Neighborhood Effects as Predictors of Hispanic Young Adult Outcomes

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Neighborhood Effects as Predictors of Hispanic Young Adult Outcomes

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Human Environmental Sciences

By

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University of Arkansas- Fort Smith
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, 2010

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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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Abstract

The present thesis explores the implications of neighborhood effects, parent-child relationship, and school attachment upon young adulthood attainment among Hispanic adolescents. By 2060, the U.S. population will consist of nearly 12.8 million Hispanic persons and will constitute nearly a third of the U.S population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Examining the social contexts in which Hispanic adolescents develop, such as neighborhoods and schools, allows researchers a greater depth of understanding the processes and potential risks that influence young adulthood attainment, such as education and career attainment (Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002). Utilizing The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health), the current thesis examined neighborhood effects, such as neighborhood disorganization, violence exposure, and school attachment in relation to specific outcomes in young-adulthood, such as education, career attainment and intimate partner violence (IPV). Results of the current thesis illuminate the mechanisms of neighborhood quality and academic belonging as influencing young adulthood attainment among a representative sample of Hispanic adolescents. These findings inform current research and future policy to more effectively support development of Hispanic adolescents.

Keywords: neighborhood disorganization, acculturation, parent-child connectedness, intimate partner violence (IPV)
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Dedication

I dedicate this work first and foremost to my grandfather, Richard Earl Smith, who led by example exhibiting diligence in his work, faithfulness to his Creator, and commitment to his family. He understood the joy and value of building community with family, friends, and newcomers.

I also dedicate this work to my family and friends who have supported and challenged me to pursue great things. In my study of communities, I have been fortunate to have the support of an encouraging community.
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CHAPTER I

General Introduction

The purpose of this thesis was to understand how specific neighborhood effects influence Hispanic adolescents with regards to social capital and developmental transitions and how these impact later outcomes in young adulthood. Data come from The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health), a nationally representative and longitudinal dataset that provides a wealth of health related information for adolescent and young adult participants who have either immigrated or are descendants of Spanish-speaking immigrants (hereafter referred to as Hispanic based upon Spanish origin; see Marrow, 2003). The U.S. Census Bureau (2012) estimates that by 2060 the Hispanic population within the U.S. will reach 128.8 million and make up roughly a third of the U.S. population. As this growing population integrates into a new culture, a variety of factors contribute to Hispanic adolescents’ experience of transitioning into a different cultural surrounding. Such factors include exposure to social environments, which are crucial to human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Neighborhoods and schools are two settings of particular interest in which sociocultural influences directly impact integrating Hispanic youth into the U.S. which may affect later outcomes in young adulthood, such as education attainment, occupation, and romantic relationships. Examining specific neighborhood effects, such as neighborhood violence, neighborhood cohesion, and perceptions of safety, enables researchers to better understand how specific neighborhood components impact Hispanic youth (Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002). Attachment to school (i.e., sense of belonging and quality of relationships to teachers and other students) is a protective factor in the lives of adolescents. However, school
attachment may be negatively impacted by exposure to neighborhood violence. Therefore, it was important to examine these environments as influenced by the presence of violence.

Ultimately, these components may have repercussions on the youth who develop within these social environments and rely upon neighborhoods as resources for social support. Moreover, negative components may have a spillover effect in other social environments within which youth are engaged (i.e., reduced school attachment and an increase in deviant behaviors). Neighborhoods are crucial social environments wherein Hispanic youth negotiate their cultural identity and prepare for engagement in new social contexts. The current thesis examined both direct and indirect effects of certain neighborhood elements as influences on Hispanic young adult outcomes, specifically education and career achievement, and intimate partner violence (IPV). This will be based upon the tenants of social disorganization theory and the life course perspective. The neighborhood is highlighted as one context which both directly and indirectly influences developing individuals. For example, neighborhoods have direct influences upon developing adolescents, through factors such as the availability of peer groups and interactions with other adults. Alternatively, neighborhoods have indirect influences upon adolescents, for example neighborhood characteristics influencing parenting styles and attitudes that then effect parent-child relationships (Bowen, Bowen, & Ware, 2002). Neighborhoods also become increasingly influential as adolescents grow older and peer relationship influence increases because of transitions into other social contexts outside of the household (Woolley et al., 2008).

