samples (e.g., Gutman & Midgley, 2000).

This study addresses these limitations by examining not only what childrearing behaviors are important for adolescents’ academic performance, but by also investigating mechanisms through which parenting exerts its influence. The specific purpose was to test a theoretical model of the social-cognitive and behavioral factors that mediate the effects of parenting on the achievement of academically talented high school students. This study also deviates from most prior research because it included a multi-ethnic sample of high-achieving adolescents. Given
that the effects of parenting are often different for various ethnic groups (Desimone, 1999; Bean et al., 2003), a further purpose of this study was to examine the theoretical model by ethnicity.

**Overview of the Model**

An implicit assumption of the model is that parents play an important role in their adolescents’ academic achievement, not just due to genetic contributions (Feldman & Piirto, 2002), but also because they directly impact their adolescents’ orientations and motivations to succeed academically. Adolescence is the developmental period in which children seek both connectedness with and autonomy from their families and begin to develop a sense of individuation (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Adolescents also begin to self-regulate themselves as they seek to develop and refine their identities by selecting specific behaviors needed to actualize the goals they have (Gestsdottir & Learner, 2007). Research has shown that responsive-nurturing parenting is critical to adolescents’ self-regulation development, and the extent to which parents meet their adolescents’ developmental needs can determine whether adolescents become motivated and self-regulated learners (Purdie, Carroll, & Roche, 2004).

The model, represented in Figure 5.1, illustrates a process by which parenting can influence academically talented adolescents’ academic performance. I hypothesized that parental support, monitoring, cognitive stimulation, and academic demandingness uniquely predict adolescents’ achievement goal orientations. In turn, these goal orientations are related to academic performance through their influence on adolescents’ study skills and habits. The model argues that academically talented adolescents who have warm and academically involved parents will become more self-motivated and regulated learners. They will spend more time studying and use more effective study strategies, which will lead to greater academic success.
Parenting Behaviors and Achievement Goal Orientations

Cognitive and developmental psychology theories have examined how students’ achievement goals impact their performance in school. Achievement goals represent the reasons or motivations for why individuals engage in certain achievement-related tasks in the manner in which they do (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Achievement goals are not necessarily a set of desired accomplishments individuals seek to fulfill, but rather are orientations that frame how individuals approach potential learning situations (Pintrich, 2000). To date, research has classified individuals’ goal orientations into two specific types. Mastery goals are those focused on developing competence and performance goals are concerned with displaying competence to others (Meece, Anderman, & Anderman, 2006). Recent achievement goal theory has distinguished performance-approach (i.e., goal of obtaining positive performance judgments) from performance-avoidance goals (i.e., goal of avoiding the appearance of incompetence in front of others), and empirical work has supported the need to differentiate between the two (Pintrich, 2003; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Because performance-approach goals can be adaptive for some outcomes and in some environmental contexts, distinguishing performance-approach from performance-avoidance goals provides a more nuanced understanding of how achievement goals can impact academic outcomes (Pintrich, 2003).

Although on average, academically talented students do have higher levels of intrinsic motivation than their peers (Gottfried, Gottfried, Cook, & Morris, 2005), there is still great variability among academically talented students. McCoach and Siegle (2003) found that high-achieving and under-achieving academically talented students significantly differed in their attitudes toward school and their teachers, achievement valuation, and self-regulation. Rathunde
and Csikszentmihalyi (1993) showed that even when controlling for individual and family background factors, academically talented students who displayed higher levels of interest in their school-related tasks tended to perform better in school. Studies have also found that high-achieving African American students had greater levels of pro-academic behaviors (Lee, Winfield, & Wilson, 1991) and were more task-oriented (Prom-Jackson, Johnson, & Wallace, 1987) than lower-achieving African American students.

The model proposed here suggests that various dimensions of parenting have a direct effect on adolescents’ goal orientations. This hypothesis is based on an emerging body of research that shows adolescent achievement goal orientations are related to general parenting (Gonzalez, Holbein, & Quilter, 2002), warmth (Fulton & Turner, 2008), monitoring (Leung & Kwan, 1998), parents’ achievement goal emphases (Friedel et al., 2007), and cognitive stimulation (Pomerantz, Ng, & Wang, 2006). Studies have also examined how parental warmth, autonomy granting, and monitoring are individually related to how children approach learning opportunities. For example, children’s extrinsic motivation was predicted by greater parental control and demandingness (Leung & Kwan, 1998), whereas greater parental warmth was associated with more positive orientations toward learning (Fulton & Turner, 2008). Even among academically talented adolescents, the combination of higher amounts of family support and a challenging home environment are related to adolescents’ greater interest in school-related tasks (Rathunde, 1996).

Studies have only examined specific parenting practices and not how these practices simultaneously contribute to children’s achievement goals. Because various parenting practices are highly correlated with each other (Gray & Steinberg, 1999), unless several practices are
simultaneously assessed, it is difficult to know the unique effects of each parenting practice. Studies have also not tested these relationships with academically talented adolescents. Similar to the rest of the population, academically talented adolescents likely require parental support, encouragement, and high expectations to perform well in school and to help translate their intellectual ability into academic achievement (Morawska & Sanders, 2008; Garn et al., 2010). However, parents with such children tend to provide higher levels of cognitive stimulation and have more cognitive interactions than other parents (Rathunde, 1996; Weissler & Landau, 1993). They also report being more disciplinarian in attempts to keep their children more motivated (Morawska & Sanders, 2008; Garn et al., 2010).

**Achievement Goals and Achievement Behaviors and Performance**

The next portion of the conceptual model considers the process through which achievement goal orientations may lead to academic outcomes. Although achievement goal orientations motivate and guide how individuals engage in achievement-related tasks, studies on the relationships between goal orientations and academic achievement have not yielded consistent patterns. Some studies on the relationship between mastery goals and student achievement have found positive relationships (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001) and others negative relationships (Harackiewicz et al., 2002). Moreover, performance-approach goals have been shown to be related to poorer classroom achievement for adolescents (Anderman & Midgley, 1997), whereas other research found that these goals were associated with better exam performance (Elliot, McGregor, & Gable, 1999). Some researchers even argue that performance-approach goals can be beneficial in certain types of settings, such as competitive academic environments (Midgley, Kaplan, & Middleton, 2001; Pintrich, 2003). The only relatively
consistent finding in the literature is the negative relationship between performance-avoidance goals and student achievement (Elliot & Church, 1997).

