



6-1-2012

# Parenting Patterns in Urban African American Families: Raising Healthy Adolescents in the Context of Economic Hardship and Community Violence

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## Recommended Citation

Tyler, Donald Hamilton, "Parenting Patterns in Urban African American Families: Raising Healthy Adolescents in the Context of Economic Hardship and Community Violence" (2012). *College of Science and Health Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 10.  
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PARENTING PATTERNS IN URBAN AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES:  
RAISING HEALTHY ADOLESCENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF  
ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

A Dissertation

Presented in

Partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

BY

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June 2012

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to the mothers who, seemingly against all odds, raised children in Cabrini Green, Marshall Field Garden, Lathrop Homes, Humboldt Park, North Lawndale, Austin, Englewood, and other communities on the south and west sides of Chicago that are severely impacted by poverty, violence, and other social ills. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my dissertation chair Kathryn Grant and committee members Karen Budd, Bernadette Sanchez, Darrick Tovar-Murray, and Robyn Brown for their support, encouragement, and valuable input throughout this project. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my mother for nurturing my compassion and commitment to serve others, to my father for developing my will to achieve, to my sister for being my twin soul on this life journey, to my maternal and paternal grandparents for providing the finest examples of African American parenting, and to my aunts and uncles for carrying forward the best traditions of Black family life.

### VITA

The author was born in Akron, Ohio on May 5, 1966. He graduated from Central-Hower High School in 1984, received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Science from The University of Akron in 1991, and a Master of Arts Degree in Clinical Psychology from Fisk University in 2001. In 2000 he was awarded the John Lewis Fellowship for outstanding research by a graduate student. The award is named in honor of the longstanding civil rights leader and current Congressman from Georgia.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dissertation Committee.....	ii
Vita.....	iv
List of Tables and Figures.....	vii
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Dimensions of Parenting.....	9
Warmth.....	10
Control.....	11
Dimensions of African American Parenting.....	15
Warmth.....	16
Control.....	18
Parenting Typology.....	34
Baumrind’s Theory and African American Parenting.....	35
Bivariate Types and African American Parenting .....	39
Natural Typologies of African American Parenting.....	44
Research Questions.....	54
CHAPTER II. METHOD.....	55
Participants.....	55
Procedures.....	56
Measures.....	57
CHAPTER III. RESULTS .....	63
Family Types.....	63
Internalizing and Externalizing Problems.....	69

CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION.....	78
Economic Hardship.....	78
Community Violence.....	79
Parenting Patterns, Environmental Risk and Adolescent Adjustment.....	81
Parenting, Risk Exposure and Externalizing Behavior in Competent Families.....	82
Parenting, Risk Exposure and Externalizing Problems in Struggling Families.....	88
Parenting Patterns, Risk Exposure and Internalizing Symptoms.....	94
Clinical and Policy Implications.....	97
Limitations and Future Research.....	102
Footnote.....	108
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY .....	109
References.....	112
Appendix A. Parent Education, Family Economic Loss Questionnaire, and Family Income.....	149
Appendix B. Survey of Exposure to Violence – Screening.....	152
Appendix C. Family Interaction Task.....	156
Appendix D. Iowa Family Interaction Ratings Scales.....	164

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

## TABLES

Table 1. Family Type Means and Standard Deviation.....	71
Table 2. Economic Loss: Top 10 Endorsed Items.....	72
Table 3. Adolescent Exposure to Violence: Top 15 Endorsed Items.....	73
Table 4. Adolescent Exposure to Violence: Victimization.....	74
Table 5. Adolescent Exposure to Violence: Additional Witnessing Items.....	75
Table 6. Adolescent Exposure to Violence: Key Item Comparison.....	76
Table 7. Internalizing and Externalizing Means and Standard Deviations.....	77

## FIGURES

Figure 1. General Coding Scheme for IFIRS.....	59
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The impact of poverty on the development and well-being of children of color has been a focus of social science research since the 1940s (Davis & Havighurst, 1946). Over the past sixty years significant progress has been made in understanding economic disadvantage as the context for multiple risk factors and processes that increase the odds of negative psychological outcomes (Luthar, 1999; Seidman & Pederson, 2003). The effects of poverty are particularly pernicious for ethnic minority children in urban areas where an array of ecological stressors often overwhelms adaptive systems and resources that would facilitate healthy development. In addition to the effects of economic deprivation, perhaps the most devastating concomitant risk condition arising in poor urban communities is violence (McLoyd & Wilson, 1991). As African American families and children have consistently borne a disproportionate share of the burden of poverty in America and urban poverty in particular (Sampson, Sharkey & Raudenbush, 2008), they are also considerably more at risk for exposure to violent crime (Harpaz-Rotem et al., 2007). The research is clear that economic stress and community violence are major contributors to child disorders in general and substantially predict psychopathology in African American youth in particular.

Both internalizing and externalizing problems are linked to poverty and community violence. National studies consistently find that socioeconomic disadvantage increases the risk of psychiatric disorders of all types across ethnic groups (Costello et al., 1998; Mark & Buck, 2006; Roberts, Roberts & Xing, 2006; Wadsworth & Achenbach, 2005). Similarly, investigations of neighborhood violence reveal that associated psychological

outcomes for youth include not only post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety but also depression, cognitive impairment, low school achievement, aggression, and delinquency (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008; Guterman, Cameron & Hahm, 2003; Stein et al., 2003). While these macro-ecological risk conditions often have a direct impact on child adjustment, their consequences occur substantially through their effects on the microsystems in which children are embedded, especially the family.

The literature has increasingly revealed that the effects of economic hardship and community violence on child and adolescent outcomes are realized largely by way of their influence on family processes. While some research suggests that African American youth who experience persistent poverty fare better than adolescents from other ethnic groups exposed to similar conditions, attesting to the strengths of African American families (McLeod & Nonnemaker, 2000), increased severity of problems in this population are attributed to psychological vulnerability in parents, negative parenting practices, and conflictual parent-child relations that result from the strain of economic disadvantage (Costello et al., 2001; Paschal & Hubbard, 1998; Wickrama, Nah & Bryant, 2005). Comparable parent mental health and family relationship factors are associated with more adverse emotional and behavioral problems in children who are exposed to neighborhood violence (Bailey et al., 2006; Ceballo et al., 2003; Kliewer et al., 2004; Richters & Martinez, 1993).

Despite the great risk that poverty and community violence pose for child and adolescent well-being, these factors are not equally detrimental for all youth. Significant numbers of youth (between one- and two-thirds in some studies) who experience such conditions demonstrate positive adjustment (Werner & Smith, 2001; Wolin & Wolin,

1993). As the vulnerability of parents and family processes are often critical factors contributing to negative outcomes in children exposed to macrosystemic risk, the quality of parenting and the parent-child relationship often makes the difference for children who exhibit social and emotional competence under similar conditions. Research examining resilience demonstrates that healthy family processes mitigate the effects of adverse environmental circumstances (Masten, 2001, 2006). Consistent with well established knowledge derived from developmental and clinical research (Maccoby, 1992), the resilience literature specifies that parenting practices that are characterized by a balance of high levels of warmth (nurturance plus responsiveness) and appropriate degrees of control (behavioral and psychological) not only promote positive adaptation but also protect against risk conditions (Luthar, 2006; Sheridan, Eagle & Dowd, 2006). However, the specific practices that constitute nurturance, responsiveness, and appropriate control—as well as the meaning and effects of these behaviors—often vary in relationship to the totality of childrearing strategies used by parents and often differ in the context of the cultural communities and social environments in which families are embedded. These facts have significant implications for understanding and supporting ethnic minority families and youth.

Studies within the resilience, developmental, family, and clinical literatures have often demonstrated that specific practices representing warmth and control dimensions of parenting are associated with child and adolescent outcomes in African Americans. Nevertheless, the predominant use of variable-centered and bivariate approaches and insufficient analyses of cultural and contextual influences may obfuscate the multidimensional features of African American parenting and limit our understanding of

how parenting patterns contribute to the vulnerability or resilience of adolescents in this population. Although demonstrating linear relationships between single variables across families provides valuable information about the effects of specific parenting practices on adolescent adjustment, there are several problems inherent in focusing solely on this methodology. First, the variable-centered approach assumes that the parenting factors and adolescent outcomes under examination are related similarly and linearly across families and thus presupposes that the meaning and covariation of variables is the same for all families, regardless of culture or context (Mandara & Murray 2002). This may particularly obscure meaningful differences in ethnic minority parenting when the research design involves application of concepts and meaning indicative of European American middle-class perspectives and experience and/or families of color are subsumed or merged in a larger sample.

For example, comparative research has revealed that African American parents often employ practices that are considered excessively controlling, restrictive, punitive, or over-reactive with respect to dominant cultural standards. Although such practices are not generally considered promotive or protective of positive adjustment in the mainstream literature and are often detrimental to European American adolescent adaptation, these strategies have often been associated with favorable outcomes in African American samples (Baumrind, 1972; Dodge, McLoyd & Lansford, 2005; Lamborn, Dornbusch & Steinberg, 1996), particularly under adverse ecological conditions (Jarrett, 1995; Mason, Cauce, Gonzales & Hiraga, 1996). While such practices often represent adaptations to environmental context and related risk factors, these behaviors are also attributed to traditional values of obedience and respect for

parents and elders (Hall & Bracken, 1996; Nobles, 1976) and reflect a high level of parent investment in child development and behavior (Steele, Nesbitt-Daly, Daniel & Forehand, 2005).

Second, variable-centered methods are unidimensional and thus cannot adequately capture the multidimensional relationships that characterize human systems (Bergman, 2000). Given that transactions between parents and children involve multiple dimensions interacting as a whole, focusing on single variables may obscure the functions of specific parenting practices when they occur in conjunction with other childrearing factors (Radke-Yarrow, 2000). For instance, strict or punitive discipline may contribute to positive adjustment in African American adolescents when these strategies occur in the context of nurturing and responsive parent-child relationships and are used in tandem with reasoning. However, when parental warmth is low and reasoning is absent, strict or punitive discipline is likely to be detrimental to adolescent development. Though the latter set of childrearing factors represent a well known parenting type that is associated with maladjustment, the former combination of practices is rarely considered in the literature because it deviates from dominant parenting theory.

Similarly, the bivariate method of investigating parenting patterns, which involves crossing the warmth and control dimensions to obtain four basic types, limits our understanding of multidimensional processes. With each type featuring a combination of high or low warmth and high or low control, this approach typically presumes that parents who employ strict or punitive discipline provide low levels of nurturance and those who use reasoning and firm but not punitive discipline offer high levels of nurturance. Because the covariance structure is pre-established in these analyses and use

of cut-off scores limits the variability of factors, this approach fails to adequately account for configurations of parenting dimensions that may be associated with positive adaptation though they diverge from the assumed interrelationships. However, qualitative studies exploring parenting from a holistic perspective have suggested that traditional African American parenting features higher levels of warmth and higher levels of control than are typically associated with positive adaptation or resilience from the point of view of mainstream parenting types (Young, 1970, 1974).

Third, variable-centered and bivariate methods cannot integrate person and process variables and social-contextual influences in a mutual analysis that adequately measures the dynamic interactions of persons-in-context (Cairns, 2000; Radke-Yarrow, 2000). Consequently, complex and co-occurring transactions within families and between families and the social environment that may uniquely increase risk or promote protection may go unrecognized (Seidman et al., 1999). It may be the case that high levels of control, including strict and/or punitive practices, and high levels of warmth are necessary for the positive adjustment of adolescents in African American families exposed to high risk social-ecological conditions, and the ability of parents to provide this balance of childrearing practices under these circumstances may be contingent upon the level of distress they experience. When risk accumulates and parent distress is heightened, parental nurturance is likely to be low and the function of strict and/or punitive discipline may shift from protection to harm.

Thus, studies that fail to consider the interactive influence of adverse social-ecological conditions, parent mental health, and multiple parenting behaviors may fail to identify critical transactions that influence child adaptation in African American families.

An investigation that explores the interactions of a comprehensive array of parenting behaviors with exogenous risk factors and examines the function of parent well-being in this integrated totality may uncover distinct childrearing patterns that differentially predict child adjustment and identify processes that account for differences in these parenting styles. Increased understanding of African American parenting strategies in relationship to child and adolescent well-being requires this type of holistic, multidimensional approach that accounts for person and process factors and cultural and contextual differences.

Although person- or case-centered methods that examine multiple interrelated dimensions of family functioning simultaneously are garnering more attention in the family, clinical, and resilience literatures (Henry, Tolan, & Gorman-Smith, 2005; Mandara 2003; Masten, 2001), only a small number of studies have involved African American families, including four that investigate childrearing practices and adolescent adjustment (Gorman-Smith, Tolan & Henry, 2000; Gorman-Smith, Henry & Tolan, 2004; Hovee et al., 2008; Mandara & Murray, 2002). These studies suggest that African American parenting styles are mostly consistent with the mainstream typology—though divergent patterns and outcomes have been identified. While these studies add to our understanding of African American parenting types, free from the restrictions of pre-established covariance and incorporating multiple parenting dimensions/practices, they fail to adequately examine the influence of culture, environmental risk, and/or parent mental health on these interrelationships. As a result, the ecological validity and adaptive value of these childrearing patterns—which include authoritative and disengaged types and authoritarian styles that deviate from expected patterns and effects—have yet to be

firmly established and questions remain regarding an optimal parenting type for African American families living in high risk environments.

The purpose of the present study is to identify natural family patterns, assess similarities and differences with respect to mainstream parenting types, clarify the efficacy of each parenting pattern, examine key variables that may influence these processes, and thereby advance understanding of African American childrearing in social-ecological context. This research will explore parenting practices and parent-child relationship factors that contribute to the adjustment of African American adolescents in families exposed to economic hardship and community violence. A case-centered approach will be utilized that permits examination of multiple dimensions of childrearing and affords consideration of multiple combinations of parenting, person, and ecological risk factors that occur naturally within families and which may holistically provide vulnerability or protection. Knowledge generated from this research will not only increase understanding of African American parenting in social and cultural context but inform the development and improvement of interventions designed to promote the well-being of families and children exposed to harsh conditions in urban environments.

The next section of this manuscript begins with an overview of the literature that defines parenting dimensions and explains their associations with child and adolescent adjustment from the mainstream perspective. It continues with a review of the literature that examines the dimensions of African American parenting and their relationships with adolescent adjustment from the perspective of research focused on cultural influence and from the perspective of research exploring social-ecological impact in the form of exposure to economic hardship and community violence. The following section



summarizes the literature regarding parenting typology and highlights studies that involve African American families. It also emphasizes investigations that use cluster analysis to identify natural parenting types in this population and examine relationships between these types and adolescent well-being with and without analysis of interactions with ecological risk factors. The strengths and limitations of studies using variable-centered, bivariate, and case-centered methods are discussed in each respective section. The last section presents research questions and hypotheses.

### Dimensions of Parenting

Although variable-centered methods may limit our understanding of parenting from a holistic perspective, research using these procedures provides indispensable knowledge of the elements or dimensions of parenting that may comprise the constellation of parenting practices that occur naturally within and across families. The studies that represent the mainstream perspective define the dimensions of parenting and describe how individual practices are related to child development and well-being for families in general. The investigations that focus on African American families inform our understanding of cultural similarities and differences in covariance among childrearing practices and adolescent outcomes and those that examine interactions between parenting strategies and ecological risk factors in this population increase our awareness of parent mental health variables and childrearing practices that mediate or moderate the effects of such conditions on adolescent adaptation. These groups of studies also suggest parenting patterns that may occur naturally in this population; though, these literatures diverge in notable respects in their analyses of specific patterns that may be optimal for African American families under high risk circumstances.

Researchers in mainstream psychology have traditionally conceptualized parenting behavior and childrearing style in terms of two broad dimensions: warmth and control (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Each dimension encompasses a range of identified parenting practices that are grouped together based on the respective functions of establishing an emotional climate that defines the parent-child relationship and achieving socialization goals that are determined by parent beliefs and values. The specific parenting practices that represent these dimensions have a positive or negative valence based on their role in supporting the child's accomplishment of developmental goals, all of which are influenced by culture and social context.

### Warmth

The warmth dimension reflects an affective tone and is defined as nurturance plus responsiveness (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). It includes the qualities of acceptance, sensitivity, involvement, and support, and results in the formation of secure attachment and cohesive relationships from a positive perspective. On the negative end it involves emotional distance, neglect, insensitivity, rejection, or hostility, and leads to insecure attachment or conflictual relations. It is well understood among researchers and laypersons alike that the positive aspects of the warmth dimension are associated with optimal human development (Shaffer, 2000). Beginning from the moment of birth and lasting throughout childhood, the developing person requires love, affection, sensitive contact, positive regard, empathy, and assistance from caregivers, family and others in order to not only survive but mature into a healthy and competent individual (Biringen, 2000; Maughan, Pickles & Quinton, 1995; Mayseless & Scharf, 2007; Stormshak et al., 2000). Indeed strong emotional bonds with significant others are required across the

lifespan and are of critical importance regardless of life circumstances (Belsky, Jaffee, Caspi, Moffitt & Silva, 2003; Pinquart & Sorenson, 2000).

Although the form of nurturing behavior optimally changes as the person transitions from infancy to childhood to adolescence and beyond, or may be expressed differently in different cultures or contexts (Vendlinski, Silk, Shaw & Lane, 2006), the need for adequate responsiveness remains. On the other hand, hostility, rejection, and alienation in family relationships often undermine positive adaptation regardless of the persons age and under otherwise favorable conditions and often contribute to worse outcomes in the context of adversity (Brook, Whiteman, Finch & Cohen, 2000; Melby & Conger, 1996; Mullins & Mushel, 1992; Simons, Robertson & Downs, 1989). Without sufficient attention and physical nurturance the newborn will fail to thrive (Leonard, Rhymes & Solnit, 1986) and the infant will develop insecure attachment (DeWolf & van IJzendoorn, 1997). Without affection, involvement and support, or with excessive hostility and conflict, the capacity of children and adolescents to develop self-regulation skills, emotional and behavioral health, social competence, and independent functioning will be substantially diminished (Prinstein & La Greca, 1999; Rodrigo, Janssens & Ceballos, 1999).

### Control

The control dimension, also referred to as demandingness (Baumrind, 1991), consists of behavioral and psychological aspects. Whereas the former encompasses strategies that target child behavior, the latter involves practices that directly affect thoughts and feelings (Barber, 1996). The psychological domain is further divided into tactics that manipulate child thinking and emoting and that support the development of autonomy in

these areas (Silk, Morris, Kanaya & Steinberg, 2003). From a favorable standpoint, behavioral control incorporates rules, organization, consistent and inductive discipline, effective contingency management practices, appropriate supervision and monitoring, and the psychological domain involves the granting of autonomy with no attempts to control thoughts or feelings. From a suboptimal view behavioral control consists of disorganization, inconsistent or harsh discipline, ineffective contingency management, indulgence, and permissiveness, and the psychological domain involves intrusion upon thoughts and emotions and denial of autonomy. Behavioral control also includes decision-making authority, which varies by degree of child involvement and may be deemed beneficial or harmful based on other conditions (Steinberg, 1993). Clear rules, appropriate levels of organization, consistency of discipline, positive reinforcement, inductive reasoning, and support for autonomy are important factors that are associated with positive child adaptation over the course of development (Teti & Candelaria, 2002). However, discipline practices that involve punishment vary in their effects based on form, intensity, and context; the appropriateness of supervision and monitoring depends upon the child's developmental phase and social ecology; and the child's role in decision-making is contingent upon age and culture (Garbarino, Bradshaw & Kostelny, 2005; Larzelere, 2002; Leyendecker, Harwood, Comparini & Yalcinkaya, 2005).

Punishment, limit-setting, positive reinforcement, supervision/monitoring, decision-making, reasoning, and autonomy promotion may be organized into categories of practices that are considered more or less beneficial for child and adolescent adjustment. One useful system developed by Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) and adapted by Kelley, Sanchez-Hucles and Walker (1993) consists of three categories. The first

category, indirect-internal control, includes reasoning, autonomy promotion, and other strategies that involve encouragement of internal motivation for behavior. Use of reasoning refers to verbal communication with the child that is purposed to clarify expectations, identify problems and likely consequences, and supply explanations and provide rationales for parent rules, decisions and behavior (Natsuaki, Ge, Brody, Simons, Gibbons & Cutrona, 2007). Reasoning is inductive to the extent that it elicits ideas from the child or adolescent that serves these purposes. Inductive reasoning is particularly appropriate for adolescents and is associated with internalization of moral standards and greater likelihood of following parent guidelines as well as development of one's own values and commitments (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Similarly, joint parent-adolescent decision-making that involves use of reasoning and encouragement of the adolescent's individual expression and capacity to make decisions is considered best for the promotion of autonomy (Steinberg, Elmen & Mounts, 1989).

The second category, indirect-external control, includes positive reinforcement, supervision and monitoring, and other strategies that involve contingent parent responses that may include management of resources, activities, or other sources of reinforcement (e.g. granting or denial of material rewards, privileges, or social interaction). Indirect-external controls are regarded by some as less than optimal means of facilitating internalization of socially acceptable behavior, particularly when used apart from reasoning, because these strategies rely more on parental assertion of power than development of internal motivation (Hoffman, 1983, 1994). However, use of praise, encouragement, rewards, and other forms of positive contingency management have been found to be more effective than punishment in increasing desired behavior (Maag, 1996,

1997) and some research indicates that reasoning combined with parent assertion of power induces internalization of standards more than inductive reasoning alone (Baumrind, 1996). Whereas firm enforcement of rules via consistent implementation of expected consequences is a critical contributor to positive adaptation over the course of child and adolescent development, optimal levels of supervision and monitoring change with age (Crouter & Head, 2002). High levels of supervision and monitoring are necessary during childhood for reasons of safety and security; however, they are expected to decrease as a child grows older in order to foster greater independence during adolescence.