Social disorganization theory suggests that specific characteristics of neighborhoods, such as poverty, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential instability play an active role in increasing the risk of hazardous features such as violence and crime. In disadvantaged neighborhoods, formal social institutions (i.e., formally organized activities which serve to maintain social order
within the neighborhood) that would ordinarily bolster the community and promote healthy, prosocial neighborhood activity are either deficient or altogether absent. Informal structures refer to interactions among neighbors such as the propensity for neighborhood adults to monitor the behavior of adolescents in order to preserve social control. Social disorganization theory illustrates how specific neighborhood characteristics have the ability to inhibit or stimulate healthy development (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). From this perspective, both formal and informal institutions of social control are impacted as a result of neighborhood characteristics.

Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley (2002; see also Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000) extend this theory by expanding upon neighborhood residents’ ability to exert a means of informal control over negative neighborhood features through collective efficacy. Collective efficacy may be summarized as the ability of neighborhood residents to influence neighborhood characteristics despite the lack of formal institutions (i.e., clubs or organized activities). While formal institutions may not be present in disorganized neighborhoods to implement social control due to limited socioeconomic resources, neighborhood cohesion and informal social control are means by which residents may exert collective efficacy. Neighborhood cohesion refers to neighborhood residents’ engagement within their neighborhood in ways that enforce informal social control (Browning, 2002). Examples of implementing informal social control through collective efficacy may be exerted through neighborhood parents watching over neighborhood children and belongings (Stewart, Stewart, & Simons, 2007). For example, a mother intervening in the deviant behavior of other children in her neighborhood is a form of informal social control. Social disorganization theory informs the current study by illuminating negative aspects of the neighborhood which propagate crime and violence and inhibit prosocial behavior. The extensions of this theory which have brought to light the role of collective efficacy produce an
added mechanism to examine the function of neighborhood cohesion to combat the negative effects of neighborhood disorganization.

Additionally, the life course perspective offers a supplementary framework for conceptualizing social role transitions precipitated by exposure to neighborhood crime. The life course perspective stresses three principles of development which influence roles and environments into which individuals transition (Bengston, 1992). *Chronological age* refers to the ontological development of an individual as they physically age. This includes aspects of physical development, such as cognitive landmarks and puberty timing. *Social age* refers to those social contexts, influences, and the transitions between contexts that an individual experiences as a function of aging. For example, upon reaching adolescence, youth transition from primarily being within the household to an increasingly higher concentration of time spent with neighborhood and school peers. Finally, *historical time* refers to the sociohistorical era. Historical time covers aspects of the sociohistorical era in which individuals live. Pertaining to the current report, examples include changing demographics within the U.S. and on-going changes in immigration policy. This perspective frames the development of individuals within their cohort, transitioning between social contexts based upon physical age and social development throughout the life course. Further, this perspective acknowledges the significance of sociohistorical context within which individuals exist. Similarities exist between Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model, and even later extensions including *bioecological* elements, and the life course perspective. Nevertheless, the current analysis aimed to identify how young adult outcomes, such as education, career, or IPV was influenced not only by the contexts, but furthermore how age and social transitions influenced the engagements into particular contexts.
Moreover, the life course perspective aids in conceptualizing how the process of cultural integration and acculturation may interact with these transitions.

Together these perspectives provide a foundation for understanding the specific contexts that affect developing humans and influence later outcomes. As adolescents navigate through new contexts, their social world expands. The complex nature and quality of these contexts influence the individual and those around them. In complement, the life course perspective and social disorganization theory present a useful framework for understanding how neighborhood effects impact developing youth, other social environments, and ultimately influence outcomes in young adulthood.