The overall lack of clear relationships between mastery and performance goal orientations and achievement means that the different goal orientations perhaps correlate with achievement outcomes through their impact on other academic behaviors. Although achievement goal orientations frame how students approach their educational activities, how these goals then materialize into specific behaviors and skills may determine their subsequent impact on student achievement. I argue that students’ study skills and habits are the primary mediators between goal orientations and academic achievement. Several studies show that study skills and habits are very strong predictors of achievement (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006). However, their link with achievement goal orientations has not been explored.

Among college-aged students, both mastery and performance-approach goals are positively related to persistence, meaning they are willing to expend more effort on achievement-related tasks and not give up as easily on difficult material (Elliot et al., 1999). Mastery goals were positively related to a greater interest and enjoyment in learning materials, but performance-approach goals had no such relationship (Harackiewicz et al., 2002). This may mean that compared to those with higher performance-approach goals, students with more mastery goals may be willing to spend more time on school work due to a deeper vested interest in the subject matter and their own learning progress. Research has shown that high-achieving and under-achieving academically talented adolescents differ on levels of persistence in completing learning tasks (Rayneri, Gerber, & Wiley, 2006) and self-regulation in doing
schoolwork at home (McCoach & Siegle, 2003), but no known study has investigated how differences in achievement goal orientations have contributed to these patterns.

The Current Study

Data were collected from 9th to 12th grade students who attended an ethnically diverse, selective enrollment high school in an urban environment. Several important dimensions of parenting, goal orientations, study skills and habits, and GPA were assessed. Based on the proposed model, I expected to find that the effects of parental support, monitoring, cognitive stimulation, and academic demandingness on adolescent GPA would be mediated by adolescents’ achievement goal orientations and academic behaviors. I predicted that greater parental support and cognitive stimulation would be related to the adoption of mastery achievement goals and that higher amounts of parental monitoring and academic demandingness would be associated with both performance goals. These hypotheses derived from the idea that supporting and encouraging home environments foster adolescents’ interest in the learning process, whereas adolescents reared in more restrictive environments may be more focused on displaying their competence to others (Gonzalez et al., 2002). Consistent with previous studies, I expected that mastery goals would predict better study skills and habits, while performance-avoidance goals would have the opposite association. Although the literature on how performance-approach goals relate to academic outcomes has produced mixed results, Midgley et al. (2001) argued that these goals can be beneficial for high-achieving students. I also expected that performance-approach goals would lead to better studying behaviors and subsequently higher academic achievement.
A further purpose was to test whether the proposed model differed by adolescent ethnicity. Although this part of the analysis was largely exploratory, I expected to find some ethnic differences in the proposed model, even among a sample of academically talented adolescents. This hypothesis was based on previous studies that have shown that the influence of parenting practices on academic outcomes often vary by ethnicity. For example, Desimone (1999) found that parent-child discussions about school were positively related to math and reading scores for European American, African American, and Hispanic American adolescents, but did not have a significant impact on Asian American student scores. Another study found that maternal behavioral control and psychological control significantly predicted academic achievement for only European American adolescents, and maternal support was significantly related to academic achievement only for African American adolescents (Bean et al., 2003). Only two known studies have specifically examined how the relationships between parenting and achievement goal orientations differ by ethnicity, but these studies yielded unclear patterns (Gonzalez, Holbein, & Quilter, 2002; Friedel et al., 2007). Despite a relatively small sample size, Gonzalez, Holbein, and Quilter (2002) found that authoritative parenting predicted mastery goal orientations for only African Americans and not European Americans, while Friedel et al., (2007) found that European American, African American, and Hispanic American children did not differ in how parenting predicted their goal orientations. Thus, more research is needed on whether ethnicity moderates how parenting behaviors impacts adolescent achievement.

Methods

Participants
The sample included 431 ninth through twelfth grade students from a selective enrollment high school in a large Midwestern city. Students who reached the minimum cutoff scores on the entrance exam for the school were then selected through a lottery system that also uses stratified sampling of students from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. For the current study, the sample was 40% European American, 24% African American, 17% Asian American, and 19% Hispanic American, and nearly two-thirds of the sample was female. About 19% of the sample was freshmen, 28% sophomores, 27% juniors, and 26% seniors.

**Procedure**

Consent forms with a description of the study were distributed to all students in their homerooms to take home and have their parents/guardians sign if they agreed to have their child participate in the study. The parent organization of the high school also sent out an electronic version of the consent forms for parents/guardians to fill-out online. Prior to taking the survey, students were also required to sign a child assent form. Students who either did not have parent/guardian consent or did not assent to taking the survey did not participate in the data collection. Students were told that if they completed the survey, they would be entered into a raffle for prizes ranging from $25 to $200. Students completed the surveys during an extended homeroom period at the beginning of the school day.

**Measures**

**Parenting Behaviors.** Adolescents were asked about their mother’s parenting behaviors using a 4-point scale (1 = *almost never*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often*, and 4 = *very often*). Items for parental support, monitoring, and academic demandingness were adapted from the Children’s Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (Shaefer, 1965) and the Family Environment Scale (Moos
Support (10 items, α = .92) referred to how warm or supportive adolescents felt their mothers were to them (e.g., “My mother and I have a close relationship”). Monitoring (8 items, α = .85) pertained to the extent that the mother asked about and kept track of the adolescent’s behavior and activities (e.g., “My mother knows where I go after school”).

Academic Demandingness (5 items, α = .70) referred to the extent to which adolescents felt their mother stressed the importance of education and schoolwork (e.g., “My mother makes sure that I work hard on my schoolwork”). Lastly, Cognitive Stimulation (6 items, α = .66) was assessed using items adapted from the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME; Caldwell & Bradley, 1984). Cognitive stimulation pertained to the amount of intellectual activities and the academic orientation of the adolescent’s home (e.g., “There are a lot of books at home that I can choose to read”).