The third category, direct-external control, includes physical and verbal (e.g. scolding, yelling) punishment, limit-setting, and other strategies (e.g. verbal directives, rule invocations, unilateral parent decision-making) that involve direct intervention or force. Verbal and physical punishment that is accompanied by anger and hostility or are administered with excessive severity are collectively labeled harsh or punitive and are often associated with child behavior problems and negative emotionality (Straus & Field, 2003; Straus & Stewart, 1999). Limit-setting that excessively restricts an adolescent's activities or parent decision-making that is unilateral may perpetuate dependence or lead to parent-adolescent conflict, problem behavior, or other poor adjustment (Fletcher, Steinberg & Williams-Wheeler, 2004; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). However, if the family's cultural values favor parental authority or if the family lives in a dangerous environment, there is some research evidence that suggests greater direct-external control during adolescence may benefit adolescent adjustment (Bradley, 2002; Harkness & Super, 2002).

### Dimensions of African American Parenting

Research focusing on African American families suggests that childrearing in this population is a distinct cultural expression of the two dimensions of parenting—warmth and control. Ethnographic work indicates that the rearing of African American children is influenced by beliefs in strong family ties, respect for elders, cooperative and reciprocal relationships, the natural goodness of the child, and a sense of divine purpose (Nobles, 1976) as well as beliefs in self-determination and individual and collective struggle to attain valued goals (Karenga & Karenga, 1985). These beliefs, in turn, appear to inform the socialization goals of obedience, respect for self and others, responsibility for self and family, social cooperation, self-reliance and independence, ambition and educational attainment, assertiveness, goal-persistence, and religious faith and morality (Allen, 1978; Brody & Stoneman, 1992; Jagers, Bingham & Hans, 1996; Peters, 1985; Stevenson, 1994). These beliefs and goals are thought to guide parenting practices that are characterized by high degrees of warmth and high levels of control.

However, cultural influence alone cannot explain the form, frequency, and function of parenting practices. Exposure to harmful social-ecological events such as economic hardship and community violence can have a substantial influence on parental warmth and control as well as adolescent adjustment. Parents who are exposed to these environmental stressors are faced with the difficult tasks of coping with the personal effects of these conditions and also providing parenting behavior that will enable their children to successfully adapt to these circumstances and achieve safety, socialization, and social mobility goals (Brodsky & DeVet, 2000; Jarrett, 1995). In many cases parents are unable to cope and their mental health and parenting practices suffer which makes

maladjustment a more likely outcome for their adolescent children (Radke-Yarrow & Klimes-Dougan, 1997). However, some parents and adolescents demonstrate positive adaptation under these risk conditions by virtue of the strength of the parents' coping abilities and childrearing strategies (Brodsky, 1999). The dimensional studies that examine parental warmth and control from cultural and ecological perspectives and highlight the influence of these practices on adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior are presented in the next sections. Whereas some of these studies focus on single parenting dimensions or practices, others consider composites of two or more parenting dimensions and/or practices.

### Warmth

Ethnographic studies and other culturally-focused investigations suggest that African American parents—especially mothers—traditionally demonstrate high levels of warmth. This nurturing and responsive behavior is expressed in the form of high degrees of attention, interaction, affection, and close physical contact during childhood (Young, 1970; 1974) and elevated communication, involvement, and investment in the child's well-being through the adolescent years (Brody & Flor, 1996; Brody & Stoneman, 1992; Brody, Stoneman & Flor, 1996). Perhaps as a result of the amount of parental warmth expressed, the parent-child relationship in African American families has been distinguished in some studies by the strength of the emotional bond when compared to parent-child dyads of other ethnic groups in degree of intimacy and support (Bartz & Levine, 1978; Hill, 1971; Rice, Cunningham & Young, 1997; Starrels, 1994). Consistent with the warmth dimension for all families, a high quality parent-child relationship is associated with positive psychosocial adjustment in African American youth without



consideration of environmental circumstances (Barber, Ball & Armistead, 2003; Veneziano, 2000; Veneziano & Rohner, 2000).

Furthermore, research suggests that single childrearing behaviors representing the warmth dimension have protective effects for African American adolescents exposed to violence in their communities. For youth exposed to community violence generally or who have experienced moderate exposure, a number of studies demonstrate that high levels of parental warmth and support (Ozer & Weinstein, 2004), more quality time spent with parents (Hammack, Richards, Luo, Edlynn & Roy, 2004; Overstreet, Dempsey, Graham & Moely, 1999), and emotionally supportive relationships (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998) are related to less depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress. Parental warmth and support (Ball et al., 2007; Rosario, Salzinger, Feldman & Ng-Mak, 2003) and emotionally supportive relationships (Kliewer et al., 2006) have also been associated with less substance abuse, delinquency and aggression. However, a few studies indicate that high levels of warmth/support or a high quality parent-child relationship considered as single variables are only protective at low levels of exposure to violence (Hammack, Richards, Luo, Edlynn & Roy, 2004; Kliewer et al., 2004).

Conversely, some studies demonstrate that inadequate parental warmth or poor parent-child relations as single factors add to or mediate the effects of economic hardship, community violence, or both of these conditions on African American adolescent outcomes. Lack of maternal warmth/support (Skowron, 2005) and poor family relationship quality (Halliday-Boykins & Graham, 2001) have separately been found to mediate the relationship between neighborhood crime and adolescent aggression. Researchers in the latter case also discovered that family risk (including economic stress

and parent psychopathology) also mediated this relationship and contributed to exposure to violence as well as adolescent violent behavior. Problems in the parent-adolescent relationship have predicted adolescent psychological distress independently of economic strain (Davis & Rhodes, 1994) and have also been found to be an outcome of this ecological condition (Gutman, McLoyd & Tokoyawa, 2005). In the second example, the investigators found the economic strain and parent-adolescent relationship link to be mediated by parent distress and, in turn, negative and positive parent-adolescent relations predicted adolescent anxiety and depression as well as positive adjustment in expected directions (Gutman, McLoyd & Tokoyawa, 2005).

### Control

With regard to the control dimension, qualitative and quantitative studies indicate that African American parenting customarily features high levels of control practices (Bartz & Levine, 1978; Young, 1970, 1974; Ward, 1971). Sociological literature suggests that an imperative mode of social control evolved out of necessity in the face of historic racial hostilities and continues to be evoked when children are in imminent danger of physical or emotional harm in the context of present day ecological hazards (Bernard, 1966; Daniels & Daniels, 1999; Greene, 1990). This imperative mode may include use of urgent commands and strict application of rules to proactively control child behavior (Bernstein, 1986; Brodsky & DeVet, 2000; Brody & Stoneman, 1992; Smetana, 2000), and may involve restriction of activities and social involvement, material consequences, denial of privileges and use of physical discipline, to correct misbehavior (Kelley & Heffer, 1987; Kelley, Sanchez-Hucles & Walker, 1993).

Though direct- and indirect-external control strategies are often major components of the parenting repertoire, several studies suggest that these practices serve a different function in African American families, particularly in the context of warm and supportive parent-child relations, and are often associated with positive adjustment in contrast to mainstream norms (Baumrind, 1972; Dodge, McLoyd & Lansford, 2005; Lamborn, Dornbusch & Steinberg, 1996). Moreover, some studies demonstrate that African American parents who use direct- and indirect-external strategies are also likely to use indirect-internal practices (Bartz & Levine, 1978; Brodsky & DeVet, 2000; Kelley, Power & Winbush, 1992; Mosby et al., 1999). Thus, the use of indirect control practices such as reasoning, encouragement of child input, use of praise and affection as positive reinforcement, monitoring of child activity outside the home, and the promotion of child/adolescent autonomy in combination with direct-external practices suggests that these parenting behaviors may collectively contribute to positive outcomes. The dimensional research investigating individual and combined indirect and direct control practices as they are often grouped in the literature and joined with parental warmth is reviewed below. Data indicating the frequency and function of specific practices and their covariation with other strategies is highlighted. The lack of research investigating the effects of direct and indirect control practices in the context of ecological risk conditions is noted.

Reasoning, Reinforcement, and Monitoring. Several studies indicate that African American parents use reasoning more frequently than parent decision-making and limit-setting, denial of privileges, ignoring, social isolation, and verbal and physical punishment to prevent and correct misbehavior (Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda 1999;

Brodsky & DeVet, 2000; Kelley & Heffner, 1987; Jackson, 1996; Jagers, Bingham & Hans, 1996). One study also indicates that demanding and restrictive parent responses are frequently accompanied by explanations for their demands (Middlemiss, 2003). Furthermore, though use of time-out and positive reinforcement have been endorsed less often by African American parents (Kelley & Heffner, 1987), giving praise and showing affection have been found to be common rewards for good behavior (Allen, 1985), and parental monitoring is reportedly used nearly as frequently as explanations to prevent and correct misbehavior (Brodsky & DeVet, 2000). The findings that reasoning, positive reinforcement, and monitoring are related to less adolescent risk behavior and greater adolescent protective behavior in this population is consistent with the relations found for other ethnic groups (Been, Barber & Crane, 2006; Pettit, Bates, Dodge & Meece, 1999; Reid, Patterson & Snyder, 2003; Stanton et al., 1999)

While deductive and inductive reasoning, positive reinforcement, and parental monitoring are understood to be effective strategies for influencing adolescent behavior, only inductive reasoning and parental monitoring appear to have been investigated in interaction with ecological risk in the variable-focused literature involving African American families. Two studies exploring the effects of single childrearing strategies found that high levels of parental monitoring and inductive reasoning buffer the effects of community violence at high levels of risk but have lesser or no effect on adolescent adaptation in safer environments. In one investigation, parental monitoring was negatively related to depression, aggression, and delinquency in adolescents who experienced economic disadvantage when the adolescents lived in neighborhoods with high levels of violence. However, no relationship between parental monitoring and

adjustment was found for adolescents living in neighborhoods with low levels of violence (Armistead, Forehand, Brody & Maguen, 2002). Similarly, the protective relationship of inductive reasoning with respect to adolescent depression became stronger when neighborhood violence increased (Natsuaki, Ge, Brody, Simons, Gibbons & Cultrona, 2007).

Several studies by two separate teams of researchers combine parental warmth and support with parental monitoring and/or inductive reasoning and find that high levels of these practices are associated with positive adjustment in African American adolescents under high-risk conditions. The first set of studies examines the efficacy of a warmth/support and supervision/monitoring composite in protecting adolescents from the harmful effects of community violence in the context of economic risk. Similar to the aforementioned research examining comparable parenting factors separately, these studies find that the warmth/support and supervision/monitoring composite moderates the effects of community violence on adjustment and explains additional variance beyond that accounted for by economic risk. At low levels of the composite, boys with high degrees of exposure to violence report greater anxiety (Henrich, Schwab-Stone, Fanti, Jones & Ruchkin, 2004). At low, moderate and high levels of the composite respectively, the positive relationship between moderate exposure to violence and violent behavior in boys changes from significance, to marginal, to no relationship (Brookmeyer, Henrich & Schwab-Stone, 2005).

Also consistent with findings for single parenting practices at increasing levels of contact with the risk condition, when adolescents are differentiated into groups by degree of exposure to violence, differences in the relationship of the warmth/support and

supervision/monitoring composite to adolescent adjustment are observed (O'Donnell, Schwab-Stone & Mueeed, 2002). When adolescents with moderate exposure to violence are compared to adolescents who have had no exposure to violence, the composite has a stronger positive relationship to positive adjustment in the moderate exposure group. When compared to the moderate and no exposure groups, the negative links between the composite and internalizing and externalizing problems are of greater magnitude for adolescents with high degrees of exposure to violence.

The second set of studies explores a composite of high levels of parental warmth and support, parent-child relationship quality, and inductive reasoning in relationship to positive adjustment in African American adolescents who experience economic hardship. The findings indicate that the positive relationship between maternal psychological functioning (high esteem, low depression) and the composite of high warmth/support, high quality relationship and inductive reasoning mediates the effects of economic hardship on adolescent internalizing and externalizing problems such that the negative impact of this risk condition on adolescent adaptation is mitigated (Brody, Kim, Murray & Brown, 2004, 2005; Kim & Brody, 2005). The same results were found when high parental monitoring was added to the composite (Brody, Murry, Kim & Brown, 2002). These outcomes suggest that parents' ability to cope with ecological stress and maintain psychological well-being is critical to the provision of optimal parenting and the promotion of adolescent adjustment under adverse circumstances.

Autonomy Promotion & Psychological Control. Whereas studies indicate that inductive reasoning and monitoring are positively related to adolescent adjustment under low risk conditions and become increasingly important as environmental risk escalates,

the relationship of autonomy promotion to adolescent well-being in the context of variable ecological conditions is less clear. Without consideration of context, the research suggests that the development of autonomy—including independent thinking, individualism (expressive and non-competitive), assertiveness, and ambition—is highly valued as a goal of socialization among African Americans (Jagers, Bingham & Hans, 1996; Peters, 1985). In fact, some studies have found that African American parents typically discourage dependence at earlier ages than European American or other parents (Bartz & Levine, 1978; Baumrind, 1972). However, despite the possibility of divergent expectations of independence during childhood, autonomy promotion during adolescence appears to be consistent across ethnicity in terms of parenting behavior and adolescent outcomes (Silk, Morris, Kanaya & Steinberg, 2003). For African American, European American, and other youth, parent autonomy promotion is associated with decreased adolescent depression, somatic symptoms, and other internalizing symptoms over time (Herman, Dornbusch, Herron & Herting, 1997) and is inversely related to expressive anger, behavior problems, and delinquency concurrently (Clark, Novak & Dupree, 2002; Silk, Morris, Kanaya & Steinberg, 2003). Direct linear and u-shaped curvilinear relationships have been found with psychosocial outcomes such as self-reliance, work orientation, and self-esteem (Gray & Steinberg, 1999). These findings suggest that autonomy promotion is an important contributor to adolescent adjustment in this population. However, the extent to which African American parents promote adolescent autonomy depends in part on their inclination to assert control in the psychological domain and in part on how much direct control they exercise over their adolescents' behavior, both of which may be contingent upon the nature of the ecological context.

While African American parents profess strong beliefs in the importance of developing autonomy in their adolescents (Smetana & Chuang, 2001), they also report restricting their adolescents activities in response to environmental risks (Cauce et al., 1996). Though often meant to protect their adolescents from harm, excessive parent control over personal issues may constrain adolescent freedom to make decisions, engage in enjoyable activities, and develop their self concepts (Smetana, 2000). Thus, such efforts may impinge upon their psychological autonomy (Smetana & Daddis, 2002).

However, in contrast with the results associated with autonomy promotion, outcomes related to parental psychological control are equivocal when African American fathers and mothers are considered separately. The findings for African American fathers in some important respects are inconsistent with expectations. Paternal psychological control appears to be negatively correlated or unrelated to depression in African American adolescents (Bean, Barber & Crane, 2006; Krishnakumar, Buehler & Barber, 2004). However, the relationship between paternal psychological control and externalizing symptoms and between maternal psychological control and both internalizing and externalizing problems in African Americans appears to be consistent with the mainstream literature—the associations are direct (Barber, 1996; Mason, Cauce, Gonzales, Hiraga & Grove, 1994; Krishnakumar, Buehler & Barber, 2004; Walker-Barnes & Mason, 2001). Furthermore, whereas paternal psychological control is directly related to paternal support (Bean, Barber & Crane, 2006), maternal psychological control is inversely related to warmth (Jackson-Newsom, Buchanan & McDonald, 2008).

While the relationship of paternal psychological control to adolescent adjustment seems contradictory, maternal psychological control appears to be detrimental to



adolescent well-being. Despite the need for more information regarding fathers, the negative results associated with maternal psychological control, the favorable outcomes related to promotion of autonomy, and reported ecological influences on parent inclination to restrict autonomy, neither psychological control nor autonomy promotion have been examined in variable-focused studies investigating interactions with economic stress and community violence.

Decision-Making & Limit-Setting. While psychological control appears to be harmful, particularly when engaged in by mothers, parent use of direct control in response to ecological concerns may be beneficial in the context of environmental risk when it is precisely focused on limiting adolescent behavior while protecting the development of psychological autonomy (Cauce et al., 1996). Evidence of ethnic differences in the function of direct-external control provides support for this notion. For example, culturally-focused studies indicate that unilateral parent decision-making is associated with less deviant behavior and decreases in gang involvement, while unilateral adolescent decision-making is associated with greater deviance and increased gang delinquency for African Americans (Lamborn, Dornbusch & Steinberg, 1996; Mason & Walker-Barnes, 2001). Joint parent-adolescent decision-making is unrelated to deviance for African American youth in these studies. Furthermore, studies indicate that strict limit-setting is negatively related to angry temperament and expressed anger in African American adolescents (Clark, Novak & Dupree, 2002) and negatively associated with depression in African American adolescent girls (Finkelstein, Donenberg & Martinovich, 2000). Research also suggests that parent permissiveness is positively associated with aggression (Krishnakumar, Buehler & Barber, 2004) and directly predicts gang

involvement and delinquency for African American youth (Mason & Walker-Barnes, 2001). For European American adolescents (and in some cases Latino and/or Asian youth) in the aforementioned studies, unilateral parent, unilateral youth, and joint decision-making, strict limit-setting and permissiveness were either unrelated to adolescent adjustment or had the opposite effects from those found for their African American counterparts. However, these outcomes may be related to differences in ecological context as much as or more than they may be attributed to cultural influences. Yet, parent decision-making and limit-setting have not been investigated in interaction with economic stress and community violence despite evidence of their frequent use in African American families, positive relationships with adolescent adjustment in this population, and likely moderating effects of the environment.

Physical Discipline. Use of physical discipline is another direct-external control strategy that may vary in relationship to adolescent adjustment based on cultural and/or ecological influences. Though African American parents report using physical discipline less than other control strategies (Jackson, 1996), research indicates that they generally use and endorse physical discipline more than other ethnic groups (Dodge, McLoyd & Lansford, 2005). When physical punishment rises to the level of maltreatment, either by employing excessive force or using harmful objects, it is as detrimental to African American children as it is damaging for other youth (Dodge, Bates & Pettit, 1990; Larzelere, 1996). However, the effects of *mild* corporal punishment for African American children and adolescents often appear markedly different from the effects of such practices for European American youth. Whereas research consistently finds spanking during childhood to be predictive of greater externalizing problems in European

American children, studies typically reveal this disciplinary practice to either be unrelated to externalizing behavior or predictive of decreased behavior problems in African American children (Gunnoe & Mariner, 1997; Magnus, Cowen, Wyman, Fagen & Work, 1999; McLoyd, Kaplan, Hardaway & Wood, 2007; Simons, Lin, Gordon, Brody & Conger, 2002; Whaley, 2000). Mild physical punishment has also been found to be negatively related to antisocial behavior in African American adolescents and more consistently protective for this age group in comparison to younger children. (Lansford, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates & Pettit, 2004).

The positive effects of mild corporal punishment for African American children appear to be explained in part by other parenting practices that serve as moderating factors. Research indicates that non-abusive physical discipline is not associated with increased externalizing problems (McLoyd & Smith, 2002) or other social-emotional maladjustment (Rohner, Bourque & Elordi, 1996; Rohner, Kean & Cournoyer, 1991) in African American youth when it occurs in the context of high levels of emotionally supportive parenting. Studies have also found spanking to be associated with decreased behavior problems in African American children when the tactic is motivated by child-oriented goals, applied consistently, and combined with use of reasoning (Larzelere, 1996; Larzelere, Sather, Schneider, Larson & Pike, 1998). The extent to which the interactive effect of high levels of warmth and/or indirect control practices with mild physical discipline may be contingent upon favorable environmental conditions is unclear.

In contrast, studies suggest that low warmth and ineffective or punitive discipline strategies often occur in the contexts of economic hardship and community violence and

are detrimental to the adjustment of African American adolescents. Parental distress or depression appears to be the critical factor that influences parenting behavior under these conditions and a poor parent-child relationship seems to adversely affect the function of punitive discipline strategies. These studies indicate that parental distress and its negative effect on parental warmth and discipline efficacy mediate the effects of economic stress on adolescent internalizing and externalizing problems (Mistry, Vandewater, Huston & McLoyd, 2002; Stern, Smith & Joon Jang, 1999). Research also shows that while maternal depression and its direct effect on punitive discipline (verbal and physical punishment and social isolation) mediates the relationship between economic hardship and adolescent depression and anxiety, the effect of punitive discipline on these internalizing symptoms is mediated by adolescent perception of negative mother-adolescent relations (McLoyd, Jayaratne, Ceballo & Borquez, 1994). Furthermore, for youth who experience poor family relationships and exposure to community violence, a positive relationship between punitive discipline (corporal punishment) and adolescent depression has been linked with violent behavior (DuRant, Cadenhead, Pendergrast, Slavens & Linder, 1994).

Similarly, three studies combining punitive discipline practices with parental warmth and support as composite variables indicate that harsh tactics and low warmth/support are related to maladjustment in African American adolescents experiencing community violence and/or economic hardship. The results inform us of the harm—or in one situation benefit—that may be associated with high punitive and low warm/supportive practices in the context of environmental risk conditions. The first study combined warm/supportive and harsh parenting (verbal and physical punishment) practices into a

single measure representing a continuum and found that harsh parenting predicted low levels of adolescent social competence at high levels of exposure to violence (Krenichyn, Saegert & Evans, 2001). Conversely, warm/supportive parenting predicted high social competence at high levels of exposure. However, harsh parenting predicted higher social competence than warm/supportive parenting at low levels of exposure to violence, suggesting that punitive tactics promote appropriate social behavior when violent victimization and witnessing are minimal but exacerbate behavior problems at high levels of exposure to these risk conditions.

The next two studies use similar composites that cast warm/supportive and punitive practices as polar opposites. These investigations find that caregiver distress that is linked to economic hardship has a significant influence on low warmth and high punitive behavior and consequently has an adverse affect on adolescent adaptation. Researchers in the second investigation constructed a parental warmth factor by subtracting punitive practices (e.g. scolding, taking away privileges) from warm and supportive behavior (e.g. verbal praise, affection; McLoyd & Wilson, 1991). They found that economic hardship predicted maternal distress, and the positive relationship between maternal distress and adolescent internalizing symptoms was accounted for by reduced parental warmth/support. In the third study, investigators used the inverse of a positive parenting composite that originally consisted of high warmth and low hostility and high levels of consistent discipline, positive reinforcement, monitoring, and inductive reasoning, and low levels of coercive and punitive (verbal and physical) discipline. The researchers demonstrated that the successive links between parent depression, family relationship conflict, and the negative form of the parenting composite mediated the effects of

economic stress on adolescent internalizing and externalizing problems (Conger, Wallace, Sun, Simons, McLoyd & Brody, 2002).