The purpose of this thesis, which included two studies, was to understand how specific neighborhood effects influence Hispanic adolescents and how these were related to later outcomes in young adulthood. Both studies drew from the Add Health data, a nationally representative longitudinal study which began in 1994 assessing a diverse range of variables among 7th to 12th graders, and is currently in its fifth wave of data collection with participants ranging in age from 31 to 42. Both studies examined Hispanic-descent adolescents. While issues pertaining to Hispanic populations are being increasingly examined, the current analyses filled gaps in the literature with regards to acculturative processes and longitudinal effects of neighborhood disorganization (i.e., safety, cohesion, and violence).

In study one, Hispanic adolescents’ and their parents’ perceptions of neighborhood disorganization were used to conceptualize how varying levels of negative and protective factors within the neighborhood assessed during Wave I may influence later young adult outcomes as assessed in Wave III. Neighborhood safety variables provided resident perceived-status of the neighborhood as being either safe or dangerous. Additionally, with a measure of perceived
neighborhood cohesion, a more precise conceptualization captured the role of collective efficacy as a protective factor inhibited by the lack of neighborhood safety. The young adult outcomes that analyzed were post-secondary education attainment and career achievement (i.e., college or consistent employment status, respectively). These outcomes were indicators of young adulthood attainment from the framework of the life course perspective theory, and may also indicated the integrating oneself into the majority culture (Benson, Johnson, & Elder, 2012). Further, neighborhood elements, such as the availability of social capital, may be influenced by the neighborhood effects under consideration. In other words, a neighborhood wherein residents do not feel safe and do not possess a sense of strong social connection among other residents may experience a decline in prosocial messages on several fronts. Social cohesion within neighborhoods reinforces solidarity and, therein, enables the transference of positive messages, such as increased college aspirations, to developing adolescents from parents, residents, and other neighborhood peers (Stewart, Stewart, & Simons, 2007). Contrarily, adolescents who grow up in neighborhoods with diminished cohesion or safety may not believe they can attain higher levels of education, or experience the benefits of social capital, such as attaining job placement through connection within a healthy social network.

In study two, the effects of violence exposure within the neighborhood were examined. Utilizing the first three waves of the Add Health data, the impact of exposure to violence was assessed as it pertained to later IPV perpetration through the mediating effect of reduced school attachment due to violence exposure within the neighborhood. At Wave I, exposure to violence taking place within residents’ neighborhood was identified. School attachment was assessed in Wave II to determine whether those participants who were exposed to neighborhood violence experienced a reduction in school attachment. Lastly, IPV perpetration in Wave III was utilized
to identify the mediating effects of decreased school attachment and as related to exposure to
violence in adolescence. Both studies examined gender differences and Hispanic-group
differences in order to further understand how gender and intragroup differences was associated
with young adult outcomes.
CHAPTER II

Study 1: Neighborhood Effects on Hispanic Young Adult Outcomes

Introduction

Study one examined neighborhood effects during adolescence as associated with Hispanic young adult outcomes, such as post-secondary education and career attainment. Adolescents’ reports of neighborhood cohesion and their parent’s perception of neighborhood safety were used to gain an insight into neighborhood disorganization and elements of collective efficacy to combat negative neighborhood elements.

In keeping with neighborhood disorganization theory, it was postulated that adolescents living in highly disorganized neighborhoods and low social cohesion would have greater difficulty attaining typical young adult life events, such as successful job placement or pursuing higher education. It was believed that being exposed to a negative neighborhood environment would hinder young adult attainment.

As the life course perspective suggests, individual, social, and sociohistoric factors function together to guide individuals from one social context to another. With regard to young adulthood attainment, the present study posited that the environment of the neighborhood played a vital role in the life of developing adolescents. From a theoretical perspective, a neighborhood should be a context within which adolescents can form healthy peer relationships and gain from interactions with adult residents. However, if the neighborhood is disorganized (i.e., it is not a safe environment with quality social connections), then adolescents would experience a deficit of support in a context that is crucial for access to social capital. This would inhibit adolescents’ ability to reach certain goals necessary to reach markers of young adult attainment (i.e., career and education).
Acculturation

Acculturation is the process in which the individual confronts, adapts to, and modifies their identity and affiliation with social and cultural values varying from their cultural heritage (Lee & Hahm, 2009; Schwartz et al., 2014). This process involves a transition during which individuals come to identify themselves within their new cultural setting while simultaneously bringing values of their culture of origin. This can be a stressful experience and potentially reduces access to sources of support (Rivera, 2007) and is a particularly arduous experience for adolescents to navigate, as adolescence is already a time of struggle for identity and belonging.