Achievement Goal Orientations. The items used to assess adolescents’ achievement goal orientations were derived from Elliot and Church’s (1997) achievement goal questionnaire. This instrument reflects the trichotomous approach to achievement goal orientations: mastery, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance. Adolescents’ responses were scored on a 4-point scale (1 = not at all true, 2 = a little true, 3 = somewhat true, and 4 = very true). Mastery goals (5 items, α = .78) referred to the adolescents’ focus on developing their abilities and understanding new and challenging learning materials (e.g., “I like classes that really challenge me so I can learn new things”). Performance-approach goals (6 items, α = .90) assessed adolescents’ desire to demonstrate their high ability relative to others (e.g., “It is important to me to do well compared to others in my classes”). Lastly, adolescents’ performance-avoidance goals
(6 items, $\alpha = .69$) measured the extent to which they were focused on avoiding negative judgments of ability. (e.g., “I just want to avoid doing poorly in my classes”).

**Study Habits.** Adolescents reported how often they spent time doing schoolwork and preparing for class at home each week (7 items, $\alpha = .81$). Each item began with the stem, “In a typical week, how often do you…” The items were 1) do math homework; 2) do English/reading homework; 3) do social studies homework; 4) do science homework; 5) study, even if your homework is complete; 6) write papers/essays for class; and 7) make sure you are prepared for school. They answered on a 5-point scale ($0 = never$, $1 = less than once per week$, $2 = once per week$, $3 = several times per week$, and $4 = almost everyday$).

**Study Skills.** These items were adapted from the cognitive-metacognitive study strategies scale (4 items, $\alpha = .78$) proposed by Elliot et al. (1999). Adolescents reported the extent to which they persisted when studying difficult school materials (e.g., “When I become confused about something I’m reading for a class, I go back and try to figure it out”). Items were assessed using a 4-point scale ($1 = not at all true$, $2 = a little true$, $3 = somewhat true$, and $4 = very true$).

**Students’ GPA.** Students were asked the number of A’s, B’s, C’s, D’s, and F’s they received on their most recent report card at the time when the survey was administered. A grade point average was then calculated for each student using a standard 4.0 grade designation system. A meta-analysis by Kuncel, Crede, and Thomas (2005) found that with high-ability and high-achieving students, self-reported grades highly correspond with the actual grades they received.

**Analysis Plan**
Latent variable structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation was conducted using AMOS 16.0 in order to test the model in Figure 5.1 (Arbuckle, 2007). The standard errors and p-values of the indirect effects were estimated using bootstrap methods. Model fit was assessed with the goodness-of-fit $\chi^2$, the comparative fit index (CFI), the goodness of fit index (GFI) and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA). Given the number of variables to be estimated, single indicator latent variables were used to reduce the complexity of the model while still accounting for measurement error. The paths from the indicators to their respective latent variables were fixed to the square root of the composite’s reliability and the residuals for each indicator were fixed to the variance of the composite multiplied by the error variance (i.e. $1 - \alpha$). This approach reduces the number of parameters that need to be estimated but still adjusts for measurement reliability (Stephenson & Holbert, 2003). In the final phase of study, multiple-group analyses were conducted to assess the potential moderating effects of ethnicity on the full model (Arbuckle, 2007).

**Results**

**Descriptive Statistics**

Zero-order correlations, means, and standard deviations of the study variables are presented in Table 5.1. Adolescent GPA, study skills, and study habits were positively correlated with all parenting and goal-orientation variables, except for the negative relationship between GPA and performance-avoidance goals and academic demandingness. Mastery goals were positively related to all four parenting factors, whereas performance-approach goals were only positively related to academic demandingness and cognitive stimulation. Performance-avoidance goals were associated with more monitoring and academic demandingness and less parental
support. Performance-approach goals were positively related to both mastery and performance-avoidance goals, but mastery and performance goals were not significantly associated with each other. Each of the achievement goal orientations had significant positive correlations with study skills and habits, albeit to different extents. Mastery goals had the relatively greatest association with these studying variables, whereas performance-avoidance goals had the relatively weakest. Lastly, greater study skills and study habits were associated with a higher GPA.

Table 5.2 presents the means, standard deviations, and ANOVA tests for each variable by ethnicity. The groups differed on many but not all variables. Both European Americans and Asian Americans had a higher GPA than African Americans and Hispanic Americans, but the groups did not statistically differ in their study skills and habits. European Americans had higher mastery goals than Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans had higher performance avoidance goals than African Americans and European Americans, but the groups had similar levels of performance approach goals. The ethnic groups also experienced similar parenting behaviors, except European Americans students reported the least amount of academic demandingness and Asian Americans reported the least amount of parental support.

**Structural Equation Models**

I first assessed the direct effects of the parenting practices and achievement goal orientations on adolescent GPA in two separate SEMs. Each model was saturated and therefore fit perfectly. When entered simultaneously, higher amounts of cognitive stimulation, parental support, and monitoring and lower levels of academic demandingness were associated with higher GPA. These parenting behaviors accounted for 8% of the variation in adolescent GPA. In the next SEM, higher mastery goals and lower performance-avoidance goals significantly
predicted higher GPA, while performance-approach goals were not significantly related. The three achievement goals accounted for 12% of the variation in GPA.

The full model in Figure 5.1 was then assessed and the model fit the data well, $\chi^2(15) = 48.8, p < .001$, CFI = .96, GFI = .98, RMSEA = .07. Furthermore, most of the hypothesized paths in the model were significant in the expected direction and the variables in the model explained 16% of the variance in adolescent GPA. However, modification indices suggested that performance-avoidance goals should have a direct path to GPA. This new model also fit the data well, $\chi^2(14) = 33.1, p < .003$, CFI = .98, GFI = .99, RMSEA = .06, and was a significantly better fit than the baseline model, $\Delta \chi^2 (1) = 15.7, p < .01$. The revised model explained an additional 5% of the variance in adolescent GPA. Multiple-group analyses were also used to determine whether the model fit differently for the four ethnic groups in the sample. Results showed that the constrained and unconstrained models did not significantly differ, $\Delta \chi^2 (63) = 55.7, p < .73$, meaning that the model fit equally well for each ethnic group.

The standardized and unstandardized path coefficients of the direct effects are depicted in Table 5.3. The results showed that parenting was significantly related to adolescent achievement goal orientations. As hypothesized, mastery goals were predicted by greater parental support and cognitive stimulation, and performance-avoidance goals were associated with more monitoring and academic demandingness and less parental support. Performance-approach goals were related to less monitoring and more cognitive stimulation. Mastery goals significantly predicted both better study skills and habits. However, of the performance goals, performance-approach goals did not significantly predict either of the studying variables, while performance-avoidance was significantly related only to better study habits. As expected, study skills and study habits
significantly predicted a higher GPA, whereas higher performance-avoidance goals continued to be associated with a lower GPA.