In contrast to the aforementioned research, a different study by some of the same researchers examined the effects of separate composites of positive and negative parenting in interaction with neighborhood economic disadvantage to predict adolescent externalizing behavior (Ge, Brody, Conger, Simons & Murray, 2003). The positive parenting composite consisted of high levels of warmth, inductive reasoning, and monitoring and the negative composite was comprised of hostility and punitive and inconsistent discipline. The interaction of the negative parenting composite and neighborhood economic disadvantage contributed to increased externalizing behavior. The positive parenting composite was associated with less exposure to neighborhood risk but was unrelated to adolescent externalizing problems. Interactions between the parenting composites were not explored.

In summary, the dimensional research that examines African American parenting and adolescent adjustment in the context of economic hardship and community violence suggests that high levels of warmth, quality time spent with the parent, an emotionally supportive parent-child relationship, and high levels of inductive reasoning and parental supervision/monitoring individually and as composites moderate the relationship between one or both risk factors and adolescent adjustment, such that the harm associated with these conditions is mitigated. However, the research also suggests that single practices representing the warmth dimension may not be protective at higher levels of community violence; though, the control strategies and composites of high warmth and control have a stronger relationship to adjustment at greater degrees of exposure to harm.

Conversely, the data indicates that low levels of warmth and support, poor parent-child relationship quality, and high levels of hostility and punitive discipline as single variables or composites mediate or exacerbate the negative effects of economic stress and community violence on adolescent internalizing and externalizing behavior. The studies also indicate that parent distress and depression mediate the relationship between the exogenous risk factors and low parental warmth and poor relationship quality. Moreover, the harm associated with punitive discipline practices appears to be associated with an inadequate parent-child relationship. Yet, one study suggested that punitive practices (verbal and physical) had a stronger relationship with adolescent social competence than warm and supportive interaction at low levels of exposure to violence.

Overall, these patterns suggest that under these adverse ecological conditions the optimal combination of parenting strategies is characterized by high levels of parental warmth and indirect control and the suboptimal configuration of childrearing practices is typified by low degrees of parental warmth and high levels of direct-external control. This implication appears to contradict the cultural perspective which suggests that the traditional and most effective childrearing pattern for African Americans involves high levels of direct-external control in addition to high levels of warmth, indirect-external, and indirect-internal control strategies. However, the questions of whether or not these forms of parenting practice occur together naturally and are effective when combined were not considered in the literature examining the interactive effects of parenting, economic hardship and community violence. Whereas direct-external control includes parent decision-making, strict limit-setting, and verbal and physical punishment, only punitive practices were explored in these studies, and then only in conjunction with low

warmth and verbal hostility. While the culturally focused research suggests that punishment (e.g. mild corporal punishment, denial of privileges) and the other direct-external strategies promote positive adolescent adaptation in the context of emotionally supportive parent-child relations and contribute to harm in the absence of such relationships, the ecological risk studies only investigated the latter scenario. Though these investigations do not explore the optimal pattern suggested by the cultural perspective, they provide vital information regarding the low warmth-high punitive profile in this population by highlighting the circumstances that increase the likelihood that low amounts of emotional support will covary with high levels of physical and verbal punishment; namely, high levels of exposure to environmental stressors and high degrees of parent distress.

Although these studies suggest parenting patterns that may be associated with resilience or vulnerability in African American adolescents exposed to economic hardship and community violence, the variable-centered approach is an unreliable means of drawing conclusions about persons or families (Mandara, 2003). Research using these methods does not assess the characteristics of families per se but measures relationships between variables that are presumed to have the same covariance across families. Moreover, studies employing these techniques are only capable of exploring a limited number of dimensions or factors that characterize families and are only able to examine a narrow range of interactions that occur between parenting, person, and ecological variables. Furthermore, though childrearing practices may be aggregated, parenting composites are constructed according to theory rather than via natural covariation and



therefore do not capture the interactive, gestalt-like effects (Anderson & Sedikides, 1991) inherent within the parenting system.

As a consequence of these limitations, dimension-focused investigations are unable to examine the multiple interactions that occur naturally within families and between families and the social environment which may alter the function of any single variable (Radke-Yarrow, 2000) and may account for greater variance in adolescent adjustment than a similar set of factors observed apart from the whole. Thus, these studies inform us of relationships between parenting, ecological risk, and adolescent outcome variables across African American families but they are unable to adequately increase our knowledge of differences in covariance between African American families or sufficiently enhance our understanding of diversity in naturally-occurring multidimensional childrearing patterns in this population. They are also unable to adequately evaluate the effectiveness of diverse parenting patterns in African American families as they occur in the context of adverse environmental conditions.

Nevertheless, though the limitations of the variable-centered methodology used in the culturally focused and ecological risk studies does not permit reliable determination of the ecological validity of the suggested parenting patterns, this research offers valuable knowledge about the parenting variables that are relevant in African American families, related to adolescent adjustment, and protective or risk increasing in the context of exposure to economic hardship and community violence. Along the warmth dimension, these variables consist of parental warmth and support, verbal hostility, amount of quality time spent with parent, and parent-child relationship quality. With respect to the control dimension, these variables include the indirect-internal and indirect-external practices of

inductive reasoning, parental monitoring, positive reinforcement, and autonomy granting, and the direct-external strategies of parent decision-making, strict limit-setting, and corporal punishment. Parent demands for appropriate behavior and consistent enforcement of such standards are also important for a full view of parenting practices. Identifying these variables represents the groundwork from which a case-centered investigation may be constructed to accomplish the objectives of identifying natural parenting patterns and evaluating their efficacy under high risk environmental conditions. The next steps are to consider the typological approach to parenting and the implications of its evolution for diverse populations and to review the studies that include or focus on African American families, which are integral to the progression of ecologically valid methods.

### Parenting Typology

While the knowledge generated from investigating the dimensions of parenting is fundamental to our understanding of how parents influence child and adolescent development, as suggested above, focusing on single dimensions or individual practices alone limits our comprehension of parenting and its effects. Because parents naturally employ the fundamental dimensions of warmth and control and utilize multiple practices in combination, child adjustment may be better explained by examining the more ecologically valid constellation of childrearing behaviors that define parent-child relations holistically. In fact, theorists have long asserted that the parenting milieu derived from multiple parenting behaviors accounts for outcomes that are not explained by single dimensions or practices alone (Orlansky, 1949; Symonds, 1939) and parenting

typologies have been a focal point of child development and family research for the past 40 years (Baumrind, 1965, 1967).

Yet, the development and utilization of methodology that can reliably produce ecologically valid measures of parenting patterns is a process that is not yet complete. Initial investigations of childrearing patterns or “styles” involved use of composite measures and other variable-centered methods and included just two or three dimensions (Baldwin, 1948; Schaefer, 1959), which as already indicated are inadequate means of understanding human systems. However, procedures for investigating naturally occurring parenting patterns moved forward with the introduction of case-centered methodology (Baumrind, 1967) but then changed, and perhaps regressed, with the adoption of bivariate methods (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), ironically for the purpose of generalizability to varied populations. Although techniques that promote ecological validity have evolved with recent developments of cluster analytic methods, shortcomings in design still remain. As will be evident in the review of these developments, the advancement of this approach has been and still is driven to a significant extent by the need for accurate assessment of diverse families in general and African American families in particular.

#### Baumrind’s Theory and African American Parenting

In contrast to the early researchers who used variable-centered techniques to identify parenting styles based on two or three parenting dimensions, the most influential advocate of the multidimensional approach assumed that classification of parents according to a comprehensive array of parenting factors represented the best approach to understanding the impact of parenting on psychosocial development (Baumrind, 1967).

The research of Diana Baumrind (1965, 1967, 1971) revealed that specific patterns of multiple parenting behaviors (15 dimensions derived from 75 parenting behaviors in one study; Baumrind, 1971) representing the basic dimensions of warmth and control were more likely to produce socially competent children than other variations of these dimensions. Her initial configurational approach—holding that any single element of child socialization depends upon the configuration of other elements—elevated parenting styles from being viewed merely as a heuristic device to being regarded as naturally occurring parenting types (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Natural types are defined as categories of objects or subsets of persons “characterized by a reliably unique or discontinuously different pattern of covariation... with respect to a specifiable (and nontrivial) set of variables” (Block, 1971, pp. 109-110). Baumrind (1965, 1967) developed her parenting typology based on observations of different patterns (and guided by theory) of childrearing attitudes and practices that were associated with divergent patterns of child psychosocial competence in middle class European American families. She found that children who displayed self-regulation and self-reliance, were uninhibited and happy, and enjoyed good peer relations had parents who expected that their children behave in accord with social standards and develop independence, were loving and involved, and exercised consistent discipline characterized by use of reason and consideration of the child’s thoughts and feelings. Children who demonstrated maturity in terms of self-control and independence but exhibited inhibition, dysphoric mood, and poor peer affiliation had parents who valued and demanded compliance with normative standards and moral dictates, were unaffectionate and unsupportive, and used discipline that was consistent but punitive and

coercive. Children who were low in impulse control and self-sufficiency but appeared content, socially engaged, and well connected with peers had parents who expressed nurturance and some involvement but doubted their ability to influence their children, made few behavioral demands, tended to be overprotective, failed to use reason or power to control behavior and resorted to love withdrawal or ridicule. Consistent with existing theories (Baumrind, 1967), these parenting patterns were labeled authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive respectively.

In subsequent research Baumrind (1971) adopted a less naturalistic approach. She assigned parents to each category based on their scores relative to the median on measures of fifteen parenting factors. When viewed from the perspective of two general dimensions, parents identified as above the median in both warmth and control (including attitudes and practices) are classified as authoritative. Parents who are low in warmth and high in control and those who are moderate in warmth and low in control are categorized as authoritarian and permissive respectfully. Accordingly, Baumrind (1971) and others (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) identified a fourth parenting type, defined by parents who were low in both dimensions. Referred to as neglecting or disengaged, parents in this category do not expect or demand normative social behavior, are not supportive and may have active disdain for the child, do not encourage independence or individuality, do not provide structure or monitoring, and may abdicate parental responsibilities altogether (Baumrind, 1971, 1991). As can be expected, their children lack maturity, relatedness, cognitive motivation and competence, self-regulation, and social responsibility, and they exhibit pessimism and internalizing symptoms, substance abuse, other externalizing behavior, and sexual involvement more than their peers.

Not surprisingly, research utilizing Baumrind's typology to examine relationships between parenting and child or adolescent adjustment has generally found similar results with respect to predominantly European American samples (Kaufmann et al., 2000). Authoritative parenting is consistently associated with positive adjustment, demonstrating that a balance of high warmth and moderate control is optimal. Moderate control may represent behavioral and psychological components or indirect and direct strategies that are high and low respectively. From this perspective, the most beneficial behavioral control practices are characterized by discipline that is consistent and involves predominant use of reasoning and positive reinforcement and includes levels of monitoring and supervision that permit age-appropriate independence. Judicious use of direct-external control may also be necessary at times (Baumrind, 1966, 1996). Furthermore, decision-making has a democratic quality in that it incorporates the child's input, and the psychological domain features parenting behavior that safeguards and supports the child's development of autonomy in thought and feeling (Gray & Steinberg, 1999).

However, research involving African Americans, as well as Asians and other ethnic groups, suggests that this typology and its associated parenting practices may not be the best fit for these populations (Ang & Goh, 2006; Chao, 1994, 1995, 1996; Power, Koboyashi-Winata & Kelley, 1992). Whereas high warmth appears to be essential for positive child development in all families regardless of culture, significant differences have been found with respect to parenting philosophy and control practices. Baumrind discovered these issues early in her work and concluded that parenting concepts and behavior that are designed to socialize European American children are often inconsistent

with the beliefs, goals, and practices of African Americans. Whereas 80% of European American families could be placed in one of her parenting categories, only 38% of African American families could be classified, and each of these families were deemed authoritarian (Baumrind, 1972). Furthermore, her analyses suggested that authoritarian practices served a different function in African American families. While African American children did not differ from European American children in social behavior generally, authoritarian control was associated with greater self-assertion and independence in African American children, unlike their European American counterparts.

#### Bivariate Types and African American Parenting

Recognizing the social-cultural specificity of Baumrind's configurational typology, researchers began utilizing the two-dimensional framework to explore the applicability of Baumrind's general model to different populations (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Reducing multiple parenting behaviors to warmth and control dimensions, investigators categorized African American families according to Baumrind's types and found effects mostly consistent with Baumrind's theory. In a large sample of families of diverse ethnicity and socioeconomic status, Steinberg, Lamborn and colleagues defined the four parenting types along dimensions of warmth/support and limit-setting/ monitoring. Authoritative parenting appeared optimal and disengaged parenting seemed most harmful in their associations with adolescent internalized distress, delinquency, psychosocial development (e.g. self-reliance), and academic achievement (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts & Dornbusch, 1994). Adolescents from authoritarian and permissive families each demonstrated a

mixture of strengths and weaknesses in these areas, with the former less mature in psychosocial development but not significantly different from their counterparts from authoritative families in psychological distress, delinquency, or grade point average.

Whereas the similar effects of these parenting styles on delinquency is expected from the standpoint of dominant norms, the comparable relationship with internalizing symptoms and academic achievement is inconsistent with the outcomes found in predominantly European American samples (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg, Dornbusch & Brown, 1992).

The reason for the divergence from mainstream norms may have been the significant proportion of ethnic minorities (40%) in the sample, which included nine percent African Americans. Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn and Dornbusch (1991) explored the effects of culture and socioeconomic status by dividing the sample according to ethnicity, class, and one- or two-parent families and comparing authoritative to non-authoritative parenting within these subgroups. The non-authoritative group consisted of parents who were below the median on at least one of three parenting factors: warmth/support, limit-setting/monitoring, and autonomy granting, which was added as a key element of authoritative parenting. Whereas authoritative parenting was consistently superior for European American adolescents from middle-class and working class/two-parent families on all outcome measures, authoritative parenting was inconsistently more effective for minority adolescents, including those from middle class and two-parent families on some indicators. Authoritative parenting often failed to demonstrate greater efficacy in comparison to non-authoritative childrearing for African American youth in general, especially relative to internalized distress, and particularly for adolescents from working class families.



Although authoritative and authoritarian parenting was not compared directly in the Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn and Dornbusch (1991) study, due to the authoritarian pattern being combined with permissive and disengaged types in the non-authoritative group, similar results comparing each of the four types were found by Pittman and Chase-Landsdale (2001) in a sample of African American adolescent girls from predominantly poor families. Defining the four types along dimensions of parental warmth/support and limit-setting/monitoring, authoritative and disengaged parents appeared to be the most and least effective respectively. However, girls with authoritative and authoritarian mothers did not differ in depression or anxiety. Though girls with authoritative and authoritarian mothers also did not differ in minor delinquency, girls with authoritative mothers exhibited less major delinquency than girls with authoritarian mothers.

Although the bivariate approach facilitated classification of African American and other diverse families according to Baumrind's model and provided more information about parenting patterns consistent with the four prototypes, the methodology may have done more to obscure African American childrearing patterns than to elucidate them. African American parenting styles may not be accurately understood when the investigation is limited to two forms of parenting behavior or two dimensions that combine multiple kinds of childrearing practices. Although African American families with high levels of warmth/support and limit-setting/monitoring are similar to European American families that display the same pattern, in terms of being more effective than parents who are low on one or two of these factors, these families may differ when other parenting practices are considered.

For instance, if the direct-external tactics that are associated with authoritarian parenting are included in the analysis the result may be divergent patterns and/or outcomes, particularly if these practices serve a different function in African American families. In fact, when the meaning and covariance of parenting practices are moderated by ethnicity and/or social environment, even patterns that are similar across families may result in different effects. This may explain why the relationship of low parental warmth/support and high limit-setting/monitoring to adolescent depression and anxiety found within African American families in the Pittman and Chase-Landsdale (2001) study stands in contrast to mainstream norms when compared with the effects of the authoritative pattern on internalizing symptoms. In this case, the meaning of parental warmth and limit-setting/monitoring and their influence on adolescent adjustment may differ for African American families, especially those experiencing economic hardship and/or other adverse conditions such as community violence (Jones, Forehand, Brody & Armistead, 2003).

Additionally, classifying parents according to pre-established dimensional relationships, particularly using arbitrary cut-off scores to define types, may further obfuscate African American childrearing patterns. When the continuous variables that are used to classify parents are divided into high and low categories a substantial amount of the information that would be gained from maintaining their continuous nature is lost (Mandara & Murray, 2002). The information forfeited is knowledge of parenting patterns that occur naturally and may reflect more variability in combinations of childrearing practices than is evident in the four types derived from Baumrind's theory. Within this expanded space of variability may be parenting types that feature higher

levels of warmth and/or greater amounts (among diverse forms) of control than are commonly associated with the classic authoritative or authoritarian styles. These patterns may vary by cultural influence and/or ecological conditions and may be differentially associated with positive or negative adolescent adjustment.

For example, some African American parents that fit the pattern of high warmth/support and high limit-setting/monitoring in the Lamborn, Steinberg and colleagues (1991, 1994) and Pittman and Chase-Landsdale (2001) studies may in actuality display substantially higher levels of limit-setting/monitoring than other families placed in the authoritative category. This greater degree of external control may be a necessary response to higher crime rates or other risk conditions in their communities and may be crucial to positive adolescent adaptation in this context. Alternatively, some African American parents who were classified as authoritarian by virtue of scores on the warmth dimension that were below the median may in reality exhibit higher levels of warmth or autonomy granting than other families in this category. Relatively higher levels of these behaviors may reflect patterns that are unique to African American parenting, while less than optimal warmth may be associated with parent distress attributed to excessive financial strain or exposure to neighborhood violence.

Adolescents in these families may be moderately well adjusted under these conditions. Moreover, the inclusion of direct-external practices in the constellation of parenting variables might reveal that African American parents that otherwise fit the authoritative pattern use such tactics to a greater degree than expected for this type and these parents, as well as those whose strategies resemble the authoritarian style, may employ these techniques more frequently under circumstances of heightened economic stress and

community violence. The internalizing and externalizing responses of adolescents to these parenting styles and harmful conditions may be moderate to severe depending on the relative amounts of each of these factors and their parents' resilience.

In order to observe natural parenting patterns in African American families that may be consistent with or divergent from mainstream types in the manner suggested and to evaluate the extent to which similar or unique combinations of warmth and control practices may facilitate or exacerbate adolescent adaptation in the context of adverse environmental conditions, a case-centered methodology must be used that allows for naturally occurring variation amongst a comprehensive selection of parenting variables. To adequately examine the interrelationships among economic stress, community violence, parenting patterns and adolescent adjustment and to explore the role of parent distress in these dynamics, the methodology must also integrate the ecological risk and parent mental health factors into the analyses.

#### Natural Typologies of African American Parenting

Very few studies have undertaken the methodology necessary to develop a natural typology of African American parenting. After the variables of interest are identified, this methodology requires use of clustering methods to identify and describe groups of individual cases defined by their similarities along these multiple dimensions (Henry, Tolan & Gorman-Smith, 2005). Given that these groups are established according to the actual characteristics of cases, as opposed to theoretically established patterns, cluster analysis is a method that transcends the limitations of the bivariate approach (Mandara, 2003). However, the analytical technique alone cannot ensure the identification of ecologically valid types. The research design must also be structured to examine cultural

and social-ecological influences that are critical to understanding individual and family functioning as it occurs in reciprocal interaction with the environment (Magnusson, 2000). With regard to African American families, a comprehensive view of their parenting styles requires within-group analyses that include examination of direct-external practices along with parental warmth and indirect control strategies and, given the disproportionate numbers of families who are exposed to adverse conditions in urban environments, accurate understanding calls for integrated analysis of the effects of salient ecological stressors on these family processes. However, the four existing studies that use cluster analytic methods to investigate the influence of natural parenting patterns on the adjustment of African American adolescents only partially meet these conditions. Each of these studies and their strengths and limitations are reviewed below.

Two of the four studies include direct-external strategies in the analysis of parenting styles but fail to examine the interactive effects of environmental risk factors. In the first study, Hoeve, Blokland, Dubas, Loeber, Gerris and Van Der Laan (2008) examined the relationships between parenting types and pathways of delinquency in an adolescent sample overrepresented with African Americans (57%). Using cluster analysis, they identified three parenting types based on patterns of monitoring, physical punishment, emotionally supportive communication, positive reinforcement, and parent-child relationship. The types were for the most part consistent with the classic authoritative, authoritarian, and disengaged styles. Authoritative parents were high in every category except physical punishment. Authoritarian parents were high in both monitoring and physical punishment but, unlike the mainstream types, they were *moderate* in communication, positive reinforcement, and closeness of parent-child relationship.

Disengaged parents were low in all five parenting practices. A permissive type did not emerge.

The outcomes mostly imply similarity between these parenting styles and Baumrind's types. Adolescents from disengaged families had a greater probability of membership in moderate and serious delinquency categories and differentiated youth on moderate to serious trajectories from youth on minor to non-delinquent trajectories above and beyond the effects of socioeconomic status (parent education and occupation). Youth from authoritarian families also had a greater likelihood of being on the serious pathway. However, aspects of the study's design may confound cultural influence and conceal socioeconomic effects. African Americans and non-African Americans (presumably European Americans though not specified) were combined in the cluster analysis and as a result the types may not be a true reflection of African American parenting features. Additionally, though main effects of socioeconomic status were examined, no interaction effects of SES with ethnicity or parenting variables were explored.