Migrant experiences present a unique purview for examining the social world of developing adolescents. Latin-American social and cultural values generally differ from those of the United States (US), particularly with regards to familial emphasis, or familismo (Ayón, Marsiglia, & Bernudez-Parsai, 2010). Latin-American culture places an emphasis on collectivism, whereas US culture generally promotes individual independence (Schwartz et al., 2014). In collectivist cultures, the self is perceived as being integrated with the identities of other individuals; however, in the US the self is typically thought of as an autonomous, separate entity (Gilovich, Keltner, & Nisbett, 2011, p. 74). An example of collectivistic culture’s familial emphases is multigenerational cohabitation in which three or four generations will reside within a single household. Multigenerational cohabitation is a means of bolstering support among family members and is a common feature in Latin-American households (Djajic, 2003; Ishizawa, 2004). Cultural factors due to generation location (i.e., 1st generation, 2nd generation immigrant; 1.5 generation being minors who immigrate with their parents, see Farley and Alba, 2002) may also play a vital role in post-secondary enrollment and persistence. For example, previous research indicates that those adolescents who are more acculturated exhibited greater tendencies
both with respect to pursuing and persisting in post-secondary education (Castillo, López-Arenas, & Saldivar, 2010; see also Flores, Ojeda, Huang, Gee, & Lee, 2006).

It is important to understand how the acculturation process may be related to the development of Hispanic adolescents’ emergence into the cultural landscape and norms of the US. As adolescence is a time during which individuals are exposed exceedingly more to others outside of the household, there may be strain upon their relationship with their family. Acculturative transitions, such as adolescents’ use of English over Spanish, may enhance the stresses of their changing social world, but may also aid in their mobility within the majority culture (i.e., the US). It is important to recognize the process of Hispanic adolescents’ sociocultural transitions at the nexus of adolescent identity formation and cultural identity negotiation. The current study examined acculturative measures in the form of language usage; however, there is a need for continued examination of identity formation beyond the capacity of the current study.

**Parent-Family Connectedness**

Family relationships are identified as the primary source of social support which fosters resilience for adolescents (Ali et al., 2010). Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that as an individual matures and expands their social world, the family remains the “most stable and enduring base throughout this process” (p. 232). The family unit is a source of social support which provides a multitude of protective factors for individuals, such as increasing self-concept (Mueller & Haines, 2012). The family unit acts as a foundation for which the individual prepares themselves for engagement with the world. Moreover, the protective factor of the family has been evidenced to decrease a multitude of health-risk behaviors, such as initiation of violent behavior,
depression, and substance abuse (Brookmeyer, Fanti, & Henrich, 2006; Henrich, Brookmeyer, Shahar, 2005; Mueller & Haines, 2012; Resnick, Harris, & Shew, 1997).