Multiple-group analyses were conducted in the next phase to determine whether the associations between parenting behaviors and adolescents’ academic goal orientations, study skills and habits, and grade point average differed as a function of ethnicity. This process entailed comparing the default model with unconstrained structural paths to a fixed model where the structural paths were constrained to be equal across Asian Americans, African Americans, European Americans, and Hispanic Americans. The unconstrained model fit the data very well: $\chi^2(60) = 110.6, p = .00, \text{CFI} = .94, \text{GFI} = .96, \text{RMSEA} = .04$. The constrained model appeared to fit the data slightly better: $\chi^2(120) = 164.9, p = .01, \text{CFI} = .94, \text{GFI} = .95, \text{RMSEA} = .03$. Counter to my expectations, the nested model comparisons, $\Delta \chi^2(60) = 54.3, p < .68$ revealed no significant difference in fit between the constrained and unconstrained models. This indicates that the model did not significantly differ by adolescent ethnicity.

Discussion

Many studies assess the parenting behaviors that are related to academic achievement without fully exploring the specific mechanisms that account for these effects (Mandara et al., 2009). Furthermore, their use of predominantly European American, middle-class and/or low-achieving ethnic minority samples tends to provide a truncated picture of why the home environment is important for school related outcomes. The purpose of this study was to test a theoretical model of some social-cognitive and behavioral factors that account for the effects of parenting on adolescent achievement using a multiethnic sample of academically talented adolescents. I hypothesized that parent behaviors would be predictive of adolescents’
achievement goal orientations, which in turn would be related to study skills and habits and subsequent academic achievement. My findings were largely supportive of the model.

Consistent with previous literature on home-school relationships and the parenting of academically talented students (Fan & Chen, 2001; Spera, 2005), the results showed that greater support and cognitive stimulation were related to higher adolescent GPA. Studies have also found that while more restrictive and obtrusive parenting behaviors tend to have an adverse effect on academic achievement (Mandara et al., 2009), parents of academically talented adolescents often feel they need to be more disciplinarian to keep their children motivated to do well in school (Garn et al., 2010). The results show that parental monitoring had a positive relationship with adolescents’ school performance, whereas academic demandingness had the opposite effect. This suggests that parents may feel they are being strict by demanding to know their children’s whereabouts and who they associate with, but adolescents may positively interpret this as their parents caring and taking an active interest in their lives. However, adolescents may think that their parents’ greater academic demandingness sets academic expectations that are too difficult to meet, which may create levels of stress and anxiety that are detrimental to their academic performance.

Moreover, there was strong evidence supporting the theoretical model by which parenting influences academic achievement for academically talented adolescents. All four parenting factors were related to adolescents’ achievement goal orientations in the expected directions, which in turn predicted their study skills and habits and GPA. Parental support and cognitive stimulation were related to greater mastery goal orientations, whereas lower amounts of support and higher levels of monitoring and academic demandingness were related to adolescents’
Another aim of this study was to test the hypothesis that academic goal orientations of academically talented students influence their high school performance through their effect on study behaviors. As predicted, and similar to previous research, mastery goals were related to better grades, whereas performance-avoidance had the opposite relationship (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Elliot & Church, 1997). Furthermore, my results showed that performance-approach goals had a null relationship with adolescent GPA and their study habits and skills. This differed from my hypotheses and previous theories that these goals may be beneficial for students in competitive environments, such as those in this sample (Midgley et al., 2001). These results suggest that adolescents perform best when they embody an inherent interest in learning and are not overly concerned with appearing incompetent in front of their peers.

The difference in predictive validity of the two performance goals for this sample is important to highlight. Previous research has shown that highly competitive environments can foster adolescents’ adoption of performance goals (Meece et al., 2006). At a selective enrollment high school with high standards and an application process, it is likely that most adolescents and parents are aware that the adolescent is now attending a school with other academically successful peers. They may be more sensitive to how they compare relative to other students and become focused on their performance. My findings suggests that the extent to which adolescents...
concentrate on outperforming their peers does not significantly impact their academic performance, but fears of doing poorly that could cast doubt on their admission into the school can have an adverse effect.

Another notable finding from this study was that adolescents’ study behaviors did not fully mediate the relationship between performance-avoidance goals and GPA. Counter to my expectations, performance-avoidance goals were related to better study skills and habits. These findings suggest that adolescents’ fears of doing poorly in school were in part a motivator to spend more time studying and persist through difficult school tasks. However, these pro-academic behaviors did not fully explain the negative relationship between performance-avoidance goals and adolescent GPA. There may be other psychosocial factors that help explain association between these two factors. For example, research has shown that because adolescents with performance-avoidance goals are overly focused on avoiding displays of incompetence, they experience higher levels of anxiety, which in turn is related to worse academic performance (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Therefore, although adolescents with more performance-avoidance goals spent more time on their schoolwork, heightened levels of psychological distress they may experience while studying may have reduced the positive effects of longer study hours. Future studies should test this possibility by including both academic behaviors and affective measures to better capture the processes by which performance goals influence achievement.

Additionally, the process by which these parenting behaviors were related to academic achievement did not differ by adolescent ethnicity. Friedel et al. (2007) also found that children from different ethnic groups did not differ in how parenting predicted their goal orientations, although Asian American adolescents were not included in the comparisons. One previous study
did find a moderating effect of ethnicity on parenting and achievement goals, but these results were based on a small number of European American and African American children (Gonzalez, Holbein, & Quilter, 2002). As a result, these findings suggest that despite differing cultural backgrounds, it may be that adolescents respond to certain parenting behaviors in similar ways through their development of achievement goal orientations and subsequent study habits and skills.

**Limitations**

It is necessary to consider a few limitations of this study. Although the goal was to put forth a theoretical model of the processes through which parenting influences adolescent achievement, the cross-sectional design of the study prevents conclusions about the causal relations between the parenting and academic factors. It is possible that the grades adolescents achieve elicit certain family processes from their parents. For the most part, only intervention studies which randomly assign parents to specific training groups can address this limitation.