Despite these concerns, the study provides some evidence of deviation from the classic types. The authoritarian style diverges from the classic type in its moderate rather than low levels of communication, positive reinforcement, and emotional closeness in the parent-child relationship. Nevertheless, the link between authoritarian parenting and serious delinquency suggests that use of physical punishment in a relationship context of less than high warmth contributes to negative outcomes. Furthermore, the difference in outcomes associated with the authoritative and authoritarian styles may be attributed to differences in social environment. The inclusion of ecological risk factors and other parenting variables in the cluster analysis could have potentially provided more

information about meaningful differences in holistic parenting patterns. Moreover, the extent to which any such differences may be true for African American families can only be discerned by conducting a within-group investigation (Seidman & Pederson, 2003).

The second study goes further in exploring the features of African American childrearing by focusing on within-group differences and examining a wider set of parenting factors. The researchers selected parenting behaviors that represented warmth, autonomy granting, psychological control, and behavioral control, which included strict limit-setting though corporal punishment was excluded. Mandara and Murray (2002) examined the relationships among parenting types based on these variables and adolescent obedience, self-esteem, and personality traits. Using cluster analysis, they identified three parenting styles which largely fit the authoritative, authoritarian, and disengaged patterns. As in the first study, no permissive type was identified.

The authoritative and disengaged types appear consistent with Baumrind's prototypes in parenting dimensions and associations with adolescent adjustment. The authoritative type features high levels of warmth and support, good relationship quality, positive reinforcement, high organization, moderate limit-setting, high autonomy granting, low psychological control, and high achievement orientation. Compared to their counterparts, the adolescents of authoritative parents were the most obedient and highest in self-esteem, agreeableness, and emotional stability. The disengaged type exhibits low levels of warmth and support, moderate relationship quality, low organization, low limit-setting, low autonomy granting, low achievement orientation, and high psychological control. Their adolescent children were lowest in obedience, self-esteem, agreeableness, emotional stability, and conscientiousness.

Although the similarities are apparent between the authoritarian type that emerged in this study and the conventional authoritarian style, some important differences are suggested with respect to dimensions and adolescent outcomes. The authoritarian parents in this study display low warmth and support, low relationship quality, low positive reinforcement, moderate organization, restrictive limit-setting, and use of psychological control tactics. While these parenting behaviors are consistent with Baumrind's prototype, the authoritarian pattern in this case is distinguished by being equivalent to and even exceeding the authoritative type in autonomy granting and achievement orientation respectively, which stands in contrast to classic authoritarian parenting. Although the adolescents from authoritarian families were lower in obedience, self-esteem, agreeableness, and emotional stability than their counterparts from authoritative families, they were higher on these indicators than adolescents from disengaged families. They were equivalent to authoritative adolescents in conscientiousness. More importantly, the aforementioned outcomes were not low in comparison to standard norms (Mandara & Murray, 2002). As such, these adolescents appear to be better adjusted than European American adolescents of authoritarian parents (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn & Dornbusch, 1991). Yet, moderate functioning is less than full potential and the shortfall in competence may be attributed more to lack of warm and supportive parenting than the presence of strict behavioral control.

However, the different patterns of parenting and levels of adolescent functioning may also reflect divergent degrees of exposure to environmental risk. The researchers indicate that the authoritarian parents are lower in education and income than the authoritative parents (Mandara & Murray, 2002). However, they neglect to examine relevant



economic factors, related social risk conditions, or parent mental health indicators in interaction with the parenting variables and adolescent outcomes. As such, the full meaning and effects of these parenting patterns may not be understood and the ecological validity of these types remains to be demonstrated.

In contrast to the previous research, the remaining two studies explore the interactive effects of community violence and economic hardship but neglect to incorporate direct-external practices in the analysis of parenting patterns. These studies, conducted by the same researchers, assess the protective or risk escalating role of holistic patterns of parenting on adolescent male adaptation in African American and Latino families living in poor, high crime communities. Gorman-Smith and colleagues selected five family relationship and parenting factors to use in their analyses: beliefs about the importance of family, warmth and support, organization and structure, discipline effectiveness, and positive reinforcement and monitoring (Gorman-Smith, Tolan, Henry & Forsheim, 2000). Using cluster analysis, they identified four family types, three of which were reminiscent of Baumrind's prototypes, though the control strategies only involved indirect-external practices. The authoritative pattern exhibits high levels of family beliefs and warmth/support, and high levels of organization/structure, reinforcement/monitoring, and effective discipline. Authoritarian families display low levels of family beliefs and warmth/support, and high levels of effective discipline, reinforcement/ monitoring, and structure/organization. Disengaged families are low in all five factors. The fourth type, moderately functioning families, differs from each of the four traditional types by demonstrating adequate but not high levels of all five factors.

The first study examined the effects of neighborhood crime and exposure to violence on violent behavior and explored interactive effects with the parenting types (Gorman-Smith, Henry & Tolan, 2004). There were no significant differences in neighborhood violent crime rates by family type. However, adolescents from disengaged families reported higher levels of exposure to violence than youth from moderate families. Adolescents from authoritarian and authoritative families did not differ from youth from moderate families in exposure. Greater violence exposure was associated with greater probability of violent behavior. Nonetheless, adolescents from authoritative families who were exposed to community violence were less likely to engage in violent behavior than were adolescents from the other family types. These findings suggest that at least moderate levels of warmth and indirect-external control practices or high levels of the latter reduces the likelihood of exposure to violence in ethnic minority adolescents. However, high levels of both dimensions also protect youth who have been exposed to violence from engaging in violent behavior.

The second study investigated the interactive effects of cumulative neighborhood risk and parenting types derived from cluster analysis on adolescent delinquency patterns (Gorman-Smith, Tolan & Henry, 2000). Neighborhoods were differentiated by concentrations of poverty, crime rates, and social organization. Authoritative, moderate and authoritarian families were about equally likely to live in neighborhoods with high and low levels of these conditions. Adolescents from authoritative families were less likely to be involved in minor, escalating, and serious delinquency across all neighborhoods but especially communities with low poverty and low crime. However, there was a trend for youth from authoritative families to have a greater chance of being

involved in minor offending in high poverty/high crime neighborhoods. Adolescents from disengaged families were at increased risk for all three categories of offending and were more likely to demonstrate escalating offending and less likely to be non-offenders when residing in neighborhoods with low social organization (including high poverty/high crime and low poverty/low crime communities). Youth from authoritarian families were more likely to be involved in serious delinquency and had a greater probability of involvement in this category of offending in neighborhoods with low social organization (including high poverty/high crime and low poverty/low crime areas). Moderate families were used as a comparison group in the analyses and thus the effects of this parenting pattern were not evaluated.

These results provide strong support for the power of high levels of warmth and indirect-external control strategies to influence positive adaptation in adolescents growing up under extremely difficult social conditions. The outcomes suggest that when parent-child relationships lack warmth and support, high levels of monitoring, positive reinforcement, and effective discipline are not enough to protect minority adolescents living in contexts of high poverty and violence from serious externalizing problems. However, the implications for African American families in high risk circumstances remain unclear because the study may obscure our understanding of cultural influence by combining African American and Latino families in the analyses and by excluding use of direct-external strategies from the investigation. Furthermore, though these studies examine interactions between social-ecological conditions and parenting types, they do not integrate environmental risk factors into the cluster analysis and therefore do not explore the multidimensional transactions occurring among economic stressors,

community violence, and parenting practices within the family-ecology system. When this form of holistic-transactional analysis is utilized (Magnusson, 2001), comparison of family types may underscore functional differences in parenting components and/or highlight distinct configurations of parenting practices that are related to adolescent vulnerability or resilience and thereby increase our understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of African American parenting under adverse social-ecological circumstances. Moreover, adding parent mental health characteristics to the set of variables would permit examination of the impact of parental distress on the constellation of parenting strategies and allow observation of a critical factor that may link exogenous risk with harmful parenting and adolescent vulnerability, may explain differences in parenting styles between African American families, and may account for similarities or differences between African American and mainstream types.

Considered together, the four cluster analytic studies suggest that natural parenting patterns in African American families include styles that are similar to Baumrind's authoritative and disengaged types, styles that are largely consistent with but also divergent from classic authoritarian parenting, and a style that is moderate across dimensions and therefore altogether distinct from the mainstream types. Neither a permissive type nor a type that features high levels of power-assertion along with high levels of warmth and indirect control is found, though two of the authoritarian types feature more warmth and autonomy granting than would be expected from the conventional view. Although these parenting patterns occur naturally, the ecological validity of these styles for African American families is not firmly established because the studies fail to meet all of the necessary conditions. However, the findings give a

strong indication of what may be found in a cluster analytic investigation that adequately examines both cultural and social-ecological influences.

In each of the existing studies the authoritative pattern appears optimal and the authoritarian pattern seems less effective in relationship to adolescent adjustment—without examination of environmental conditions as well as in the context of economic hardship and community violence. Although the effects of the authoritarian patterns appear similar to the outcomes associated with the classic authoritarian type in the three studies that combine ethnic groups in the analyses, the adolescent children of authoritarian parents in the study that uses a within-group design appear moderately well adjusted in comparison to mainstream norms (Mandara & Murray, 2002). This suggests that the authoritarian pattern, though not optimal, may be less detrimental in African American families—even when power-assertive tactics are used.

Furthermore, the study that focuses on an exclusively African American sample suggests that differences between authoritative and authoritarian parenting and related adolescent adjustment may be attributed to differences in family exposure to ecological risk conditions (Mandara & Murray, 2002). However, this study and the other that included power-assertive practices in the set of parenting variables did not explore the interactive effects of such factors and the two studies that examined the interactions of community violence, economic hardship, and parenting styles offer limited information regarding this question. In one study neighborhood crime and poverty are examined at a distal level and proximal effects are not explored. In the other study, the adolescents from disengaged families were found to experience greater exposure to violence, but it is unclear if adolescents from authoritative and authoritarian families differed in exposure,

though the trend suggested that authoritarian parents experienced more violence. More importantly, the amount of *parent* exposure to violence, which may be more critical to parenting, was not examined, and neither parent nor adolescent exposure to economic stress at a proximal level was considered. The present research project is designed to transcend the limitations of the four existing studies by employing a within group design, including power-assertive practices in the set of parenting variables, and integrating proximal measures of exposure to economic stress and community violence as well as a parental mental health variable in the cluster analysis.

### Research Questions

Research questions I through III were tested using cluster analytic procedures to classify families based on their patterns of exogenous risk, maternal mental health, and parenting factors. Research question IV was tested using Multivariate Analyses of Variance (MANOVA). The family types that emerged from the cluster analytic procedures were used as independent variables to predict adolescent internalizing and externalizing problems.

Research Question I: How do parenting behaviors cluster together in urban African American families exposed to economic hardship and community violence?

Research Question II: Are different patterns of parenting behavior associated with different levels of exposure to economic hardship and community violence?

Research Question III: Are different patterns of parenting behavior associated with different levels of parent distress?

Research Question IV: Will emergent family types predict different levels of adolescent internalizing and externalizing problems?

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### Participants

Participants in the study were 101 African American adolescents and their mothers. They were recruited to participate in a larger project, The Chicago Family Study, to investigate the influence of social-ecological stressors on family functioning and adolescent well-being. This study was conducted from 1997 to 2002. The age range of the participants in this study is 11 to 15 years (mean age = 12.89). Males and females represented 53% and 47% of the sample respectively. The participants were recruited from twelve elementary schools in a large Midwestern city. They were in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades at the time of participation. Target schools were selected based on high percentages of low-income and African American students. Two schools with lower percentages of low income students were selected to increase variability of income. Seventy-five percent of the participants attended schools with 79% or more of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch.

According to mothers' reports, the gross income of participating families ranged from \$307 to \$6000 per month (mean = \$1486; standard deviation = 1064), with a median gross income of \$1200 per month. Fifty-four percent of the families were below the federal poverty level. Forty-nine percent of families reported receiving public aid or food stamps. Sixteen percent of families reported experiencing a decrease in standard of living relative to one year ago, 33% remained the same, and 51% experienced an increase. Twenty-eight percent of mothers reported being unemployed, whereas 16% reported being employed part-time, 9% reported holding more than one job, and 47% reported

being employed full-time. Thirty-eight percent of mothers did not complete high school (11% of this group earned their GED), 45% reported receiving vocational training, 6% percent reported completing an associates degree, and 3% reported earning a bachelor's degree. Twenty-five percent of mothers were married and 11% reported having a live-in partner. The number for family members living in the home ranged from two to ten (mean = 5 family members).

### Procedures

Flyers describing the project were distributed to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students attending target schools. Mothers agreeing to participate were asked to provide a phone number or address and to return the flyer to school. Approximately 25% of eligible families responded to the flyer, agreed to participate, and followed through with the interview. Two doctoral students collected the flyers, scheduled appointments, and administered questionnaires and videotaped interaction protocols in the home of participants. Questionnaires assessing demographic information, income, economic stressors, exposure to violence, and psychological symptoms were administered in an interview format, with one of the doctoral students interviewing the mother, and the other interviewing the adolescent separately.

The mother and adolescent also participated in a 20 minute videotaped interaction task. They were instructed to respond to a series of questions contained in a booklet. The interviewers set up the videotaping equipment and explained the procedures but were not present during the interaction task. The interaction task consists of a structured discussion in response to a series of questions (Conger et al., 1992). The questions ask about shared activities, parent expectations, adolescent accomplishments, and perceptions



of the family. Sample questions include: “How much and when do we see each other?” “What do we do together?” (adolescent question), “How do I find out about my child’s school, friends, and activities? How hard or easy is this?” (parent question), “If I don’t do what she wants, what does mom say she will do? Does she always do what she says? Give an example.” (adolescent question). Total participation time was approximately one and a half hours. Families were paid \$50 for their participation.

### Measures

Family Economic Loss Questionnaire (FEL). This 15-item measure is a modified version of a subscale adapted from Conger’s (1992) Family Economic Pressure Index. The FEL assesses negative changes in finances over the past 12 months as reported by the mother. Sample items include: “During the past 12 months did you change jobs for a worse one?”, “During the past 12 months did you take a cut in wage or salary?”, “During the past 12 months did you get laid off or fired?” Respondents indicated their answers to these questions with a “yes” or “no,” which were scored 1 and 2 respectively. Responses for all 15 items were summed, with higher numbers indicating greater exposure to economic stressors (Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient = .76).

Exposure to Violence Survey—Screening (EVS). This 51-item measure assesses lifetime exposure to violence (Richters & Martinez, 1990, 1993). It asks respondents to indicate whether they have witnessed or experienced twenty-seven types of violence/crime including gang violence, drug trafficking, burglary, police arrests, assaults, physical threats, sexual assaults, weapon carrying, firearm use, and intentional injuries such as stabbings, gunshots, suicides, and murders. The adolescents and mothers in this study were asked to indicate “true” or “false” for each item, which were scored 3

and 1 respectively. Responses for all 51 items were summed, with higher numbers indicating greater exposure to community violence. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient equals .76 for this sample.

Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales (IFIRS). Conger and colleagues (Conger et al., 1992; Melby et al., 1993) developed a global coding system to measure individual behavioral characteristics and the quality of behavioral interchanges between family members displayed during videotaped family interactions. Four members of the Chicago Family Study research team participated in a 4-day training on use of the rating scales conducted at the Center for Family Research in rural Mental Health, Institute for Social and Behavioral Research at Iowa State University. All four took part in coding the videotapes. One of the doctoral students provided training to undergraduate student members of the team. The undergraduates participated in weekly 2-hour training sessions over a 6-month period to develop proficiency in coding. Each coder was required to obtain 85% reliability with a criterion tape, as recommended by Melby and colleagues (1993). Twenty-five percent of the tapes were double coded to ensure reliability between coders. Reliability was based on percent agreement between the two coders on each scale. The criterion for agreement was less than a two point difference between coders on each rating. Ratings for scales that differed by two or more points were reviewed by both coders during a joint viewing of the tape and a consensus rating was assigned. Each scale, with one exception, was rated on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 = Not at all characteristic to 9 = Mainly characteristic (Figure 1). The one exception to this coding scheme involves the Relationship Quality scale, in which the quality of the dyadic relationship may be rated negative, even, or positive: 1 = Negative Relationship, 3

= Somewhat Negative, 5 = Equally Negative and Positive, 7 = Somewhat Positive, and 9 = Positive. The rating for each scale constitutes the scale score.

	Code Descriptors		Definitions	
1	Not at all characteristic	Very Low	Does not occur	No evidence
2				Slight evidence
3	Mainly uncharacteristic	Low	Rarely occurs	Minimal evidence
4				
5	Somewhat characteristic	Moderate	Sometimes occurs	Occasional evidence
6		Mod High		
7	Moderately characteristic		Fairly often occurs	Fairly high evidence
8		High		
9	Mainly characteristic		Frequently occurs	High evidence

*Figure 1.* General coding scheme for the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales.

The scales used in the present study are associated conceptually with the warmth and control dimensions of parenting though they will be included as discrete variables in the cluster analyses. The parental warmth scales consist of Warmth/Support, Quality Time, Hostility, and Relationship Quality. The Warmth/Support scale measures expressions of interest, care, concern, support, encouragement, and/or responsiveness toward the adolescent as indicated by verbal responses, nonverbal communication, and emotional expressions. The Quality Time scale measures the extent and quality of the parent's regular involvement with the child in settings that promote opportunities for

conversation, companionship, and mutual enjoyment. The Hostility scale measures the extent to which the parent engages in hostile, angry, critical, disapproving, or rejecting behavior that is directed toward the adolescent or his/her behavior. The Relationship Quality scale measures the quality of the parent-child relationship as evidenced by dyadic interaction that indicates the degree of shared willingness to discuss issues, the extent of mutual warmth and support conveyed in communication, the amount of knowledge about each other that is displayed, and the level of happiness and satisfaction expressed in the relationship. Additionally, the Sadness scale is used to assess maternal distress. This scale measures the extent to which the parent's verbal and nonverbal behavior communicates emotional distress that is conveyed as sadness, unhappiness, despondency, depression, and/or regret.

The control dimension is represented by scales that are indicative of the behavioral and psychological domains. The behavioral control scales encompass Inductive Reasoning, Positive Reinforcement, Consistent Discipline, Child Monitoring, Parental Influence, and Harsh Discipline. The scale representing the psychological domain is Encourages Independence. The Inductive Reasoning scale measures the extent to which the parent encourages the adolescent, in a neutral or positive manner, to understand the possible consequences of the adolescent's behavior and consider the feelings of others. It also assesses the extent to which the parents seeks voluntary compliance from the adolescent and avoids the use of force. The Positive Reinforcement Scale measures the extent to which the parent's contingent responses to expected or appropriate adolescent behavior include smiles, approval, praise, rewards, or special privileges. The Consistent Discipline Scale measures degree of consistency and persistence with which the parent

maintains and adheres to rules and standards of conduct for the adolescent's behavior as indicated by clear communication of expectations and evidence of follow through on stated consequences when expectations are violated. The Child Monitoring Scale measures the parent's knowledge and information, as well the extent to which the parent pursues information, concerning the adolescent's life, interests, friends, and daily activities. The Parental Influence scale measures the parent's direct and indirect attempts to influence, regulate or control the adolescent's life according to commonly accepted, age appropriate standards. The Harsh Discipline scale measures the extent to which the parent responds to adolescent misbehavior or violation of parental standards through the use of punitive or severe tactics that are either verbal (e.g. yelling, screaming, threatening, belittling, shaming) or physical (e.g. corporal punishment, hitting, or punching). The Encourages Independence scale measures the extent to which the parent demonstrates trust in and encouragement of the adolescent's independence in thought and action as indicated by efforts to reinforce the adolescent's initiative and capability to make decisions, solve problems, and accomplish goals that are age-appropriate on his/her own. Inter-rater reliability for each of the individual warmth and control scales used in this study ranged from adequate to good (78-93% within 2-point agreement).

Child Behavior Checklist—Parent Version (CBCL) and Youth Self Report (YSR).

The CBCL is a 113-item broad band parent-report measure of child psychological symptoms rated on a 3-point scale as “not true,” “somewhat or sometimes true,” or very true or often true.” These responses are scored 0, 1, and 2 respectively. The YSR is a 119-item child self-report measure with a 3-point scale similar to the CBCL. The 33-item Externalizing and Internalizing subscales of the CBCL and YSR were used in this

study to examine adolescent adjustment. These two broad dimensions of behavioral adaptation represent the standard conceptualization of psychological adjustment (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). Sample items from the Externalizing subscale include “My child gets in many fights,” “My child argues a lot,” and “My child destroys his/her own things.” Sample items from the Internalizing subscale include “I feel nervous or tense,” “I feel worthless or inferior,” and “I cry a lot.” The responses to the 33 items in each respective subscale were summed, with higher numbers indicating greater externalizing problems and internalizing symptoms. Normative data of the CBCL and YSR are based on a nationally representative sample of non-clinic referred children and adolescents (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). Alpha coefficients for the externalizing and internalizing subscales for this sample were .91 and .79 respectively.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

The results are presented in two sections, which include analyses that explore research questions I through III and research question IV respectively. First, the results of cluster analytic procedures used to classify families based on their patterns of ecological risk, maternal mental health, parenting and parent-child relationship variables are reported. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) that explores the characteristics of each emergent family type is also presented. Second, the outcomes of Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) that predict adolescent internalizing and externalizing problems from the family types are described.

#### Family Types

Standard cluster analytic methods (Mandara & Murray, 2002) were used to classify families based on their patterns of exposure to economic stress and community violence, maternal distress, parenting practices and parent-child relations. To begin, a two-step clustering procedure was used to determine the number of clusters in the sample. Designed to analyze large data sets, the first step of the procedure involves the grouping of cases into pre-clusters which are then used as input for more traditional clustering methods in the second step. The two-step method developed by SPSS uses agglomerative hierarchical clustering in the second step along with two additional procedures to automatically estimate the optimal number of clusters in the data (SPSS, 2001). The Bayesian information criterion (BIC) is calculated to find the initial estimate of the best model (Fraley & Raftery, 1998). Then, changes in distance between the two closest clusters in each hierarchical cluster stage are computed as a second estimate of

best fit. The solution with the lowest BIC and the greatest Ratio of Distance Measures (RDM) is optimal. When exposure to violence, economic stress, maternal distress, and the parenting variables were entered in the two-step cluster analytic procedure a two-cluster solution was identified.

After the number of clusters was determined via the two-step method, a replication and cross-validation procedure was performed in order to validate the two-cluster solution (Breckenridge, 2000; Mandara, 2003). First, a subsample of 51 cases (e.g. sample A) was randomly selected from the total sample of 101 cases. Second, a complete cluster analysis using the *k*-means method (explained below) was performed on sample A. Third, a complete cluster analysis using the *k*-means method was performed on the remaining cases (e.g. sample B). Fourth, the centroids (the points of averages of the clusters) derived from sample A were used in a second cluster analysis performed on sample B. Fifth, Cohen's kappa was used to compute the agreement between the two sample B solutions. This procedure was repeated ten times with new random samples and the measures of agreement between the two sample B solutions were recorded. The mean of the ten kappas equaled .51. Given that the kappa mean exceeds .50, we may conclude that two clusters exist in the population (Mandara, 2003).

Following validation of the two-cluster solution, agglomerative hierarchical and iterative (*k*-means) cluster analytic methods were used to group families. Hierarchical and iterative methods are distinguished by the strategies used to derive clusters from the data (Henry, Tolan & Gorman-Smith, 2005). Hierarchical methods are designed to arrange a nested structure of clusters by initially joining the two most similar cases and subsequently combining similar cases and clusters until one cluster remains (Mandara,



2003). Ward's (1963) algorithm is commonly used to minimize the within-cluster sum of squares (SS) of each cluster when clusters are combined (Henry, Tolan & Gorman-Smith, 2005). Iterative clustering via the *k*-means method involves combining cases into a specified number of clusters based on the smallest distances between the cases and clusters (Mandara, 2003). This process is repeated until the SS within groups is minimized and the SS between groups is maximized. In this study, the two-cluster solutions of the hierarchical and *k*-means procedures were compared to each other and to the two-cluster solution that emerged from the two-step method. The *k*-means two-cluster solution appeared to best represent the data in terms of maximizing the differences between clusters and minimizing the differences within each cluster, while also offering interpretability. Thus, this solution was used in subsequent analyses.

To examine the characteristics of the two clusters, a MANOVA was computed on the ecological risk, maternal mental health, and parenting and parent-child relationship variables, with the two clusters serving as the factor. The multivariate effect was significant, Wilks's lambda = .249,  $F(14, 86) = 18.59$ ,  $p < .00$ ,  $\eta^2 = .75$ , indicating that 75% of the variability in family functioning and risk exposure was accounted for by group differences among the two clusters. Univariate Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) of each clustering variable for the two clusters were then computed. Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and univariate tests of significance for the analyses. As evident in Table 1, all ANOVAs were significant except for economic stress.

Though the two family clusters do not differ in economic stress, the frequency of items endorsed and other socioeconomic indicators suggest that the overall sample experiences moderate to high levels of economic hardship. The ten most frequently

endorsed items are listed in Table 2. Fifty percent of the families received public aid or food stamps. Thirty-three percent of the parents in each family stopped working for a long period of time and 31% took on financial responsibility for a family member. Further highlighting the similarities between the clusters, ANOVAs revealed no significant differences between the family types in income,  $F(1, 98) = .11, p = .75$  or parent education,  $F(1, 98) = .55, p = .46$ .

Despite the similarities in economic circumstances, these analyses suggest that the two clusters represent relatively distinct types of families. The first cluster consists of eighty-one families exposed to moderately high levels of community violence. The top twenty items most frequently endorsed by the adolescents are listed in Table 3. The top five include having seen someone (91%) and knowing someone (86%) picked up or arrested by the police, having seen someone chased by gangs or individuals (74%), having seen others use, sell or distribute drugs (74%), and having seen a person slapped, punched, hit or kicked by a non-family member (69%). Tables 4 and 5 present the frequency of endorsement of items that involve victimization and other important indicators of exposure to violence. The top five victimization items most frequently endorsed by the adolescents consist of having been slapped, punched, hit or kicked by a non-family member (36%), having been in a serious accident (32%), having been slapped, punched, or kicked by a family member (24%), having been chased by gangs or individuals (19%), having been at home when someone tried to break in (16%), and having been threatened with serious physical harm (16%). Other key items include having seen someone get beat up or mugged (49%), having seen someone get shot or shot

at with a gun (46%), having seen someone get attacked or stabbed with a knife (31%), and having seen someone being killed by another person (11%).

Despite exposure to considerable environmental risk, families in the first cluster are characterized by predominantly high levels of functioning. Based on nine-point scales that range from no evidence (behavior does not occur) to high evidence (behavior occurs frequently) that mothers engage in each parenting practice (Melby et al., 1993), observer ratings indicate that families in this cluster exhibit moderately high levels of maternal warmth/support and quality time and high mother-adolescent relationship quality (see Table 1). They display moderately high levels of parent influence, positive reinforcement, consistent discipline, and child monitoring. They demonstrate moderate levels of inductive reasoning and encouragement of independence. They also feature very low levels of maternal distress, hostility, and harsh discipline. In recognition of the quality of parent functioning exhibited, these families are labeled Competent.

In contrast to the Competent families, the twenty families in cluster 2 are characterized by mostly moderate to low functioning across parenting domains. Based on observer ratings they display moderately high levels of parent influence and moderate levels of child monitoring. They exhibit low levels of maternal warmth/support, quality time, and mother-adolescent relationship quality, and low levels of positive reinforcement and consistent discipline. Consistent with the relative pattern evident in Competent families, they present low levels of encouragement of independence and very low levels of inductive reasoning. They also feature low levels of maternal distress, hostility, and harsh discipline in terms of measurement norms. Reflecting their moderately high

influence, moderate monitoring, and low levels of functioning across the remaining parenting variables, families in this cluster are labeled Struggling.

In comparison to their Competent counterparts, Struggling families are exposed to even higher levels of community violence. As presented in Table 3, the top five items most frequently endorsed by the adolescents are having seen someone (100%) and knowing someone (100%) picked up or arrested by the police, having seen someone chased by gangs or individuals (95%), and having seen a person (95%) and knowing someone (90%) who has been slapped, punched, hit, or kicked by a non-family member. As displayed in Table 4, the top five victimization items most frequently reported by the adolescents include having been slapped, punched, hit or kicked by a non-family member (50%), having been slapped, punched, hit or kicked by a family member (45%), having been chased by gangs or individuals (35%), having been away from home when someone tried to break in (35%), and having been threatened with serious physical harm (30%). Other key items presented in Table 5 consist of having seen someone get beat up or mugged (75%), having seen someone get shot or shot at with a gun (50%), having seen someone get attacked or stabbed with a knife (40%), and having seen someone being killed by another person (10%).

Additional analyses were conducted to examine the level of exposure to community violence reported by mothers from Struggling families and to compare the level of violence they experience with the degree of exposure reported by Competent mothers. Struggling and Competent mothers reported mean levels of community violence exposure of 79.7 and 75.3 respectively, which appear to exceed the levels of exposure reported by their adolescents respectively. A Univariate Analysis of Variance was performed with

the family types as the factors. No difference in exposure to community violence was found between Struggling and Competent mothers,  $F(1, 99) = 2.11$ ,  $p = .15$ ,  $n^2 = .02$ . An ANOVA was also computed on the sum of nine items representing direct involvement in violence and no difference in victimization was found,  $F(1, 99) = 1.21$ ,  $p = .27$ ,  $n^2 = .01$ . Percentages of Struggling and Competent mothers who reported various types of violence exposure are presented in Table 6. (The statistics for adolescent-reported Community Violence are reported in Table 1.)

#### Internalizing & Externalizing Problems

Analyses testing for possible differences between Competent and Struggling families in adolescent internalizing and externalizing problems reported by parents and adolescents were conducted. Correlation analyses were first conducted to establish if a relationship exists between the dependent variables and thus determine if Univariate or Multivariate Analysis of Variance is appropriate. A bivariate correlation revealed no relationship between internalizing symptoms reported by the adolescent and externalizing problems reported by the parent in this sample ( $r = .14$ ,  $p = .17$ ); therefore, Univariate Analysis of Variance is the appropriate method for examining potential differences in these variables reported by the adolescent and parent respectively (Weinfurt, 1995). Thus, ANOVAs rather than MANOVAs were computed. However, no differences in adolescent-reported internalizing,  $F(1, 99) = .64$ ,  $p = .43$ , or parent-reported externalizing symptoms,  $F(1, 99) = 2.61$ ,  $p = .11$ , were found between Competent and Struggling adolescents.

In contrast, a significant bivariate correlation between adolescent-reported internalizing and adolescent-reported externalizing problems was found and a MANOVA

was computed. A significant multivariate effect was found, Wilks's lambda = .931,  $F(2, 98) = 3.621$ ,  $p = .03$ ,  $\eta^2 = .07$ , indicating that adolescents from Competent families reported better adjustment. Follow-up ANOVAs revealed a significant effect for externalizing,  $F(1, 99) = 6.64$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .06$ , but not internalizing behavior,  $F(1, 99) = .64$ ,  $p = .43$  (as indicated above). Adolescents from Struggling families reported greater externalizing problems than their counterparts from Competent families. Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 7.

Table 1

*Family Type Means and Standard Deviations*

Variable	Competent (n = 81)	Struggling (n = 20)	F (1, 99)	P
	M (SD)	M (SD)		
Community Violence <sup>a</sup>	70.87 (9.04)	76.10 (8.58)	5.46	.02
Economic Loss	19.86 (3.91)	21.00 (4.81)	1.23	.27
Maternal Distress	1.72 (1.24)	2.70 (2.36)	6.72	.01
Warmth/ Support	6.47 (1.84)	3.55 (1.28)	44.64	.00
Quality Time	6.67 (1.39)	3.65 (1.23)	79.16	.00
Relationship Quality	7.48 (1.16)	4.40 (1.57)	97.26	.00
Inductive Reasoning	4.68 (2.32)	2.35 (1.60)	18.01	.00
Positive Reinforcement	6.77 (1.41)	3.55 (1.15)	89.47	.00
Consistent Discipline	6.81 (1.64)	4.35 (1.79)	34.86	.00
Child Monitoring	6.99 (.99)	4.75 (1.21)	74.49	.00
Parental Influence	7.28 (1.56)	6.00 (1.75)	10.37	.00
Encourages Independence	4.80 (1.95)	2.95 (1.82)	14.82	.00
Hostility	1.60 (1.09)	3.90 (2.51)	38.87	.00
Harsh Discipline	1.60 (1.25)	3.80 (2.80)	27.87	.00

<sup>a</sup>Adolescent report

Table 2

*Economic Loss: Top 10 Endorsed Items*

In the past year...	%
Family received public aid or food stamps	50
Had a close friend/relative who had serious financial problems	40
Stopped working for a long period of time (not retirement)	33
Took on financial responsibility for a parent, in-law, or other family member	31
Started receiving government assistance (e.g. AFDC, SSI, food stamps)	21
Lights, heat, gas, or phone has been turned off	20
Took a cut in wages or salary	12
Suffered a significant financial loss or went deeply into debt	12
Moved to a worse home or neighborhood	11
Got demoted, had trouble at work, or trouble with boss	10
Got laid off or fired <sup>a</sup>	9

<sup>a</sup>Eleven items are reported due to equivalent percentages for two of them.



Table 3

*Adolescent Exposure to Violence: Top 15 Endorsed Items*

Competent	%	Struggling	%
Seen someone picked-up/arrested	91	Seen someone picked-up/arrested	100
Know someone picked-up/arrested	86	Know someone picked-up/arrested	100
Seen someone chased by gangs	74	Seen someone chased by gangs	95
Seen others use/sell/distribute drugs	74	Seen person hit by non-family	95
Seen person hit by non-family	69	Know someone hit by non-family	90
Know someone hit by family	68	Know someone chased by gangs	85
Know someone house broken into	67	Seen others use/sell/distribute drugs	85
Seen someone have a serious accident	64	Seen someone have a serious accident	85
Know someone hit by non-family	64	Know someone hit by family	80
Seen someone carrying gun/knife	64	Seen someone hit by family	75
Know someone had serious accident	63	Seen someone beaten up/mugged	75
Know someone chased by gangs	61	Know someone carries gun/knife	75
Know someone shot/shot at	61	Know someone shot/shot at	75
Heard about a dead person found	59	Heard about a dead person found	75
Seen seriously wounded person	54	Seen someone carrying gun/knife	70
Know someone beaten-up/mugged	52	Know someone attacked with knife <sup>a</sup>	70

<sup>a</sup>Sixteen items are reported due to equivalent percentages for last two.

Table 4

*Adolescent Exposure to Violence: Victimization*

	% Com	% Strg
I have been chased by gangs or individuals	19	35
I have been asked to use/sell/help distribute drugs	10	10
I have been in a serious accident	32	25
I have been at home when someone has tried to break in	16	20
I have been away from home when someone has tried to break in	14	35
I have been picked-up/arrested/taken away by police	7	20
I have been threatened with serious physical harm	16	30
I have been slapped/punched/kicked by a family member	24	45
I have been slapped/punched/kicked by a non-family member	36	50
I have been beat-up or mugged	6	20
I have been sexually assaulted	1	0
I have been attacked/stabbed with a knife	4	5
I have been seriously wounded in an incident of violence	3	0
I have been shot or shot at with a gun	4	10

Table 5

*Adolescent Exposure to Violence: Additional Witnessing Items*

	% Com	% Strg
I have seen someone break in or try to break in a home	18	20
I have seen someone threatened with serious physical harm	51	55
I have seen someone sexually assaulted	3	15
I know someone who has been sexually assaulted	36	45
I have seen someone attacked/stabbed with a knife	31	40
I have seen someone seriously wounded in an incident of violence	54	60
I have seen or heard a gun fired in my home	14	10
I have seen someone get shot or shot at with a gun	46	50
I have seen a dead person somewhere in the community	24	20
I have seen someone committing suicide	3	20
I have known someone who committed suicide	19	15
I have seen someone being killed by another person	11	10
I have known someone who was killed by another person	46	45

Table 6

*Exposure to Violence: Key Item Comparison<sup>a</sup>*

	% Competent		% Struggling		% Other Urban Populations <sup>b</sup>
	Adol	Mom	Adol	Mom	
Been hit/slapped/punched	36	30	50	40	34
Been chased/threatened by gang	19	12	35	5	40
Been beaten/mugged	6	12	20	15	25-27
Been stabbed	4	4	5	5	4-11
Been shot/shot at	4	11	10	20	3-9/11-24
Seen someone hit/slapped/punched	69	67	95	85	44-82
Seen someone arrested	91	89	100	90	70
Seen a beating/mugging	49	42	75	35	43-78
Seen someone carrying a knife/gun	64	60	70	70	54
Seen someone stabbed	31	28	40	40	25-56
Seen a shooting	46	58	50	55	15-70
Seen someone being killed	11	17	10	35	13-47
Seen a dead body	24	37	20	40	23-26
Know someone beaten/mugged	52	61	65	55	21
Know someone stabbed	48	47	70	60	26
Know someone shot/shot at	61	74	75	75	29

<sup>a</sup>Items selected to represent victimization, witnessed and vicarious violence.

<sup>b</sup>(Bell & Jenkins, 1993; Fitzpatrick & Boldizar, 1993; Gladstein et al., 1992; Gorman-Smith, Henry & Tolan, 2004; Jones, 2007; Miller et al., 1999; Stein et al., 2003).

Table 7

*Internalizing and Externalizing Means and Standard Deviations*

Variable	Competent (n = 81)	Struggling (n = 20)	F (1, 99)	P
	M (SD)	M (SD)		
CBCL Externalizing	9.54 (8.24)	12.95 (9.31)	2.60	.11
YSR Internalizing	9.47 (6.39)	10.79 (7.26)	.64	.43
YSR Externalizing	10.22 (6.68)	14.90 (9.35)	6.64	.01

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify natural patterns of ecological risk and parenting behaviors in African American families and consider the similarities and differences between the parenting patterns and mainstream parenting types. Moreover, the purpose was to clarify the risk-enhancing or protective effects of each parenting pattern with regard to adolescent adjustment and to consider key variables that may influence these processes. Cluster analytic procedures resulted in identification of two family patterns that are distinguished by degree of exposure to environmental risk and vary in terms of configuration of childrearing practices, which diverge in key respects from classic parenting types. The families are labeled Competent and Struggling to reflect the quality of their functioning in the context of economic hardship and community violence. The contexts of exposure to economic hardship and community violence, the patterns of parenting that are characteristic of each family type, and the relationships between these parenting patterns and adolescent adjustment are described in the next sections, followed by discussion of the implications for intervention and policy, review of the study's limitations, and presentation of suggestions for future research.

#### Economic Hardship

Competent and Struggling families experience similar economic circumstances. No differences in education, income, or economic loss were found between them. However, collectively they experience considerable economic hardship. Seventy-three percent of families earn less than \$21,600 per year and 56% of families are under the federal poverty threshold given their level of income and the number of persons dependent upon

that income. Another 10% of families are less than 10% above the poverty level. Thus, economic difficulties appear to present significant challenges for a majority of Competent and Struggling families. Yet, while financial hardship may contribute to higher maternal distress, greater mother-adolescent conflict, lower quality parenting across the warmth and control dimensions, and poorer adolescent adjustment in Struggling families, Competent families appear to be resilient in the context of equivalent economic adversity. However, critical differences in functioning between these groups of families may be attributed to the added effects of exposure to high levels of community violence.

### Community Violence

Competent and Struggling families are exposed to high levels of violence in their communities. In comparison to reported violence exposure in other urban populations (Bell & Jenkins, 1993; Gladstein et al., 1992; Jones, 2007), high percentages of adolescents and mothers from Competent and Struggling families witnessed shootings, arrests, and weapon carrying, and knew persons who had been stabbed, shot, and beaten or mugged within the past year (Table 5). However, most Competent and Struggling adolescents and mothers appeared to avoid direct involvement in several types of serious violence. Relative to other urban populations, lower proportions of Competent and Struggling adolescents and mothers were victimized in the form of being stabbed, beaten or mugged, and being chased by gangs or individuals (Fitzpatrick & Boldizar, 1993; Jones, 2007; Stein et al., 2003).

Yet, in comparison to people in other studies, Struggling and Competent mothers reported heightened exposure to the most extreme forms of violence, with Struggling mothers reporting the most direct involvement. Whereas relatively high percentages of

mothers from Struggling families were shot or shot at and witnessed dead bodies in the community in the past year, relative to other populations (Jones, 2007; Stein et al., 2003), moderate and high percentages of their Competent counterparts experienced these forms of violence respectively. Moreover, moderate and low-moderate proportions of Struggling and Competent mothers respectively witnessed murders over the same period. In comparison, while a moderate proportion of Struggling adolescents were shot or shot at, low proportions witnessed murders and dead bodies in their communities and low percentages of Competent adolescents experienced being shot or shot at and witnessed murders and dead bodies relative to urban adolescents in other studies (Jones, 2007; Miller et al., 1999; Stein et al., 2003).

Furthermore, while Struggling mothers reported the greatest exposure to the most extreme violence, followed by Competent mothers and Struggling adolescents, Struggling mothers and adolescents experienced more involvement in incidents of physical assault without weapons than their Competent counterparts as well as people from other cities. High proportions of Struggling mothers and adolescents relative to other urban populations were personally hit, slapped or punched and witnessed other persons being physically struck over the past year (Stein et al., 2003). In contrast, moderate proportions of Competent mothers and adolescents witnessed fighting and moderate and low percentages of Competent adolescents and mothers respectively were themselves hit, slapped, or punched over the same period. Additionally, while moderate percentages of Struggling adolescents reported being chased by gangs or individuals and being beaten or mugged and a high percentage witnessed beatings or muggings within the past year compared to other urban adolescents (Bell & Jenkins, 1993; Gorman-Smith,



Henry & Tolan, 2004), lower proportions of Competent adolescents as well as Competent and Struggling mothers witnessed these forms of violence.

While the degree of violence exposure reported by Struggling adolescents is greater than that reported by their Competent counterparts, there is no statistical difference between the amounts of exposure reported by Struggling and Competent mothers. Yet, while the amount of exposure did not differ significantly, the measure of exposure to community violence did not assess the frequency of exposure to different forms of violence and thus potential differences in the total number of violent incidents experienced may not have been accurately identified. If so, greater frequency of exposure may explain why Struggling mothers display higher levels of distress and exhibit less adaptive parenting behavior than their Competent counterparts. Conversely, better coping ability and/or other forms of resourcefulness may explain why Competent mothers experience less victimization, present very little evidence of distress, and exhibit moderately high levels of adaptive parenting across domains despite exposure to high levels of community violence. In either case, the vulnerability and resilience of these groups of mothers may largely determine the distinctive parenting patterns that characterize Competent and Struggling families, and in turn their configurations of parenting practices appear to influence the divergent degrees of exposure to violence and varying levels of psychosocial adjustment demonstrated by their adolescents.

#### Parenting Patterns, Environmental Risk and Adolescent Adjustment

Adolescents from Struggling families reported greater combined internalizing and externalizing problems than their counterparts from Competent families. The variation in adjustment found between these two groups of adolescents may be explained by

differences in total risk exposure and by divergence in the extent to which parenting resources are complementary to the needs elicited by exposure to the ecological stressors. Economic hardship and community violence require that individuals and families adapt and respond in specific ways in order to resist debilitation and develop resilience. The configurations of risk and parenting variables that characterize Competent and Struggling families suggest that the former are able to successfully meet the demands of these stressors. These same patterns also imply that the resources of the latter are undermined by greater accumulation of stress demands. However, while the match and mismatch between stress demands and parenting resources appear to explain the lower externalizing problems reported by Competent adolescents relative to their Struggling counterparts<sup>1</sup>, the degree of fit between these specific demands and resources may not account for the similar levels of internalizing symptoms reported by these youth. The parenting patterns demonstrated by Competent and Struggling families, the similarities and differences between these patterns and mainstream parenting types, and the relationships between these patterns and adolescent risk exposure, externalizing problems, and internalizing symptoms are described in the next sections.