Although the purpose of this study was to specifically examine how parenting contributes to the educational success of academically talented students, school factors also greatly contribute to adolescents’ achievement goal orientation development and their academic performance. For example, teachers and peers both significantly contribute to how adolescents’ approach learning activities (Wentzel, 1998). The literature has yet to fully explore how the competitive environments espoused by schools for academically talented adolescents shape learning motivations and what parents and teachers do to mediate these effects. Another limitation was the reliance on self-reports for the variables included in this study. Although this approach was needed to best assess how adolescents interpret their home environment and its
relation to their motivational and academic outcome, self-report data may also introduce certain response biases that can influence the findings. Lastly, the long-term effects of parenting on achievement goal orientations and academic outcomes were not assessed, which future studies need to consider. Longitudinal studies should also investigate how the achievement goal orientations adolescents have in high school predict their future college and employment outcomes.

**Study Implications**

Despite these limitations, this study demonstrates the importance of parenting on academic outcomes for even academically talented adolescents. As previously mentioned, parents of academically talented adolescents often use a more demanding approach to keeping their child motivated (Garn et al., 2010). Although this may predict higher GPAs in the short term, this more controlling approach may then lead to the development of performance-avoidance goals, which can have negative consequences for certain academic behaviors and future academic outcomes (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). These adolescents may develop specific study skills and habits that help them to do well in high school under the supervision of their parents, but this may not be suited for the independent, self-motivated approach to learning they will need in college. This will likely be especially true for those leaving home for college. Thus, counseling and training programs specifically geared towards parents of academically talented students should dissuade parents from resorting to excessive controlling or restrictive practices to motivate their adolescents. Such programs should also focus on creating a supportive and stimulating environment to foster their children’s ability.
Furthermore, teachers and school administrators often dedicate a lot of time and resources toward building school and classroom environments to develop adolescents’ academic motivation, especially those that are academically talented (Meece et al., 2006). The success of these efforts would be greatly improved if they incorporated the types of motivations students already possess and how the home environment fosters these different approaches to learning. With this knowledge, teachers and administrators can develop teaching practices and classroom structures that can rectify or work in conjunction with what adolescents experience at home. Integrating these home and school environments can then increase the prospects of raising academic performance and help adolescents meet their potential.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I conducted four studies investigating the social and cultural factors that may account for differential parenting behaviors between European American and African American families. The first three studies examined the extent to which ethnic differences in controlling parenting behaviors are explained by the economic and environmental contexts in which families reside or the socialization goals parents have for their children. The second purpose was to understand the psychological processes through which parenting practices are related to academic achievement and whether these association differed by a function of ethnicity.

The purpose of study one was to examine whether parents’ perceptions of neighborhood quality and family socioeconomic status mediated ethnic differences in decision-making, monitoring, and use of punishments. I further explored whether family socioeconomic status moderated the relationships between ethnicity, neighborhood context, and parenting behaviors, in light of the literature showing that European American and African American families of similar economic backgrounds vary in the quality of neighborhoods in which they live.

In study two, I explored the processes through which neighborhood factors may account for ethnic differences in parental control in early adolescence and trajectories of these parenting behaviors over time through late adolescence. This study tested the theoretical model that independent of economic and psychological factors, differences in neighborhood problems are related to parents’ prevention-focus, which in turn is associated with a greater use of controlling parenting behaviors.
Study three studied whether ethnic differences in parental control are explained by variations in parents’ developmental goals for their children, over and beyond socioeconomic factors. I examined how parents’ goals of independence, filial-cultural piety, and success were related to parental autonomy-granting and strictness and if this accounted for initial differences in behaviors between European Americans and African Americans.

Finally, the fourth study considered the processes through which parenting behaviors are related to academic achievement and if academically talented European American and African American adolescents differed in these associations. I examined how aspects of the home environment are related to adolescents’ achievement goal orientations and pro-academic studying behaviors, which in turn are correlated to better student achievement.

Overall, I found that African American parents of adolescents tend to employ more controlling parenting behaviors with their adolescents than European American parents. In particular, African American parents tended to be more restrictive of their children’s behavior, provided fewer decision-making opportunities, and used punishments more often. These patterns were relatively consistent across the first three studies, each utilizing different data sets containing an economically diverse set of European American and African American families. Study two demonstrated that although European American and African American parents are similar in how their use of parental control changes over time, ethnic differences in these behaviors persisted from early to late adolescence. These finding are particularly important given that many studies interested in cross-ethnic parenting comparisons often use samples consisting of low-income African American families.
The first and second studies found that variations in socioeconomic and neighborhood characteristics do account for some of the differences in controlling parenting behaviors between European Americans and African Americans. Parents with lower socioeconomic status or living in poorer quality neighborhoods were more likely to regulate their adolescents’ behaviors and use more disciplinary parenting practices. This finding is consistent with other studies showing that parents are more likely to restrict their children’s behavior and limit the choices they are allowed to make as a strategy to protect them against potential-risk factors (e.g. Pinderhughes et al., 2001; 2009). This is especially relevant in the parenting of adolescents, as this is the developmental time when children strive for greater independence and begin to spend more time away from their parents’ direct supervision. Further research is needed to examine how environmental circumstances may limit the amount of autonomy parents would otherwise want to grant to their adolescents to meet their developmental needs.

The results also showed that European American and African American families tend to live in starkly dissimilar neighborhoods, even when taking into consideration any differences in socioeconomic status. On average, African American parents reported higher levels of neighborhood problems than European Americans. In fact, study one showed that ethnic disparities in neighborhood conditions were largest among low SES families. Researchers have long called for using economically comparable samples of European American and African American families in conducting cross-cultural comparisons. The findings from this dissertation, along with other previous studies (Alba, Logan, & Stults, 2000; Friedman & Rosenbaum, 2005; Pattillo-McCoy, 2002), show that only focusing on a relatively economically homogenous sample of European American and African American families is not the equivalent to families
who live in similar neighborhood environments. The extent to which SES is related to neighborhood quality differs for European Americans and African Americans. This specific issue needs to be explicitly addressed in future studies interested in understanding the social and contextual influences of ethnic differences in controlling parenting behaviors.