#### Parenting, Risk Exposure and Externalizing Behavior in Competent Families

Competent mothers demonstrate a pattern of high quality childrearing behavior that may be optimal under high risk conditions. This pattern is consistent with the classic authoritative type and recent conceptualizations of this style with respect to a specific set of practices representing several aspects of warmth and control (Baumrind, 1967, Gorman-Smith et al., 2000; Hovee et al., 2008; Mandara & Murray, 2002). Competent mothers display moderately high levels of warmth and emotional support, including

positive gestures, affectionate touching, and relatively frequent empathy and praise. They exhibit very low levels of hostility. As a likely result of this emotional tone, they enjoy a high quality parent-adolescent relationship, characterized by predominantly positive interactions that suggest happiness and emotional satisfaction and are reflected in relatively frequent involvement in meaningful activities. They also exert a high level of influence on their adolescents' behavior by establishing and asserting age-appropriate standards of conduct at home and in the community. They are primarily consistent in maintaining and adhering to these standards and rules, and often respond to expected adolescent behavior with contingent praise, approval, rewards or privileges. They very rarely punish misbehavior via yelling, threatening, belittling, or physical discipline. They fairly often display interest in, pursue knowledge about, and demonstrate awareness of their adolescents' daily activities and involvement with others.

While their functioning in the aforementioned areas is consistent with authoritative parenting, Competent mothers differ from Baumrind's prototype in their moderate use of inductive reasoning and encouragement of adolescent independence. Whereas the authoritative model is distinguished by frequent use of reflection-enhancing reasoning and promotion of autonomy (Applegate et al., 1985; Baumrind, 1996), Competent mothers only occasionally encourage their adolescent children to think and act independently and sometimes use open discussion to encourage consideration of feelings and consequences, increase understanding of the rationale for rules, and gain voluntary compliance. Given that mothers from Struggling families are also lower in these practices relative to their other parenting behaviors and parents displaying an authoritative style in a prior study of African American childrearing patterns are also

comparatively low in encouragement of independence (Mandara & Murray, 2002), it appears that use of these childrearing strategies in African American families reflects cultural-ecological influences.

Limited use of inductive reasoning and encouragement of independence may be necessary adaptations to the task of raising adolescents in a dangerous environment. Consistent with the imperative mode of social control described by sociologists and communication theorists (Bernard, 1966; Daniels & Daniels, 1999; Greene, 1990), in a context of imminent danger, African American parents may use urgent commands to direct adolescent behavior and may make unilateral decisions and apply strict rules to control adolescent activity. While increased use of urgent directives, parent decision-making, and strict limit setting may be necessary to ensure safety in communities where violence is prevalent, greater use of these strategies may necessarily involve lesser use of inductive reasoning and encouragement of independence.

The moderate level of encouragement of independence exhibited by Competent mothers suggests that they may have achieved an effective balance between the imperative of protection, which may require heightened use of parental power, and the need to develop autonomous functioning in their adolescents (Cauce et al., 1996). Competent mothers, like other African American parents, may strongly value independence, particularly in the form of self-reliance and responsibility (Brody & Stoneman, 1992; Cauce et al., 1996; Hurd, Moore & Rogers, 1995; Jagers, Bingham & Hans, 1996; Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). However, they also may believe, given the realities of their environment, that independent thinking and decision-making is less important than compliance with rules and respect for authority and they may deem that

encouragement of independence is less important than the need to set firm limits (Brodsky & DeVet, 2000; Jagers, Bingham & Hans, 1996; Smetana & Chuang, 2001). Thus, Competent mothers may be more restrictive of adolescent autonomy relative to parents living in safer communities, possibly limiting the scope of their adolescents' decision-making and curtailing their adolescents' activities outside the home and interactions with others in the neighborhood (Cauce et al., 1996; Jarrett, 1997; Kelley, Sanchez-Hucles & Walker, 1993).

Pursuit of an effective balance that promotes safety while supporting autonomy may also explain Competent mothers' moderate use of inductive reasoning. Similar to African American parents in other studies, they may value two-way communication in order to develop strong relationships with their adolescents (Brodsky and DeVet, 2000) and they may seek to understand their adolescents' perspectives in the context of discipline (Kelley, Power & Winbush, 1992). They may also value use of reasoning in the form of explanations to increase understanding of discipline, improve moral judgment, teach values, and correct behavior as well as protect children from harm (Brodsky& DeVet, 2000; Jagers, Bingham & Hans, 1996; Medora et al., 2001; Middlemiss, 2003). However, like other parents living in dangerous communities (Baldwin, Baldwin & Cole, 1990; Middlemiss, 2003), Competent mothers may be more directive, less open to adolescent input, and less inclined to offer explanations during disciplinary encounters in comparison to parents living in neighborhoods with lower ecological risk. Moreover, in order to exert the level of control over their adolescents' behavior that is necessary to ensure their safety while also promoting their ability to think for themselves and make appropriate decisions, they may use reasoning to accomplish

these complex goals after more power assertive forms of discipline have been implemented (Daniels & Daniels, 1999).

Considered collectively, the parenting practices of Competent mothers seem well suited to the tasks of reducing adolescent exposure to community violence, decreasing indirect exposure to economic stress (via the impact of economic hardship on parenting), enhancing healthy functioning, and minimizing externalizing behavior. By virtue of their resilience, Competent mothers are able to offer emotional warmth, support, involvement, and a satisfying relationship, while simultaneously demanding and enforcing high standards of behavior with attentive, positive, and consistent discipline, an appropriate level of monitoring, and balanced use of reasoning and encouragement of independence. This combination of parenting practices is likely to produce secure attachment, promote positive feelings, and enable Competent adolescents to form a healthy sense of self, effectively regulate their emotions and behavior, and develop good relationships with others (Lynch & Cicchetti, 2002). As a result, Competent adolescents may be less likely to experience stress that derives from economic hardship and may be less inclined to engage in behavior that would increase their chances of being exposed to violence.

Furthermore, maternal warmth and responsiveness to adolescent needs is likely to enhance adolescent responsiveness to maternal expectations and improve adolescent motivation to understand and utilize parent and other adult control (Rothbaum & Weisz, 1994). As such, Competent adolescents are likely more inclined than their Struggling counterparts to internalize their mothers' standards of behavior, cooperate with their mothers' efforts to monitor their activities, and accept their mothers' attempts to regulate their behavior. Accordingly, Competent adolescents may be more inclined to avoid

behavior and activities that may violate family or social norms and may be more likely to spend time in settings that keep them safe. Additionally, Competent mothers judicious use of reasoning and encouragement of independence are likely to increase their adolescents' ability to make choices that decrease their likelihood of encountering violence. These processes that reduce exposure to risk may in turn explain why Competent adolescents are less likely than their Struggling counterparts to engage in externalizing behavior.

In addition to parenting and other ecological processes that may help reduce exposure to violence, Competent adolescents may engage in less aggression and delinquency as a result of mother-adolescent relational patterns that are well suited to mitigate the effects of exposure to violence and economic hardship and promote positive adaptation despite exposure to these stressors. The level of warmth and support exhibited and the degree of positive interaction and reinforcement observed suggests that Competent adolescents would be more inclined than Struggling adolescents to share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings with their mothers. This open and responsive relationship likely enables Competent adolescents and mothers to effectively process events and reactions related to economic loss and community violence, while also promoting the self-worth and self-confidence the adolescents need to withstand these threatening conditions (Conger et al., 1999; McLoyd, 1997; Wallen & Rubin, 1997). Furthermore, Competent mothers' apparent ability to cope effectively with these stressors suggests that they are better positioned than their Struggling counterparts to help their adolescents develop viable solutions to the ecological dilemmas they encounter. Moreover, the greater time that Competent mothers and adolescents spend engaged in meaningful shared activities

indicate an advantage in developing coherent expectations and joint goals that increase safety and suggest an edge in constructing shared scripts and meanings that promote resilience (Rothbaum & Weisz, 1994).

### Parenting, Risk Exposure and Externalizing Problems in Struggling Families

In contrast to the strengths of Competent parents, Struggling mothers appear less proficient at protecting their adolescents from exposure to danger and less adept at promoting their psychosocial development. In accord with Baumrind's (1967, 1971, 1991) authoritarian prototype, Struggling mothers exert a moderately high level of influence over their adolescents' behavior in the form of fairly frequent demands for age-appropriate behavior at home and in the community. However, somewhat divergent from traditional authoritarian parenting (Baumrind, 1967), Struggling mothers are inconsistent in maintaining standards of behavior and implementing discipline when rules are violated. Moreover, reminiscent of classic authoritarian parenting (Baumrind, 1967), Struggling mothers seldom respond with contingent praise, approval, or rewards when their adolescents' display appropriate behavior. They also rarely actively pursue information or display significant interest in their adolescents' lives beyond events with which they are directly involved, though they display general knowledge of their adolescents' behavior at home and school.

In terms of responsiveness, Struggling mothers' are also consistent with the classic authoritarian type (Baumrind, 1967). They display low levels of warmth and support as evidenced by infrequent or low intensity expressions of positive emotions, displays of care and concern, and sensitivity to adolescent needs. They exhibit limited involvement in the adolescent's life in terms of joint participation in meaningful and mutually



enjoyable activities and the mother-adolescent relationship appears somewhat contentious with more displays of negative interaction than positive. Moreover, Struggling mothers rarely encourage their adolescents' efforts to increase independent thought and action and they almost never try to guide their behavior through an exchange of information involving use of reasoning to enhance reflection and voluntary compliance. Though they seem to value compliance with rules and respect for authority, they fail to set firm behavioral limits and appear to do little to develop their adolescents' ability to think independently and make good decisions. While they appear to be appropriately directive, they may not value two-way communication or use of reasoning, and thus do not appear to seek child input or offer explanations. Whereas Struggling mothers may operate predominantly from the imperative mode and/or may not believe in using reflection-enhancing communication to develop autonomy, they may also be unaware of the need or means to integrate promotion of autonomy with control of adolescent behavior.

Alternatively, Struggling mothers' inconsistent discipline, lack of positive reinforcement, low warmth, support and involvement, low use of inductive reasoning, and slight effort to encourage independence may be attributed to their relatively higher levels of distress. While the aforementioned parenting patterns (with the exception of inconsistent discipline) are reminiscent of the classic authoritarian type, they are also consistent with the effects of maternal depression on parenting (Lovejoy et al., 2000). Research indicates that deficient discipline practices, diminished emotional involvement and sensitivity, increased relational conflict, impaired communication and reasoning, and reduced support for autonomy are all correlates of parental depressive symptoms (Bluestone & Tamis-Lomonda, 1999; Foster et al., 2008). Thus, rather than unfolding

from an attitude that reflects the authoritarian personality or resulting exclusively from predominant imperative functioning, Struggling mothers' lack of proficient control and minimal promotion of autonomy may derive from lower energy, decreased concentration, reduced interest, or other symptoms associated with affective disorder<sup>1</sup> (Lovejoy et al., 2000).

Consistent with this argument, though mothers from Struggling families appear similar to the classic authoritarian parenting style with regard to the aforementioned aspects of warmth and control, they diverge from the authoritarian prototype and a recent iteration of this style (Hoeve et al., 2008) in two important respects. Struggling mothers demonstrate low levels of hostility and harsh discipline. Although Baumrind identified a subtype that she termed "authoritarian non-rejecting," which featured a low level of harsh discipline, a high level of expressed anger was an integral component of the authoritarian style (Baumrind, 1971). In contrast, Struggling mothers infrequently present low-intensity anger in the form of mild criticism or rejection and terse or irritable responses. They relatively rarely respond to adolescent misbehavior by yelling, threatening, shaming, or hitting. Moreover, the low rates of harsh punishment evidenced by both Struggling and Competent mothers are consistent with other findings that indicate, despite favorable views regarding the use of physical punishment as well as its association with positive outcomes when administered mildly, African American parents prefer and more often utilize other discipline strategies (Kelley & Heffner, 1987; Jackson, 1996).

Yet, while Struggling mothers exhibit low levels of hostility and harsh discipline, their displays of anger and use of verbal and physical punishment are significantly greater

than those of their Competent counterparts, and when combined with low warmth likely results in even less effective management of adolescent behavior. These differences in hostility and harshness may be attributed to Struggling mothers' higher levels of distress, given that greater depressive symptoms (e.g. irritability) are associated with increased expressions of hostility and more frequent use of coercive discipline (Foster et al., 2008; Ge et al., 1996). Furthermore, Struggling mothers' pattern of low warmth, support and involvement and relatively higher hostility and harsh discipline that are nonetheless low in terms of observational norms is consistent with the parenting pattern of mothers who display subclinical depression but demonstrate greater depressive symptoms than their counterparts who exhibit no evidence of past or present depression (Lovejoy et al., 2000).

As a probable consequence of maternal distress, the pattern of parenting practices displayed by mothers in Struggling families is not well suited to the tasks of reducing their adolescents' exposure to economic stress and community violence and thereby increasing their adolescents' sense of security and decreasing the likelihood of their participation in aggression and delinquency. Low levels of maternal warmth/support and involvement, and a less than satisfying mother-adolescent relationship, as well as relatively higher maternal hostility and harsh discipline may contribute to Struggling adolescents experiencing insecure attachment with mother, increased feelings of anger, difficulty regulating emotions, and problems interacting with others (Lynch & Cicchetti, 2002). Moreover, low warmth and responsiveness and unsatisfactory relationship quality are likely to reduce Struggling adolescents' willingness to cooperate with their mothers' demands for appropriate behavior and may trigger resistance to their mothers' modest efforts to monitor their activities (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Inconsistent enforcement

of rules is also not likely to be effective in limiting Struggling adolescents' involvement in activities that may increase exposure to danger. Consequently, inadequate attachment, increased hostility, deficient self-regulation and relationship skills, along with ineffective maternal influence, monitoring, and rule enforcement may lead Struggling adolescents to experience increased unsupervised time spent in the community, enhanced bonding with peers, and/or relational difficulties and heightened conflict with peers and others. These experiences in turn are likely to result in greater exposure to violence and increased externalizing problems (Richards et al., 2004).

Furthermore, the relationship between increased exposure to violence and adolescent externalizing behavior is likely to be reciprocal. Exposure to violence raises safety demands and likely heightens aggressive responding via learning processes that suggest use of force is an acceptable and effective means of meeting these demands. For Struggling adolescents, greater exposure to violence suggests that aggressive solutions to problems are modeled more frequently and may be reinforced more often by social approval of aggressive behavior and/or by contingent reductions in environmental threat and internalized distress (Rich, 2005). Similarly, Struggling mothers' may reciprocate coercive processes with their adolescents by responding to increased adolescent aggression and delinquency with less warmth and involvement and more contention, harsh and inconsistent discipline, which may serve to momentarily reduce their own distress (Krenichyn et al., 2001; Patterson, Reid & Dishion, 1992). In turn, increased strain in the mother-adolescent relationship may lead to increased adolescent exposure to the direct effects of economic hardship and contribute further to the cycle of stress and externalizing behavior. Without a warm and supportive relationship as a vital resource to

ease the pressure of financial strain, economic loss may increase the demand for financial resources and may motivate adolescents to engage in delinquent activity in order to compensate for monetary shortfalls (McLoyd, 1997). Moreover, the strain of unmet economic need may increase frustration and anger and result in increased aggressive behavior (Agnew, 2007; Warner & Fowler, 2003).

Additionally, while Struggling mothers are likely to have difficulty protecting their adolescents from exposure to economic stress and community violence, they also appear unprepared to assist them in recovering from exposure to these maladies and developing resilience. Their characteristic parenting practices appear inappropriate to the tasks of enhancing relational bonds and facilitating the cognitive and emotional processing that is needed to enable their adolescents to successfully adapt to their adversities. Lack of warmth, support, relationship quality, positive reinforcement, and inductive reasoning likely preclude opportunities for Struggling adolescents to appropriately express feelings, share thoughts, and reinterpret events in a manner that will increase meaning and self-worth and enable them to reduce stress and work through trauma (Conger et al., 1999; Linares et al., 2001; Overstreet & Braun, 2000; Wallen & Rubin, 1997). Moreover, Struggling mothers' limited awareness of their adolescents' activities and experiences may restrict recognition of their vulnerability and distress and further reduce the likelihood of needed support being offered (Krenichyn et al., 2001). Making matters worse, their deficient promotion of autonomy likely hampers their adolescents' ability to effectively adapt to environmental constraints and hazards when on their own. Furthermore, Struggling adolescents may match their mothers' distress and hostility and interpret their mothers' inability to keep them safe in a negative manner, resulting in an

increased sense of insecurity (Linares et al., 2001; Lynch & Cicchetti, 2002). Inability to reduce strain, work through trauma, and increase safety is likely to contribute further to adolescent externalizing problems.

### Parenting Patterns, Risk Exposure & Internalizing Symptoms

Although the parenting resources of Struggling families appear to be quite ineffective in meeting the demands of exposure to economic hardship and community violence and promoting adolescent adjustment, as evidenced by higher adolescent externalizing problems, the lack of fit between these resources and stressors may or may not be as important in influencing adolescent internalizing symptoms. Given their higher level of exposure to violence and their mothers' higher distress and lower quality parenting practices, Struggling adolescents would be expected to report more anxiety and depression than their Competent counterparts. However, there was no significant difference in internalizing symptoms between adolescents from Competent and Struggling families. While this null finding may be attributed to a lack of statistical power, this outcome may also be explained by a seemingly paradoxical relationship between very high levels of exposure to violence and internalizing symptoms and/or by a relatively weak relationship between internalizing problems and the stressors and parenting patterns experienced by Struggling adolescents.

While exposure to violence has often been associated with internalizing symptoms (Fowler et al., 2009), there are some instances in which it has been found to be unrelated to anxiety and depression. Paradoxically, these instances involve youth who live in high crime communities where they are often exposed to high levels of violence (Fitzpatrick, 1993; White et al., 1998), witness more severe forms of violence (Hill et al., 1996), and

experience greater overall stress from a variety of social-ecological sources (Hill et al., 1996). These seemingly incongruous findings are consistent with evidence that suggests that high levels of violence exposure, particularly without the benefit of protective resources, can result in non-reactivity in the form of desensitization or dissociation (Perry & Pollard, 1998). When faced with a persistent threat that is difficult to avoid, and parents fail to respond in a supportive manner, children may respond to the threat with increasing emotional numbing, denial and forgetting (Krenichyn et al., 2001; Perry & Pollard, 1995). When given the opportunity to report their experiences, younger children exposed to high levels of violence may openly express their feelings and concerns; however, older youth may be inclined to deny internal distress and express bravado (Martinez & Richters, 1993), particularly in communities where expression of internalizing symptoms may increase the likelihood of victimization (Cassidy & Stevenson, 2005).

Struggling adolescents' lower than expected internalizing symptoms may alternatively be explained by a relatively weak relationship between internalizing problems and stressors that are less interpersonal in nature (Rudolph et al., 2000). Although Struggling adolescents are exposed to very high levels of violence, most of their exposure has been in the form of witnessing or knowing other persons involved in violent episodes as opposed to their own personal victimization. Witnessed or vicarious violence involving persons with whom the adolescents are not emotionally close may have less of an impact in terms of internalizing symptoms (Kliewer et al., 1998) and more of an effect on externalizing problems (Farrell & Bruce, 1997), which may occur through social learning processes (Bandura, 1973).

Furthermore, lack of maternal warmth, support, and involvement may have less impact on internalizing symptoms relative to externalizing problems in African American youth (Jones et al., 2008), particularly in relationship to high levels of parent control (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991; Pittman and Chase-Landsdale, 2001; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts & Dornbusch, 1994) and parent-adolescent conflict (Gutman, McLoyd & Tokoyawa, 2005; Kim et al., 2003). Jones and colleagues (2008) found that parental warmth and support had a stronger relationship with aggressive behavior than with depression in this population. Moreover, Kim and colleagues (2003) found that African American youth with depressive symptoms and those with conduct problems both experienced high levels of parent hostility and harsh discipline, but youth with conduct problems were distinguished from youth with depressive symptoms by the added experience of low levels of parent nurturance and involvement. They found that youth with co-occurring depression and conduct problems experienced the highest levels of parent hostility along with high levels of harsh discipline and low levels of nurturance and involvement. Parental hostility and harsh discipline may increase internal distress via disruption of the parent child relationship, consequent diminishment of adolescent self-worth and emergence of hopelessness and helplessness (Rudolph, 2002), and are likely to increase externalizing behavior through learning processes that involve reinforcement of coercive interaction (Reid, Patterson & Schneider, 2002). Low levels of warmth and support may increase adolescent externalizing behavior via interruption of mutual regulation processes and resulting interference with the development of self-regulatory skills (Brody et al., 2002). While the processes by which the grouping of these parenting behaviors influence the development of externalizing versus internalizing



problems are not well understood, Jones and colleagues (2008) found that the relationship between low levels of parental warmth/support and adolescent depressive symptoms was largely accounted for by the relationship between low parental warmth/support and adolescent aggression. Thus, Struggling adolescents' elevated externalizing problems and lower than expected internalizing symptoms may be explained by the stronger relationship between low levels of warmth and support and externalizing problems. Additional research is needed to test these possible interrelationships.

#### Clinical & Policy Implications

These findings highlight the importance of focusing attention on parenting and ecological risk in efforts to promote positive adjustment in African American adolescents living in low income urban environments. Interventions that aim to prevent or ameliorate adolescent externalizing problems in particular are likely to be strengthened by components that seek to improve maternal mental health and parenting practices and reduce family exposure to economic stress and community violence. Assessment and treatment of maternal depression or other psychological difficulties appear to be vital first steps from a preventive standpoint and critical adjunctive elements in the context of adolescent-focused treatment. In addition to traditional therapy approaches to reduce distress, promotion of mothers' emotional well-being may require reducing personal risk exposure as well as development of adaptive coping skills. Accomplishing these objectives may optimally involve applying knowledge of strategies that have worked best for other parents in similar conditions (i.e. Competent mothers) and likely include increasing vulnerable families' access to supportive resources. Accordingly, providing

intervention in the form of multiple family groups that involve Competent mothers may be ideal for mothers who fit the Struggling profile or otherwise display vulnerability.