The first three studies also showed that social factors alone could not completely explain the ethnic differences in parenting. European American and African American families do experience varying economic and environmental circumstances, but the findings here suggest that this is not the primary explanation for why they may parent differently. Previous studies have also shown that ethnic difference in controlling parenting behaviors are not mediated by only neighborhood characteristics or family resources (Hill & Tyson, 2008; Pinderhughes et al., 2001). Future studies should continue to investigate how social factors impact childrearing behaviors but need to consider alternative pathways that contribute to why European American and African American parents use differing childrearing behaviors.

Studies two and three were specifically dedicated to that purpose by examining both social and cultural explanations for parenting differences. The results showed that cultural factors, specifically the goals parents have for their adolescents, tend to explain a significant amount of the variance in parenting behaviors, independent of social-contextual variables. Parents’ focus on preventing negative child outcomes and the goals of filial-cultural piety and success significantly mediated ethnic differences in controlling parenting behaviors, even with measures of parent education, family income, and neighborhood factors included.

In study two, parents’ prevention-focus significantly mediated ethnic differences in parental intrusiveness and discipline during early adolescence and how parents changed in their
use of these behaviors over time. Although parents’ prevention-focus was in part related to the prevalence of social problems in their neighborhood, African Americans were significantly more prevention-focused than European Americans, beyond any neighborhood differences. Similarly, study three showed that African Americans tended to endorse filial-cultural piety and success goals more so than European Americans. These differences in socialization goals, while controlling for parent education, accounted for initial variations in strictness. These results suggest that cultural factors play a significant role in accounting for ethnic differences in behavior. Parents possess specific goals for their children’s development, which are significantly related to ethnicity, and these goals in turn appear to inform the types of parenting behaviors they employ to meet these objectives.

Study four examined the processes through which parenting behaviors are related to academic achievement and whether European Americans and African Americans differed in these associations. The results showed that a supportive and cognitively stimulating home environment was related to adolescents’ mastery achievement goals, more proacademic behaviors, and better school performance. Conversely, adolescents who perceived their parents as being overly demanding and protective tended to have performance-avoidance goals, which were associated with worse school performance. These processes did not differ for European American and African American adolescents. Overall, these findings suggest that adolescents of differing cultural backgrounds respond to parenting behaviors in similar ways through their development of achievement goal orientations and subsequent study habits and skills.

Limitations
There are some important limitations to this set of studies. Although there were many consistencies in the results across the varying data sets used in this dissertation, all findings are correlational and causation cannot be inferred. There may be potential confounds related to how individuals self-select into their economic and environmental contexts that are also related to the parenting behaviors they employ. Similarly, the socialization goals parents possess may change over time in response to the perceived success of certain parenting behaviors used in the past. Future research is needed to ascertain whether the findings presented here are causal relationships. Secondly, this study was primarily focused on understanding the variations in parenting behaviors among families with adolescents. As such, the findings presented here may not generalize to families with younger children. This is especially relevant, in that the socialization goals parents have for their children may be dependent on their children’s age or may vary over time.

Another limitation was the reliance on either parent or adolescent self-reports of parenting behaviors. This tends to be the general approach among research to understand the determinants of parenting behaviors, especially with large-scale longitudinal studies. Future work should also try to incorporate observational and experimental methods in their research design. Lastly, there are numerous other factors beyond the scope of this dissertation that can influence parenting behaviors. For instance, parents’ health, personality, developmental histories, and social support can also affect their childrearing behaviors. Perhaps most important, parenting often takes place within the larger family unit. The relationship dynamic between parents and other potential caregivers and family size and structure can also greatly determine how individuals parent.
**Significance and Implications**

Despite these limitations, the present studies make a significant contribution to our knowledge of social and cultural factors that help explain differential parenting among European American and African American parents of adolescents. Previous studies often only include economic and/or contextual measures and use ethnicity as a proxy for culture without operationalizing any specific cultural constructs. When previous studies found that social factors did not fully mediate ethnic differences in parenting, they tended to offer cultural explanations for differences without directly testing these hypotheses. Additionally, studies also compare European American and African American families that are economically dissimilar. This approach has made it incredibly difficult to disentangle social and cultural explanations for ethnic differences in parenting. This dissertation demonstrates that both social and cultural factors contribute to ethnic differences in controlling parenting behaviors, but that cultural differences perhaps play a significantly bigger role.

These studies also could have implications for practice. Increased knowledge of the factors that contribute to parenting differences between European Americans and African Americans helps our understanding of what influences parenting behaviors in general. The purpose of comparative studies, such as those in this dissertation, is to help expose potential determinants of parenting behaviors and to distinguish which factors can generalize across ethnic groups. Parenting programs and interventions need to move beyond instilling the knowledge, strategies, and behaviors that have been identified as related to a variety of positive outcomes for children. To fully promote positive parent development, programs will improve their long-term effectiveness if they are able to establish how social and cultural factors contribute to parenting
behaviors. Furthermore, much of the existing social policy is aimed at alleviating some of the financial, occupational, and marital stresses in adults’ lives, which certainly has direct and indirect impacts on the ability to parent. If policy is to be more effective at improving childrearing practices, it must consider all the determinants that cause parents to parent the way they do. Policy cannot expect to effectively promote certain parenting behaviors if they are not informed of social and cultural processes that motivate such behavior.
### Table 2.1.

Zero-Order Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Study Variables

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<td>3. Decisions</td>
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<td>.25</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Punish</td>
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<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Monitor</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Urban</td>
<td>.04</td>
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<td>-.20</td>
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<td>-.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Child Female</td>
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<td>.11</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.07</td>
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<td>-</td>
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</table>

European American: .31<sup>a</sup> 2.72<sup>a</sup> .76<sup>a</sup> 3.27<sup>b</sup> 2.33<sup>a</sup> .62<sup>b</sup> .50<sup>a</sup>

(.60) (.31) (.25) (.93) (.52) (.42) (.50)

African American: -.14<sup>b</sup> 2.38<sup>b</sup> .59<sup>b</sup> 4.13<sup>a</sup> 2.13<sup>b</sup> .81<sup>a</sup> .52<sup>a</sup>

(.72) (.50) (.29) (.76) (.57) (.34) (.50)

Note: N = 2762 adolescents. For correlations, all absolute values ≥ .05 are significant at the .05 level. For independent sample t-tests, measures not sharing the same superscript indicate that European Americans and African Americans significantly differed at the p < .001 level.
Table 2.2.

The Unstandardized and Standardized Direct Effect Estimates of Ethnicity, Neighborhood Quality, and SES on Parenting Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
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<th>Model 2</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>B (SE)</td>
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<td>-.17*** (.01)</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>-.17*** (.01)</td>
<td>-.29</td>
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<td>.52</td>
<td>1.00*** (.04)</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>1.00*** (.04)</td>
<td>.50</td>
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<td>Ethnicity → Monitoring</td>
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<td>-.22</td>
<td>-.17*** (.03)</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.16*** (.03)</td>
<td>-.15</td>
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<td>-.35</td>
<td>-.33*** (.02)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity → SES</td>
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<td>-.49*** (.03)</td>
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<td>Neigh. Qual. → Decisions</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.11* (.06)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neigh. Qual. → Monitoring</td>
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<td>SES → Punishment</td>
<td>-.02 (.03)</td>
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<td>-.03 (.03)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.13*** (.02)</td>
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<td>Ethnicity → Neigh. Qual. x SES</td>
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<td>.11*** (.01)</td>
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<td>Neigh. Qual. x SES → Decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neigh. Qual. x SES → Punishment</td>
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<td>-.17** (.06)</td>
<td>-.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neigh. Qual. x SES → Monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>.07 (.04)</td>
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*Note: *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05. Ethnicity was coded European American = 1, African American = 0. Child gender and urbanicity were controlled for in each model.*
Table 2.3.

The Unstandardized and Standardized Direct and Indirect Effect Estimates of Ethnicity and Neighborhood Quality on Parenting by Family SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Average-High SES</th>
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<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>(SE)</td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
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<td>(SE)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Effects</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity $\rightarrow$ Neigh. Qual.</td>
<td>-.32***</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>-.24***</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>-.19***</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.20***</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>-.18***</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>-.33</td>
<td>-.15***</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ethnicity $\rightarrow$ Punishment</td>
<td>.84***</td>
<td>(.11)</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.97***</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>.49</td>
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<td>-.01</td>
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<td>-.11</td>
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<td>.14</td>
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<td>(.09)</td>
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<td>.05</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
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<td><strong>Indirect Effects</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>(.01)</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.02**</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.03*</td>
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<td>(.03)</td>
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<td>(.02)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
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<td>(.02)</td>
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<td>(.01)</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.03*</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
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</table>

**Note:** *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$. Ethnicity was coded European American = 1, African American = 0. Child gender and urbanicity were controlled for in each model.
Table 3.1.

Zero-Order Correlations Among Study Variables

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
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<td>1. Intrusiveness (7)</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>.34</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
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<td>4. Discipline (7)</td>
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<td>.18</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>5. Discipline (9)</td>
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<td>.22</td>
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<td>6. Discipline (11)</td>
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<td>.20</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Prevention-Focus</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>9. Family Income</td>
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<td>-.26</td>
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<td>10. Parent Education</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.18</td>
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<td>.47</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Depressive Symptoms</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Married</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: N = 1170. Correlations greater than or equal to ± .07 are significant at p < .05.*
Table 3.2.

Means and Standard Deviations for Study Variables by Ethnicity

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>t</th>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>$\bar{X}$</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seventh Grade</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ninth Grade</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eleventh Grade</td>
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<td>.86</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Grade</td>
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<td>.80</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>.90</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.72</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.80</td>
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<td>Eleventh Grade</td>
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<td>.78</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.80</td>
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<td>.63</td>
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<td>.66</td>
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<td>.63</td>
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<td>Child Gender</td>
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<td>.50</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.50</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 280 European Americans and 583 African Americans. *** p < .001, * p < .05.
Table 3.3.

The Means, Variances, and Standard Errors of the Intercepts and Slopes of the Parenting Variables Between Seventh and Eleventh Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intrusiveness</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( M )</td>
<td>Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>( 2.44^{***} )</td>
<td>.42^{***}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slope</td>
<td>.51^{***}</td>
<td>.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model Fit Statistics
- Intrusiveness: \( \chi^2 (1) = .18, p < .67, \) CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00
- Discipline: \( \chi^2 (1) = .08, p < .78, \) CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00

*Note:* *** \( p < .001 \), * \( p < .05 \).
### Table 3.4.

The Direct Effects Estimates of Ethnicity on the Intercepts and Slopes of Parenting Between Seventh and Eleventh Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Discipline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>(SE)</td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$B$</td>
<td>(SE)</td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-.32***</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.17**</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slope</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>(.17)</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.06***</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Fit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2$ (1) = .07, $p &lt; .79$,</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ (2) = 11.54, $p &lt; .00$,</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Statistics</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CFI = 1.00,</td>
<td>CFI = .98,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TLI = 1.00,</td>
<td>TLI = .95,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RMSEA = .00</td>
<td>RMSEA = .06</td>
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*Note:* *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$. Ethnicity coded European American = 1, African American = 0.
Table 3.5: The Mediation Model Estimates of Ethnicity, Neighborhood Problems, and Prevention-Focus on the Intercepts and Slopes of Parenting Between Seventh and Eleventh Grade

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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity ➔ Prevention-Focus</td>
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<td>-.47</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Problems ➔ Prevention-Focus</td>
<td>.21***</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intrusiveness</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity ➔ Intercept</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Problems ➔ Intercept</td>
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<td>(.06)</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention-Focus ➔ Intercept</td>
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<td>(.06)</td>
<td>.31</td>
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<td>.15</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Problems ➔ Slope</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
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<td>.00</td>
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<td>Neighborhood Problems ➔ Intercept</td>
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<td>(.06)</td>
<td>-.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention-Focus ➔ Intercept</td>
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<td>(.06)</td>
<td>.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity ➔ Slope</td>
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<td>(.02)</td>
<td>.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Problems ➔ Slope</td>
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<td>(.02)</td>
<td>.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention-Focus ➔ Slope</td>
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<td>(.02)</td>
<td>-.37</td>
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</table>

Note: *** p < .001, ** p < .01, *p < .05. Ethnicity was coded European American = 1, African American = 0. The effects of family income, education, depressive symptoms, marital status, and child gender were accounted for but results are not shown.
### Table 4.1

Zero-Order Correlations Among Study Variables.