In addition to reducing distress and developing coping skills, mothers who are deficient in parenting practices may improve their childrearing strategies by learning from groups that involve Competent mothers or from traditional parent-focused approaches that are informed by the Competent parenting style. Emotionally supportive interaction with Competent parents and informed practitioners, along with effective modeling of optimal parenting by these advocates, may help Struggling mothers or other vulnerable parents to improve their functioning across the warmth and control domains. With the overall goals being to reduce adolescent risk exposure and develop resilience, the specific objectives of such interventions should be to reduce barriers that may inhibit positive emotion, increase expressions of warmth and nurturance, and promote more involvement of parents in meaningful activity with their adolescents. The intent should also be to reduce parent-adolescent conflict, enhance problem solving skills, promote greater openness to two-way communication, and thereby improve the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship. Moreover, the aims should be to increase use of reasoning and positive reinforcement, develop consistency to back up clear demands for appropriate behavior, increase monitoring of adolescent activities, enhance willingness to permit and develop appropriate levels of independence, and ideally to develop parents' capacity to assist their adolescents in connecting with other settings that are protective and promotive of positive development.

Whereas helping vulnerable parents to reduce distress and improve their capacity to provide optimal parenting would likely be successful in decreasing adolescent

externalizing problems in individual families, realizing significant reductions in the prevalence of mental health problems across families in the African American community requires intervention at macro-ecological levels to reduce the causes of economic hardship and neighborhood violence. Urban poverty and violence are rooted in a confluence of adverse social forces that continue to circumscribe the life chances of African American parents and youth. While historical discrimination in housing and employment created segregated African American communities characterized by a disproportionately low skilled labor force, industrial and geographic changes beginning in the early 1970s sharply reduced the demand for low skilled labor, which culminated in concentrations of joblessness and poverty among African Americans in inner-city neighborhoods (Wilson, 1987, 1996). As the economy has increasingly demanded high skilled labor, the outmigration of middle income families and the expansion of failing public schools have continued to perpetuate disproportionate concentrations of low job skills, disconnection from high wage positions, and high rates of joblessness in predominantly African American communities (Wilson, 2009).

Concentrated joblessness directly and indirectly predicts increases in violent crime (Krivo & Peterson, 2004). Directly, idleness experienced by a larger share of neighborhood residents contributes to increased gathering in places that are conducive to crime (e.g. street corners, bars) by men in particular and financial needs often motivate their involvement in illegal activity (Anderson, 1978; Crutchfield 1989). Moreover, when a large percentage of a community's residents have low paying and unstable employment at best, fewer people have strong attachments to jobs and thus may have lower commitment to societal norms (Anderson, 1990; Krivo & Peterson, 2000).

Indirectly, high rates of joblessness among men contribute to higher incidences of single-mother families as the pool of marriage-eligible men is decreased (Wilson, 1996; Sampson, 1995). As the rate of single-parent families has been found to mediate the relationship between joblessness and violent crime among adolescents in particular (Messner & Sampson, 1991; Sampson, 1987), it appears that high percentages of single-parent families mean reduced numbers of adults who are available to assist in providing the supervision and guardianship needed to control deviance in the community (Sampson, 1995). Consequently, adolescents who spend significant time engaged in unstructured activities in the neighborhood lack the formal and informal networks of social organization that would reduce their involvement in violence and delinquency (Maimon & Browning, 2010; Osgood & Anderson, 2004). Moreover, unsupervised adolescents under such circumstances are more likely to affiliate with gangs and often become young adults who continue to spend extensive time on street corners and further increase the likelihood of participation in crime (Sampson & Groves, 1989).

Given the contributions of concentrated joblessness and social disorganization to poverty and community violence, achieving large scale improvement in the well-being of African American families requires that policy makers and community leaders take effective action to reduce these conditions. Increasing the proportions of adults engaged in stable, higher wage employment necessitates improvement in education and training over the life course. Beginning at the elementary and secondary levels this means implementing realistic changes in public education. African American youth must remain engaged in school and must develop the basic skills needed to prepare them for post-secondary education and training. In turn, post-secondary education for youth and

adults must involve in-depth collaboration between employers and institutions that is focused on providing the training in high level skills that are needed by employers in the high tech, global economy.

Despite all of the efforts to reform public education and to enhance training for adults that have been made at federal, state, and local levels, it is striking that relatively little improvement in public education or job training has been achieved, particularly for African American youth and adults (Weber, 2010). One critical reason for this ongoing predicament is the little attention that has been given to schools and teachers that have demonstrated success in raising the educational performance of African American students, many of whom are among the nation's most disadvantaged (Perry, Steele & Hilliard, 2003). Likewise, adult education and training programs that have achieved success in preparing formerly unemployed, low skilled, and/or low wage adult workers for stable, gainful employment in high skill jobs that have increased their earnings have not been adequately recognized or duplicated (Osterman, 2006). Accordingly, realistic efforts to decrease joblessness must involve learning from schools and training programs with proven track records of developing high achieving African American students despite their exposure to ecological risks and developing high skilled workers and professionals regardless of their socioeconomic circumstances. It is imperative that policy makers prioritize the development and expansion of such programs to meet the needs of families living in poor urban communities.

In addition to reducing joblessness, decreasing the effects of social disorganization on community violence in African American neighborhoods requires enhancement of community capacity for social control. Building the capacity of community residents to

exercise control over their communities requires development of neighborhood social networks. Given this need, community leaders and organizations must provide interventions that develop relationships between parents and establish connections between parents and community settings that help organize their efforts to protect youth and promote positive youth development. Building relationships between parents and other adult residents with the goal of developing trust and shared willingness to engage in social control will enable them to cooperate with each other in monitoring adolescent activities and setting limits on undesirable behavior (Sampson et al., 1997, 1999; Warner, Beck & Ohmer, 2010). Enhancement of informal networks may also be integrated with the development of neighborhood associations that may help to deter crime (Sabol, Coultin & Korbin, 2004; Simcha-Fagan & Schwartz, 1986; Taylor, Gottfredson & Brower, 1984). Increasing interconnections among neighborhood parents, schools, churches, recreation centers, and health and service organizations with the objective of involving all neighborhood youth in structured after-school programs will decrease youth involvement in delinquency and violence via decreased engagement in unsupervised activities. Increasing the participation of parents in such programs will provide additional means and resources to enhance informal social control networks (Osgood, Anderson & Shaffer, 2005).

#### Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that help inform the direction of future research. First, the data examined is cross-sectional. As such, it was not possible to assess the reliability of the family types over time or to examine temporal changes in adolescent adjustment. Future studies should employ a longitudinal design in order to ensure that

the types identified are reflective of enduring patterns and not situational responses and to clarify the direction of the relationship between the family patterns and adolescent outcomes. Second, the size of the sample may not be large enough to adequately represent all of the natural types that exist in the population. This may explain why only two family types were found. The sample size was also not large enough to provide sufficient power to detect differences between the family types in adolescent-reported internalizing symptoms and mother-reported externalizing problems. Future investigations should involve a large enough sample to allow for identification of additional family patterns that may be present and to provide adequate power to detect additional differences in adolescent adjustment. Third, given that the sample was drawn from among the most disadvantaged urban neighborhoods of one city, the generalizability of the findings to families in other communities may be limited. Forthcoming studies should incorporate families living in different geographic areas in order to examine the prevalence of specific family types and explore the diversity of African American parenting styles in the context of varied ecological conditions.

Furthermore, while future research should increase the size and geographic diversity of the sample and employ a longitudinal design, prospective studies should also incorporate new measures and constructs that may improve assessment of risk exposure and psychological outcomes and enhance identification of ecologically valid parenting styles. The current study examined the effects of economic loss over a one-year period and considered each form of loss as equally impactful, which may have precluded discovery of family differences in recentness and magnitude of economic stressors. Future studies may better explore effects of economic hardship by employing a measure

of acute financial loss (i.e. within a three-month period), which may have a greater impact on current family functioning than chronic economic difficulties (Ennis, Hobfall & Schroder, 2000). Similarly, this study examined exposure to violence in terms of whether or not adolescents and mothers experienced different forms of violence at least once within the past year and counted each of these types of violence as equivalent in impact. Consequently, differences in the frequency and severity of exposure to violence may not have been fully realized. Upcoming studies may better assess the effects of community violence on individuals and families by accounting for these differences, which are likely to explain greater variance in family well-being.

Assessment of maternal and adolescent psychological health in the current study may also have been less than optimal and may be improved in future investigations. Use of an observational method to assess maternal sadness may have underestimated the levels of distress experienced by mothers. Use of a self-report measure of psychological symptomatology in future studies may result in a more accurate assessment of parent symptoms. Regarding adolescent adaptation, use of a broad band measure of adjustment may not have provided the best assessment of anxiety and depression and thus may have failed to elucidate the relationships between internalizing problems and exposure to economic loss and neighborhood violence. Utilizing instruments that focus on symptoms of anxiety and depression may help clarify the links between the ecological stressors, parenting factors, and internalizing problems in future work.

Additionally, though a wide range of appropriate parenting constructs were explored in this study, examination of culturally and contextually relevant parenting variables was somewhat unclear and incomplete. In terms of clarity, the harsh discipline construct



combined physical and verbal punishment and this combination may have concealed different levels of these behaviors in Competent and Struggling families and may have obscured different functions of these practices. Whereas physical discipline generally falls within the domain of behavior control, verbal coercion may constitute psychological control and thus these practices may have different relationships with adolescent adjustment in the areas of externalizing and internalizing behavior respectively. Moreover, a psychological control scale is not included in the observational rating system used in this study and should be developed. With respect to completeness, three important parenting strategies were not examined. Parent limit-setting (restrictiveness), decision-making (unilateral), and use of social and material consequences (response cost) have been identified as practices that are often employed by African American parents under high risk conditions. Moreover, the former two appear to be culturally distinct in their relationship to adolescent behavior. Forthcoming research would likely further advance our understanding of African American parenting in the context of environmental risk by separating verbal and physical punishment and including psychological control, limit-setting, decision-making, and social/material consequences.

While future investigations would further increase knowledge of ecologically valid African American parenting patterns by incorporating the aforementioned improvements, prospective research should also explore other pertinent issues highlighted by the current study. One such issue is the pattern of lower levels of inductive reasoning and encouragement of independence relative to the other parenting practices displayed by Competent and Struggling families. Future studies should explore the beliefs and behaviors related to these practices in order to increase comprehension of the meaning of

these strategies or alternative practices in African American families. Research is needed to clarify the extent to which African American parents value and utilize bidirectional communication, induction, and use of explanations as disciplinary strategies and/or as means of enhancing the parent-adolescent relationship. The hypothesis that lower levels of these practices are related to adaptation to environmental risk should be tested.

Research is also needed to elucidate beliefs about independence and the relationship between these beliefs and the strategies used by African American parents to develop this attribute in their adolescents. As new constructs emerge they should be incorporated into studies that examine parenting patterns in this population.

Other key matters that need further exploration involve the processes by which parenting and risk factors influence adolescent adjustment. Future research should examine if Competent parenting does in fact help to reduce adolescents exposure to community violence. If so, research should explore the extent to which this relationship is explained by parent warmth, support, involvement and relationship quality increasing adolescents' willingness to cooperate with parental demands, monitoring, and discipline. Studies should also investigate whether or not Competent parenting ameliorates the effects of adolescent exposure to violence and economic loss and thereby reduces externalizing problems by facilitating emotional processing of experiences and increasing appropriate problem solving strategies. Conversely, research is needed to explore whether or not the Struggling parenting pattern helps increase adolescent exposure to violence and exacerbates the effects of exposure by motivating adolescents to increase unsupervised time spent with peers in the community and by failing to facilitate processing of experiences respectively. Moreover, studies should examine these

processes, as well as increased anger, as mediators of the relationship between the Struggling pattern and adolescent externalizing behavior.

Future research also needs to investigate the processes that influence internalizing symptoms in African American adolescents. Research needs to explore the extent to which depression and anxiety may be more closely related to parent hostility and relational conflict than to warmth and involvement. Research should examine the extent to which high levels of exposure to violence may be associated with desensitization or denial of distress, particularly for adolescents from families that fit the Struggling pattern or otherwise appear vulnerable. Future studies should examine whether or not the emotional climate of the family and/or peer and community norms about emotional expression influences such adolescent responses as well as a tendency for adolescents who deny distress to increase expressions of bravado in the context of threatening conditions. Furthermore, studies are needed to assess internalizing symptoms, desensitization, and/or denial as mediators of the relationship between exposure to violence and externalizing problems. Such studies should consider whether or not these relationships are stronger for adolescents from Struggling families.

In addition to research that further explores relationships between parenting beliefs and practices and examines processes involving parenting, risk factors, and adolescent adjustment, investigations are needed to increase knowledge of parent coping skills, coping socialization, social support and co-parenting. In the current study, Competent parents demonstrated little or no distress despite exposure to moderately high levels of economic hardship and high levels of community violence. This suggests that they possess substantial coping abilities. Research is needed to explore Competent mothers'

coping skills and resources so that this knowledge may be used to help Struggling mothers develop resilience. Competent mothers' resources are likely to include social support from co-parents, other relatives and friends (Mitchell & Ronzio, 2011). Studies are needed to examine the role of co-parents, other family members, and friends in enhancing Competent mothers' capacity to cope as well as supporting their ability to provide effective parenting. Furthermore, future investigations should examine how Competent mothers' coping abilities influence their parenting, particularly their efforts to develop their adolescents' coping skills.

#### Footnote

<sup>1</sup>While Struggling adolescents reported greater externalizing behavior than Competent adolescents, there was no statistical difference in the levels of adolescent externalizing behavior reported by Struggling and Competent mothers. This null finding may be attributed to insufficient statistical power. Furthermore, the levels of mother-reported externalizing problems may be explained by mothers' limited awareness of adolescent behavior. In contrast to conventional expectations regarding the reporting of externalizing behavior (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001), adolescents in this study reported more externalizing behavior than their mothers reported.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The aims of the current study were to identify natural patterns of environmental risk conditions and parenting practices in African American families, assess the similarities and differences between the parenting patterns and mainstream parenting types, clarify the efficacy of each parenting pattern in reducing risk and promoting adolescent adjustment, consider key variables that may influence these processes, and thereby advance understanding of African American childrearing in social-ecological context. A case-centered approach featuring cluster analysis was utilized to permit exploration of multiple childrearing behaviors across the dimensions of parental warmth and control and to afford examination of multiple combinations of these parenting variables along with indicators of maternal distress and adolescent exposure to economic hardship and community violence. This approach enabled investigation of the natural occurrences of these factors among families and facilitated consideration of how these configurations may holistically provide vulnerability or protection to adolescents.

Cluster analyses revealed two types of families. The first type, Competent families, was exposed to moderately high levels of community violence and featured very low maternal distress and moderately high levels of functioning across the warmth and control dimensions of parenting. The second type, Struggling families, was exposed to higher levels of community violence and displayed higher maternal distress and lower functioning across all of the parenting practices. Both types of families experienced moderate to high levels of economic hardship. Competent and Struggling families appeared similar to prototypical authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles

respectively in many ways but also differed from these mainstream types in key areas. While the parenting pattern of Competent mothers appears similar to the authoritative type in terms of high levels of parental warmth and indirect-external control practices and low levels of punitive discipline, they diverge from the authoritative style in their moderate encouragement of adolescent independence and moderate use of inductive reasoning. Whereas the parenting pattern of Struggling mothers is reminiscent of the authoritarian style in terms of moderately high parental influence and low levels of parental warmth and indirect control practices, they vary from the authoritarian type in their low levels of parent hostility and harsh discipline. While the distinctions from the authoritative type that are demonstrated by Competent mothers appears to be related to adaptations that are necessary in high risk environments, the similarities to the authoritarian type that are displayed by Struggling mothers seem to derive from the adverse effects of ecological risk exposure.

Evaluation of the efficacy of the two parenting patterns indicates that the Competent pattern may be optimal for raising adolescents in the context of economic adversity and high levels of community violence. Adolescents from Competent families displayed lower levels of combined externalizing and internalizing problems than their counterparts from Struggling families. However, when these forms of adolescent adjustment were considered separately, adolescents from Competent families demonstrated lower externalizing problems but the two groups of adolescents did not differ in internalizing symptoms. While the difference in externalizing problems between Competent and Struggling adolescents appears to be explained by the resilience and high quality parenting demonstrated by Competent mothers, which appears to be effective in both

reducing their adolescents' exposure to violence and facilitating healthy adjustment in the aftermath of exposure, the unexpectedly low level of internalizing symptoms displayed by Struggling adolescents may be a result of desensitization or denial resulting from heightened exposure to violence and the ineffectiveness of parenting resources to reduce or mitigate the effects of risk exposure. The knowledge generated from this research will not only increase understanding of African American parenting in social and cultural context but will inform the development and improvement of interventions and public policy designed to promote the well-being of families and children exposed to harsh conditions in urban environments.

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Appendix A.

Parent Education, Family Economic Loss Questionnaire, and Family Income

### Background Information

**Now I would like to ask a few questions about your education and work experience.**

What is the highest grade in school (or year of college) that you completed?

(Circle the highest year completed)

None	0											
Elementary – High School	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
College	13			14	15	16+						
Graduate/Professional	17		18	19	20+							

### Family Finances

**For the next questions, please identify the answer that is most true about your family.**

Does your family receive public aid or food stamps?

- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No

During the past year, has your family been evicted or homeless?

- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No

During the past year, have your lights, heat, gas, or telephone been turned off?

- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No

**The following questions ask about important changes you may have experienced during the past year.**

During the past 12 months, did you...

1 = Yes

2 = No

Change jobs for a worse one?	1	2
Get demoted, have trouble at work, or trouble with your boss?	1	2
Take a cut in wage or salary?	1	2
Get laid off or fired?	1	2
Suffer a significant financial loss or go deeply into debt?	1	2
Stop working for a long period of time (Not because of retirement)?	1	2
Move to a worse house or apartment OR neighborhood?	1	2
Have a car, furniture, or other items repossessed?	1	2
Have a loan foreclosed on (like a home loan)?	1	2
Start receiving government assistance such as AFDC, SSI, food stamps, or something else?	1	2
Have a close friend or relative who had serious financial problems?	1	2
Take on financial responsibility for a parent, in-law, or other family member?	1	2

Approximately, how much income does your family bring in each month? (**Get exact amount from respondent and then code below**). \_\_\_\_\_ per month

1 = \$300 or less

2 = \$301 - \$600

3 = \$601 - \$900

4 = \$901 - \$1200

5 = \$1201 - \$1500

6 = \$1501 - \$1800

7 = More than \$1800

Appendix B.

Survey of Exposure to Violence – Screening



Listed below are various kinds of violence and things related to violence that you may have experienced, seen, or heard about in real life, *to the best of your recollection*. Indicate your answers by circling either true false or false for each description. **DO NOT INCLUDE IN YOUR ANSWERS THINGS YOU HAVE SEEN OR HEARD ABOUT ONLY ON TV, RADIO, THE NEWS, OR IN MOVIES.** This is a confidential survey. No one will know that these are your answers.

Your Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years      Your Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

1. True False I have been chased by gangs or individuals.
2. True False I have seen someone else being chased by gangs or individuals.
3. True False I know someone who has been chased by gangs or individuals.
4. True False I have been asked to use, sell, or help distribute illegal drugs.
5. True False I have seen other people get asked to use, sell, or help distribute illegal drugs.
6. True False I know someone who has been asked to use, sell or help distribute illegal drugs.
7. True False I have seen other people use, sell, or help distribute illegal drugs.
8. True False I have been in a serious accident where I thought that someone would get hurt very badly or die
9. True False I have seen someone else have a serious accident where I thought that someone would get hurt very badly or die.
10. True False I know someone who has been in a serious accident where I thought that someone would get hurt very badly or die.
11. True False I have been at home when someone has broken into or tried to force their way into the house or apartment.
12. True False I have been away from home when someone has broken into or tried to force their way into the house or apartment
13. True False I have seen someone trying to force their way into somebody else's house or apartment.
14. True False I know someone whose house or apartment has been broken into.

15. True False I have been picked up, arrested, or taken away by the police.
16. True False I have seen someone else get picked up, arrested, or taken away by the police.
17. True False I know someone who has been picked up, arrested, or taken away by the police.
18. True False I have been threatened with serious physical harm by someone.
19. True False I have seen someone else get threatened with serious physical harm.
20. True False I know someone who has been threatened with serious physical harm.
21. True False I have been slapped, punched, or hit by a family member.
22. True False I have seen someone else slapped, punched, or hit by a member of their family.
23. True False I know someone who has been slapped, punched, or hit by a member of their family.
24. True False I have been slapped, punched, or hit by someone who is not a member of the family.
25. True False I have seen another person getting slapped, punched, or hit by someone who was not a member of their family.
26. True False I know someone who has been slapped, punched, or hit by someone who was not a member of their family.
27. True False I have been beaten up or mugged.
28. True False I have seen someone else getting beaten up or mugged.
29. True False I know someone who has been beaten up or mugged.
30. True False I have been sexually assaulted, molested, or raped.
31. True False I have seen someone else being sexually assaulted, molested, or raped.
32. True False I know someone who has been sexually assaulted, molested, or raped.

33. True False I have seen someone carrying or holding a gun or knife (do not include police, military, or security officers).
34. True False I know someone who carries or holds a gun or knife (do not include police, military, or security officers).
35. True False I have been attacked or stabbed with a knife.
36. True False I have seen someone else being attacked or stabbed with a knife.
37. True False I know someone else who has been attacked or stabbed with a knife.
38. True False I have seen a seriously wounded person after an incident of violence.
39. True False I have been seriously wounded in an incident of violence.
40. True False I know someone who has been seriously wounded in an incident of violence.
41. True False I have seen or heard a gun fired in my home.
42. True False I have been shot or shot at with a gun.
43. True False I have seen someone else get shot or shot at with a gun.
44. True False I know someone who has been shot or shot at with a gun.
45. True False I have seen a dead person somewhere in the community (do not include wakes or funerals).
46. True False I have heard about a dead person found somewhere in the community (do not include wakes or funerals).
47. True False I have seen someone committing suicide.
48. True False I have known someone who committed suicide.
49. True False I have seen someone being killed by another person.
50. True False I have known someone who was killed by another person
51. True False I have been in a situation not already described where I was extremely frightened or thought that I would get hurt very badly or die.