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<td>.09†</td>
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<td>.39***</td>
<td>.15**</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>-.21**</td>
<td>.25***</td>
<td>-.37***</td>
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<td>-.26**</td>
<td>.10†</td>
<td>-.34***</td>
<td>.40***</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: N = 320 parents. Ethnicity coded 1 = African American, 0 = European American. † < .10. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.*
Table 4.2

Means and Standard Deviations of Study Variables by Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>European Americans</th>
<th></th>
<th>African Americans</th>
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<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.32 (.78)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.11 (.93)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-8.04***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Independence</td>
<td>3.77 (.32)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.77 (.36)</td>
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<td>.02</td>
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<td>Parental Strictness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.58 (.54)</td>
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<td>2.80 (.59)</td>
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<td>8.59***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.54 (.78)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.83***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 209 111

Note: N = 320 parents. For t-tests, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.
Table 4.3

Parameter Estimates for Direct Effects on Parenting Strictness and Autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strictness</th>
<th></th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>(SE)</td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$b$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Effects on Parenting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity → Parenting Behavior</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>(.07)***</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>-.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES → Parenting Behavior</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>(.04)***</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $N = 320$ parents. Ethnicity coded 1 = African American, 0 = European American. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$. 
Table 4.4.

Parameter Estimates for Direct Effects on Parental Socialization Goals and Parenting Strictness and Autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>b</th>
<th>(SE)</th>
<th>β</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Effects on Parenting Goals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity → Filial-Cultural Piety</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>(.10)**</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity → Success</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>(.16)**</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES → Filial-Cultural Piety</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES → Success</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES → Independence</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>(.03)</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Effects on Parenting Behavior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity → Strictness</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES → Strictness</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>(.04)</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial-Cultural Piety → Strictness</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>(.10)**</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success → Strictness</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>(.05)*</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence → Strictness</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>(.12)</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity → Autonomy</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>(.11)*</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES → Autonomy</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>(.05)**</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial-Cultural Piety → Autonomy</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success → Autonomy</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence → Autonomy</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>(.13)**</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: N = 320 parents. Ethnicity coded 1 = African American, 0 = European American. The path from ethnicity to independence goals was constrained to zero. The standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected and were estimated with 500 bootstrap samples in AMOS 18.0. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Adolescent gender, age, and school were controlled.*
Table 5.1

Zero-Order Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
<th>6.</th>
<th>7.</th>
<th>8.</th>
<th>9.</th>
<th>10.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>_</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Study Habits</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Study Skills</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>_</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>_</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Perf. Approach</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>_</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Perf. Avoid</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>_</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>_</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>_</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Cog. Stim.</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\text{Mean} \quad 3.44 \quad 3.00 \quad 2.90 \quad 3.22 \quad 2.73 \quad 2.86 \quad 3.14 \quad 3.21 \quad 2.96 \quad 2.26
\]

\[
\text{SD} \quad .50 \quad .66 \quad .65 \quad .57 \quad .77 \quad .64 \quad .71 \quad .59 \quad .64 \quad .55
\]


Correlations greater than or equal to ± .07 are significant at \(p < .05\).
### Table 5.2.

**Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVAs of Each Factor by Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Asian American</th>
<th>European American</th>
<th>Hispanic American</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>3.21&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.50&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.62&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.30&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>19.16&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Habits</td>
<td>2.94&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.95&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.06&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.01&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Skills</td>
<td>2.88&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.82&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.90&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.01&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>3.19&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.07&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.29&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.26&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.81&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perf. Approach</td>
<td>2.62&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.75&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.72&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.87&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perf. Avoid</td>
<td>2.82&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.97&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.75&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.05&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.12&lt;sup&gt;**&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>3.17&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.88&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.25&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.11&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.82&lt;sup&gt;**&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>3.27&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.09&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.21&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.27&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acad. Demand.</td>
<td>2.98&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.04&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.86&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.08&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.71&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cog. Stim.</td>
<td>2.34&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.17&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.28&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.19&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N                 | 105              | 71              | 174               | 81                |

Table 5.3

Significance of Parameter Estimates on Mediators of Parenting on Adolescent GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Effects on Goal-Orientations</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support → Mastery</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring → Mastery</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cog. Stim. → Mastery</td>
<td>.42***</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acad. Demand. → Mastery</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support → Perf. Approach</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring → Perf. Approach</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acad. Demand. → Perf. Approach</td>
<td>.37***</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support → Perf. Avoid</td>
<td>-.21***</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>-.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring → Perf. Avoid</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cog. Stim. → Perf. Avoid</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acad. Demand. → Perf. Avoid</td>
<td>.32***</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Effects on Pro-Academic Behaviors</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastery → Study Skills</td>
<td>.88***</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
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<td>Perf. Approach → Study Skills</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perf. Avoid → Study Skills</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery → Study Habits</td>
<td>.57***</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perf. Approach → Study Habits</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perf. Avoid → Study Habits</td>
<td>.22***</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Effects on GPA</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Skills → GPA</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Habits → GPA</td>
<td>.21***</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perf. Avoid → GPA</td>
<td>-.18***</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>-.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.
Figure 2.1. The unique and interactive effects of family SES and neighborhood quality in mediating ethnic differences in parenting.
Figure 2.2. Average neighborhood quality across SES levels for European Americans and African Americans.
Figure 2.3. The SES and neighborhood quality moderation-mediation model of ethnic differences in parenting.
Figure 3.1. The conceptual model of how neighborhood problems and prevention-focus mediate ethnic differences in parenting.
Figure 3.2. The full mediation model of ethnicity, neighborhood problems, and prevention-focus, on parental discipline. Parent education, income, depressive symptoms, marital status, and child gender were controlled. Ethnicity was coded European American =1, African American = 0.
Figure 3.3. The full mediation model of ethnicity, neighborhood problems, and prevention-focus, on parenting behaviors. The latent variable for the linear slope is not displayed but was included in the model. Parent education, income, depressive symptoms, marital status, and child gender were controlled. Ethnicity was coded European American = 1, African American = 0.
Figure 4.1. The conceptual model of how parental socialization goals mediate ethnic differences in controlling parenting behaviors independent of socioeconomic factors.
Figure 5.1. Mediational model of parenting practices’ effect on achievement outcomes. The residuals of the latent constructs were correlated but are not depicted in the figure.
REFERENCES


during the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38, 242-256. doi:10.1007/s10964-008-9354-z