Appendix C.  
Family Interaction Task

### Video Task 1 Directions

I want to let you know again that all the information you provide is CONFIDENTIAL. I will not be watching your video discussions and I will give you as much privacy as possible while you're talking together. Where would you like me to wait while you two talk?

Just a few reminders before we begin:

1. Please relax and try to ignore the camera! You don't have to talk TO the camera or feel that you have to explain anything – just talk to each other as you normally would.
2. Please try not to shift your position too much during the task.
3. Since our microphone is very sensitive, we'd like you to avoid moving it or making extra sounds like tapping on the table.
4. If there are any phone calls, visitors, or any other interruptions, I would appreciate it if you would take care of the matter as quickly as possible so you can continue your discussion.
5. Because we need to give every family the same amount of time to talk, I cannot return until the time is up. If you finish all the questions before I come back, please go back and discuss some of the questions or continue talking because I'm not allowed to return until the time is up.

Do you have any questions?

This is a 20 minute video task with just the two of you to do together. We'd like you to talk with each other about questions listed on the cards.

These cards have the questions for you to talk about. I'll put the cards face down on the table. On the back of each card it tells who should read and answer the question first, adult or child. When it's your turn, please pick up the card, read all of the questions on the card out loud and give your answer. Then the other person should say what (she/he) thinks. Each of you should talk about your answers with each other.

When you both feel like you've said what you want to say about the questions on the card and each other's answers, go on to the next card. Don't feel like you have to get through all the cards.

I'd like to start with two practice cards so you can see how the video part works. Our first practice card says, "Adult" so (primary caretaker) you can read the card out loud and the two of you can talk about your answers while I finish setting up my camera. *[Start recording. Give feedback so they understand they are supposed to talk with each other.]*

Okay, the second practice card says, "Child" and is for (child) to read and answer first. Remember, both of you should answer and talk about your answers with each other.

Do you have any questions?

I'd like to introduce you now. This is... *[First names only. When you introduce the child tell how old he/she is.]*

Start with card 1 when I leave the room. Remember to just talk with each other like you normally would. I can't come back until my timer goes off, so if you do get through all the cards, please continue talking until I come back in 20 minutes.

**PRACTICE CARD** (Adult)

What was the last week like for us?

Was it an average week or did something different happen?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**PRACTICE CARD** (Child)

What do we think we will do together tomorrow?

Will we do what we usually do, or something different?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 1** (Adult)

What was the BEST THING my child did this past year?

Does my child agree?

How do we each feel about this?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 2** (Child)

How much and when do we see each other?

What do we do together?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 3** (Child)

What do I really like to do with Mom?

What do I wish Mom and I could do together more often?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 4** (Adult)

How do I find out about my child's school, friends, and activities?

How hard or easy is this?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 5** (Child)

How does Mom want me to act?

What are her rules?

How fair are her rules?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 6** (Child)

If I DON'T DO what she wants, what does mom say she will do?

Does she always do what she says?

Give an example.

(Please talk together about your answers)



**CARD 7** (Adult)

When was the LAST TIME we got mad at each other or did not agree on something?

What happened?

What did each of us do or say?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 8** (Child)

When I do a good job, what does Mom do or say?

Does she always do or say this?

Give an example.

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 9** (Child)

If friends tried to get me into trouble, what would I do?

What would Mom want me to do?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 10** (Adult)

What does my child do after school and on weekends?

Do I approve?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 11** (Child)

What does my Mom do most days?

How do each of us feel about this?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 12** (Child)

Where do I get money to spend?

Do I get enough?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 13** (Adult)

What made my child SAD or DISAPPOINTED this past year?

Does my child agree?

How do we each feel about this?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 14** (Child)

When I grow up, what kind of parent will I be?

How will I be like my Mom?

How will I be different?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 15** (Adult)

What would I like to change about my family?

Why?

Do we agree about this?

(Please talk together about your answers)

**CARD 16** (Adult)

Please talk more about these questions until the interviewer comes back.

Appendix D.

Iowa Family Interaction Ratings Scales

## SADNESS

The extent to which the focal's verbal and nonverbal behavior communicates emotional distress that is conveyed as sadness, unhappiness, despondency, depression, and regret. Persons may simply appear detached from the family's ongoing activity (e.g. they seem apathetic or withdrawn) or they may show more overt signs of sadness or dysphoria such as speaking in a low, slow tone, becoming tearful, or verbally expressing their sadness. Attend carefully to nonverbal behaviors in scoring Sadness.

- 1 = Not at all Characteristic:  
The focal displays no signs of sadness, unhappiness, despondency, depression, and/or regret
- 2 =
- 3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:  
The focal rarely shows evidence of sadness, unhappiness, despondency, depression and/or regret. Such behavior is of low frequency and intensity.
- 4 =
- 5 = Somewhat Characteristic:  
The focal sometimes exhibits sadness, unhappiness, despondency, depression and/or regret. Such behavior is of low to moderate intensity.
- 6 =
- 7 = Moderately Characteristic:  
The focal fairly often shows evidence of sadness, unhappiness, despondency, depression and/or regret at a low to moderate level of intensity or there are one or more episodes of behavior that are fairly intense, e.g. crying or statements of extreme pessimism or unhappiness.
- 8 =
- 9 = Mainly Characteristic:  
The focal frequently displays sadness, unhappiness, despondency, depression and/or regret at a low to moderate level of intensity or such behavior occurs less frequently but at a high level of intensity.

## WARMTH/SUPPORT

This scale measures the degree to which the parent or the child has a favorable reaction to the other person, takes an interest in the other person, and enjoys being with the other person. Take into account combinations of four types of behavior: *Nonverbal Communication*, such as physical gestures (touching, kissing), body posture (relaxed, sitting close), and eye contact; *Emotional Expression*, such as smiling, laughing, seeming happy, good humored; *Supportiveness*, such as showing concern for the other's welfare, offering encouragement and praise; *Responsiveness*, such as head nods, asking questions to show interest in the other, using follow-up questions; and the *Content* of the statements themselves. In general, rate how much the focal cares about or shows interest in and is supportive of the other. In scoring Warmth/Support, look for combinations of behaviors and weigh affect or nonverbal behaviors more heavily than content of statements.

1 = Not at all Characteristic:

The focal displays virtually no examples of warmth or support toward the other. The focal does not go out of his/her way to be warm/supportive (interested in and affirming) of the other at any time.

2 =

3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:

The focal exhibits some evidence of low intensity behaviors that demonstrate warm/supportive caring, concern, encouragement, and responsiveness toward the other, but these behaviors quickly disappear. Examples of low intensity warmth/support are: a few head nods, encouraging comment or interested question, or a look with a smile, etc., that are genuinely warm/supportive. Simply attending does not warrant a '2' or '3' unless accompanied by warmth such as a smile or an empathic expression. Just looking at another person is not enough for a '2' or '3' in this scale; there must be some indication of warmth/support.

4 =

5 = Somewhat Characteristic:

There are several times when the focal expresses a moderate degree of concern, warmth, involvement, support, encouragement, praise, or affection or attempts to draw the other person out in a warm/supportive manner. There is some clear evidence that the focal occasionally is trying, for example, to praise, affirm, empathize with, or in some other manner demonstrate warmth/support to the other.

6 =

## 7 = Moderately Characteristic:

The focal fairly often shows warmth and support or demonstrates more intense warmth and support. The focal may express interest in and attend to the other's comments in a warm/supportive manner. The focal shows positive nonverbal gestures, such as warm smiles, frequent positive eye contact, and/or occasional affectionate touching. The focal fairly often attempts, for example, to praise, affirm, empathize with, or in some other manner demonstrate warmth/support to the other.

8 =

## 9 = Mainly Characteristic:

The focal is characterized as being highly warm and/or supportive. The focal may frequently show high warmth and support by offering a high degree of encouragement and praise, and/or the focal may display a high degree of affectionate touching, warm smiling, positive eye contact, and/or supportive laughing. He/She may actively elicit information about the other's concerns in a warm/supportive, interested manner. The focal displays genuine interest in and affirmation of the other.

## HOSTILITY

This scale measures the degree to which the focal displays hostile, angry, critical, disapproving and/or rejecting behavior toward another interactor's behavior (actions), appearance or state. Take the following behaviors into account: *Nonverbal Communication*, such as angry or contemptuous facial expressions and menacing/threatening body posture; *Emotional Expression*, such as irritable, sarcastic, or curt tones of voice or shouting; rejections such as actively ignoring the other, showing contempt or disgust for the other or the other's behavior, denying the other's needs; and the *Content*, of the statements themselves, such as complaints about the other or denigrating or critical remarks, e.g. "You don't know anything" or "You could never manage that." Bear in mind that just because two people disagree does not necessarily mean they are being hostile. To be hostile, disagreements must include some element of negative affect such as derogation, disapproval, blame, ridicule, etc.

- 1 = Not at all Characteristic:  
The focal displays virtually no examples of hostile, angry, critical, disapproving, sarcastic, or rejecting behavior.
- 2 =
- 3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:  
The focal infrequently displays evidence of low intensity hostility, but it is quickly abated. Examples of low intensity hostility are: mild criticism with minimal negative affect, an occasional abrupt remark, a scowl or frown, a cynical smile, and in children particularly, a taunt or tease.
- 4 =
- 5 = Somewhat Characteristic:  
The focal sometimes displays examples of low level or moderately intense hostility, such as curt or irritable responses, mild rejection, or some moderately intense criticism or anger. In the absence of these behaviors, score '5' if there is a tense atmosphere. (The intensity of the negative affect helps to distinguish the appropriate score: '3,' '4,' or '5.')
- 6 =
- 7 = Moderately Characteristic:  
The focal fairly often shows hostility or demonstrates more intense and prolonged critical comments, such as some shouting, several curt or disruptive remarks. The focal may also show more intense rejection or rebuffing of the other person's requests for assistance or affection. The focal may also show more denigration or mocking. Note: Even a single instance of hostility may be scored '7' if it is of relatively high intensity.



8 =

9 = Mainly Characteristic:

The focal frequently displays behaviors that are angry, critical, disapproving, and/or rejecting. There may be a relatively high degree of shouting, angry tones of voice, heavy use of sarcasm to denigrate the other, sharp or frequent criticism or mocking. The focal may be highly rejecting. The focal can be enraged and inflamed, but does not need to be this extreme in order to be coded a '9.' One extremely intense instance of hostility, e.g. a burst of inflamed name calling, may be scored a '9.'

## RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

This scale reflects the observer's evaluation of the quality of the dyad's relationship. A code of '5' is given if there is no evidence concerning the quality of the relationship. A low score indicates an unhappy, emotionally unsatisfying, or brittle relationship. A high score indicates the observer's impression that the relationship is warm, open, happy, and emotionally satisfying.

1 = Negative:

The dyad's relationship is characterized as unhappy, conflicted, and brittle, OR the dyad is uninvolved (emotionally divorced).

2 =

3 = Somewhat Negative:

The dyad's relationship is characterized as somewhat unhappy and conflicted. The relationship is more negative than neutral or positive.

4 =

5 = Between the Two Extremes:

The dyad members are involved with each other, but the relationship is neither excessively negative nor excessively positive. They may avoid some issues important to the dyad relationship. There may also be some areas in the relationship in which they avoid unhappiness or conflict. The relationship would be described as an "okay" relationship, but the relationship could use improvement in some areas to increase quality. Code as '5' if there is no evidence concerning the quality of the relationship or if the amounts of positive and negative evidence are fairly equal.

6 =

7 = Somewhat Positive:

The dyad's relationship is characterized as generally positive and warm. The quality of the relationship is more positive than neutral or negative, although there may be some indications of low negative behavior.

8 =

9 = Positive:

The dyad's relationship is characterized as open, satisfying, pleasing, communicative, and/or warm. The individuals have appositve outlook on their relationship. There are few, if any, incidents of negative behaviors.

## QUALITY TIME

This scale assesses the extent or quality of the parent's involvement in the child's life. Of particular interest is a sense of time "well-spent" vs. merely superficial involvement. Please note that this scale differs from Child Monitoring (knowledge and information) in that it measures the quality of the time the parent and child spend together. Quality of time relates to opportunities for conversation, companionship, and mutual enjoyment. The rating is based on both parent and child reports of the degree to which they are involved in meaningful or mutually enjoyable activities.

- 1 = Not at all Characteristic:  
The parent spends no quality time with the child. It appears that none of the time spent with the child is of significant quality.
- 2 =
- 3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:  
It appears that the parent rarely spends time with the child that is of significant quality.
- 4 =
- 5 = Somewhat Characteristic:  
It appears that the parent occasionally spends time with the child that is of significant quality.
- 6 =
- 7 = Moderately Characteristic:  
It appears that the parent fairly often spends time with the child that is of significant quality.
- 8 =
- 9 = Mainly Characteristic:  
It appears that the parent frequently and routinely spends time with the child that is of significant quality. The parent is regularly involved with the child in a high quality manner

## **PARENTAL INFLUENCE**

This scale measures the parent's direct and indirect *attempts to influence* the child, *not* his/her success. The scale reflects parental expectations for age-appropriate behavior. Take into account the degree to which the parent attempts to regulate or control the child's life according to commonly accepted standards, e.g. setting standards for conduct at home (manners, chores, homework, T.V.), developing and overseeing daily routines (brushing teeth, eating regular meals), setting standards for behavior away from home (friends, social, school), or directing the child's behavior in the task.

- 1 = Not at all Characteristic:  
The parent never attempts to regulate, control or influence the child's behavior.  
The parent does not provide expectations for age-appropriate behavior.
- 2 =
- 3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:  
The parent rarely attempts to regulate, control or influence the child's behavior.  
The parent infrequently provides expectations for age-appropriate behavior.
- 4 =
- 5 = Somewhat Characteristic:  
The parent occasionally attempts to regulate, control or influence the child's behavior. The parent sometimes provides expectations for age-appropriate behavior.
- 6 =
- 7 = Moderately Characteristic:  
The parent fairly often attempts to regulate, control or influence the child's behavior and provides expectations for age-appropriate behavior.
- 8 =
- 9 = Mainly Characteristic:  
The parent consistently attempts to regulate, control or influence the child's behavior. The parent frequently provides expectations for age-appropriate behavior.

## **POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT**

This scale assesses the extent to which the parent's contingent responses to the child include use of praise, approval, rewards, special privileges, or smiles. The parent's positive responses are contingent upon "appropriate child behavior" or upon child behavior that meets specific parental standards (stated or implied rules, regulations, and expectations). For positive responses by the parent to a child's behavior during the video task, also code as Warmth/Support.

- 1 = Not at all Characteristic:  
Contingent parental responses to desired child behavior are never affirming or positively reinforcing.
- 2 =
- 3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:  
Contingent parental responses to desired child behavior are rarely affirming and positively reinforcing. The parent's responses to the child's behavior may be mildly positive, e.g. infrequently offering praise and positive reinforcement.
- 4 =
- 5 = Somewhat Characteristic:  
Contingent parental responses to desired child behavior are occasionally affirming and positive. There is some evidence of positive reinforcement, e.g. praising and positively reinforcing comments.
- 6 =
- 7 = Moderately Characteristic:  
Contingent parental responses to desired child behavior are fairly often affirming and positive. More intense affirmation is evident and displayed to a fairly high degree.
- 8 =
- 9 = Mainly Characteristic:  
Contingent parental responses to desired child behavior are frequently affirming and positive. Such responses are very affirming and positive.

## **CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE**

This scale assesses the consistency and the persistence with which the parent maintains and adheres to rules and standards of conduct for the child's behavior (whether or not there is evidence of violation of standards by the child) and disciplines the child when the child violates rules and standards of conduct. This applies to both implicit and explicit rules and standards of conduct. Indicators of consistent discipline are the extent to which children appear to have clear expectations for what will happen if they violate the rules and evidence that the parent follows through with an expected consequence or punishment when misbehavior occurs.

- 1 = Not at all Characteristic:  
There are no signs of consistency on the part of the parent. If a parent has no rules, or if there is no evidence of disciplinary behavior, also score '1.'
- 2 =
- 3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:  
The parent is rarely consistent in maintaining and adhering to rules and standards of conduct set of the child.
- 4 =
- 5 = Somewhat Characteristic:  
The parent is occasionally consistent with regard to rules and standards of conduct set of the child.
- 6 =
- 7 = Moderately Characteristic:  
The parent is fairly often consistent in maintaining and adhering to rules and standards of conduct set of the child, but there is some lack of consistency.
- 8 =
- 9 = Mainly Characteristic:  
The parent is frequently consistent in maintaining and adhering to rules and standards of conduct set of the child.

## CHILD MONITORING

This scale assesses the parent's knowledge and information, as well as the extent to which the parent pursues information, concerning the child's life and daily activities. It measures the degree to which a parent knows what the child is doing, where the child is, and with whom. It assesses the parent's awareness of the child's daily life and routines, who the child's friends are, and what his/her interests and activities might be.

1 = Not at all Characteristic:

The parent displays no knowledge about the child's whereabouts, daily routines, friends, or schoolwork. The parent may not elicit any information from the child and may have a few or no follow-up questions to gather information.

2 =

3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:

The parent displays a vague awareness of the child's behavior and some desire to gain more information from the child, but there is an absence of any real discussion or in-depth questioning about activities, relationships, feelings, or events of the day; the parent displays a superficial attempt at obtaining information from the child.

4 =

5 = Somewhat Characteristic:

The parent displays a general knowledge of the child's behavior at home, knows that the child is in school and in a specific grade, etc., and may know the names of teachers or friends. There may be some attempts to obtain further information from the child. However, the parent does not seem to actively display or pursue knowledge about the child's life. The parent is likely to be familiar with only those events that he/she has come in contact with directly.

6 =

7 = Moderately Characteristic:

The parent fairly often displays a broad range of knowledge and more specific information regarding the child's behavior and activities and/or actively pursues with interest information concerning the child. This parent asks specific questions of the child and can knowingly follow up on comments made by the child.

8 =

9 = Mainly Characteristic:

This parent frequently displays an intimate knowledge of the child's behavior, may ask very specific questions of the child, and/or pursues detailed information concerning the child's life.

## **HARSH DISCIPLINE**

This scale assesses the parent's use of punishment in response to the child's "misbehavior" or violation of specific parental standards (stated or implied rules, regulations, and expectations). Punishment includes the use of punitive or severe disciplinary techniques (i.e. belittling, shaming, yelling, threatening, hitting, or other cruel and unusually excessive or extreme parental behavior).

- 1 = Not at all Characteristic:  
Parental discipline is never harsh or excessively punitive.
- 2 =
- 3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:  
Parental discipline is rarely harsh or excessively punitive. The parent's responses to the child may be mildly punitive, e.g. infrequently yelling.
- 4 =
- 5 = Somewhat Characteristic:  
Parental discipline is occasionally harsh and punitive. There is a moderate level of harshness, e.g. frequently yelling at the child.
- 6 =
- 7 = Moderately Characteristic:  
Parental discipline is fairly often, but not always, harsh and punitive. More intense harshness is evident and displayed to a fairly high degree (e.g. always yelling). There may be evidence that physical discipline, shaming, belittling, etc. occur fairly often or with more intensity.
- 8 =
- 9 = Mainly Characteristic:  
Parental discipline is frequently extremely harsh and punitive. Nearly all disciplinary attempts are punitive and harsh, or some discipline is extremely severe, e.g. physically abusive. To score a '9' there must be some evidence of physical discipline such as slapping, hitting, punching, or evidence that the parent frequently belittles, shames or embarrasses the child when disciplining him/her.



## **INDUCTIVE REASONING**

This scale assesses the extent to which the parent tries to guide the behavior of the child through an exchange of information with the child. The parent encourages the child to understand the possible consequences of the child's behavior, seeks voluntary compliance, avoids a direct conflict of wills (power assertion), and uses reasoning to encourage the child to consider the feelings of others with whom he/she interacts. Explanations and discussions are presented in a neutral or positive manner. There is evidence of good communication skills and an allowance for verbal give and take. The parent encourages the child's thought and consideration regarding the reason for rules, etc., and promotes the child's thought regarding the child's behavior.

- 1 = Not at all Characteristic:  
The parent never uses reasoning or displays induction in dealing with the child. Power assertion is used to control the child or else the parent is neglecting/distancing.
- 2 =
- 3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:  
The parent rarely uses induction. However, his/her interaction is primarily lacking in induction. The parent tends to ignore the child's behavior or to use other means (i.e. coercion, power assertion) to control the child's behavior.
- 4 =
- 5 = Somewhat Characteristic:  
The parent occasionally uses induction when interacting with the child.
- 6 =
- 7 = Moderately Characteristic:  
The parent fairly often uses induction. However, there is some evidence of lack of induction to control the child's behavior.
- 8 =
- 9 = Mainly Characteristic:  
The parent frequently (characteristically) uses inductive reasoning with the child.

## **ENCOURAGES INDEPENDENCE**

This scale assesses the extent to which the parent encourages the child's independence in thought and actions. The parent reinforces the child's initiative, demonstrations of competence, and capabilities by encouraging the child to make decisions or do things on his/her own. The parent demonstrates confidence in the child's ability to solve problems, accomplish goals, and make decisions that are appropriate to the child's age. The parent provides information and guidance, but also demonstrates trust in the child's capabilities.

- 1 = Not at all Characteristic:  
The parent shows no evidence of encouraging the child's independence.
- 2 =
- 3 = Mainly Uncharacteristic:  
The parent infrequently encourages the child's independence.
- 4 =
- 5 = Somewhat Characteristic:  
The parent occasionally encourages the child's independence.
- 6 =
- 7 = Moderately Characteristic:  
The parent fairly often encourages the child's independence, but not at the highest level.
- 8 =
- 9 = Mainly Characteristic:  
The parent frequently (characteristically) encourages the child's independence.