Once again familismo may serve as a vital protective function in the lives of developing and acculturating Hispanic youth in the US. However, as is evidenced in previous literature (Gonzales et al., 2008), the role of immigrant generational-status causes shifts in motivation towards certain goals, such as adolescents of later generations experiencing a reduction in likelihood to obtain a post-secondary degree. While family remains an important social support system, the manifestation of familismo’s influence in the lives of Hispanic youth alters as a result of the acculturation process. For example, if the cultural messages and norms embedded in familismo become less important to acculturating Hispanic youth, their behavior may reflect these cultural identity changes by reducing their motivation to seek higher education. This may be particularly true when considering specific Hispanic groups. For example, Mexican-origin Americans and Cuban Americans more closely resemble two-parent, single-earner households, while Hispanics of other ethnic groups (e.g., Dominicans) belong to a matrifocal culture (i.e., female-headed households; Cherlin, 2010). Hispanics of Dominican descent are also more likely than other Hispanic groups to live in households headed by females, similar to African American households. This may also increase the likelihood that adolescent Hispanics of Dominican descent will reside in lower socioeconomic status environments (and therefore more likely to be disorganized neighborhoods) due to living in female-headed households. In addition to examining overall intragroup differences among Hispanic ethnic groups, the present study also examined possible interactions among Hispanic ethnic groups to better understand how differences in cultural messages were associated with variations in young adulthood outcomes.
It is important to identify how the parent-child connectedness might be associated with the acculturation process. It may be the case that as adolescents become more integrated into the dominant culture, the connection with their family wanes. This is speculated to be particularly true among families in which there exists greater cultural incongruence. That is, if an acculturating Hispanic adolescent is identifying more with the dominant culture while their parents identify more with the traditional values of their culture of origin, this may stress the parent-child relationship (Perez-Brena, Updegraff, & Umana-Taylor, 2014).

**Neighborhoods**

Human development literature contains a rich history of research identifying and examining the contexts in which development takes place. Neighborhoods have been at the center of such contexts. Past research suggests that the neighborhood environment plays an increasingly important role in the lives of children as they grow older (Woolley et al., 2008). As the social world of a developing individual expands, they begin to rely on individuals outside of their household. This transition emphasizes the importance of social capital available within the neighborhood. Features of such neighborhood social capital include sharing responsibilities with others and receiving advice from individuals outside of one’s family (Wooley et al., 2008).

Although the literature is rather dense, meta-analyses indicate that the complexities involved in identifying specific factors of neighborhoods and their implications upon development require further attention. Examining neighborhood effects involves sifting through a variety of neighborhood characteristics and identifying how these characteristics function together to impact development and outcomes later in life. Characteristics of the neighborhood have major implications upon a variety of issues such as overall social capital, parent-child relationships, academic achievement, sexual behaviors, mental health, and more (Bowen,
Bowen, & Ware, 2002; Campos, 2006; Cubin, Santelli, Brindis, & Braveman, 2005; Vega, Ang, Rodriguez, & Finch, 2011; Woolley et al., 2008). Alternatively, family relationships certainly play a protective role. Thus, it was important to control for this dimension of the adolescent experience.

**Neighborhood Disorganization.** With the increasing number of Hispanic immigrants living in the United States, researchers have begun examining the impact of ethnic concentration and cultural influences upon neighborhood effects. Past research demonstrates that non-Caucasian and low-income families are at greater risk for living in socially disorganized neighborhoods (Bowen, Bowen, & Ware, 2002). Neighborhood disorganization refers to dissolution of prosocial elements within the neighborhood, such as clubs or other organized activities that promote interaction and social support, and the increased risk of deviant behavior (i.e., substance problems and violence; Bowen, Bowen, & Ware, 2002). The authors’ research reveals that perceptions of parenting practices are influenced by the level of neighborhood disorganization. This is further evidence that socially disorganized neighborhoods negatively influence parenting styles by hindering parents’ ability to tend to the needs of their children. Middle school and high school age children reported perceiving their parents as less supportive and in turn this negatively affects children’s perception of education support received from their parents. Lack of parental education support is abundant considering that secondary-school success and overall social capital have the greatest impact upon plans to attend post-secondary education (Engberg & Wolniak, 2010).

Studies that highlight the importance of cultural values suggests that ethnic background and the interchange between dominant and minority cultures may have both positive and negative implications. Behavioral expectations imbedded in Hispanic culture may be protective
against risky behaviors for adolescents. For example, Hispanic female adolescents living in neighborhoods with a high concentration of Hispanic families report lower levels of initiating sex during adolescence (Cubbin, Santelli, Brindis, & Braveman, 2005). This outcome is considered to be a result of positive cultural influences such as sharing cultural norms and having access to intergenerational networks of support.

Additional studies illuminate the protective nature of Hispanic cultural influences against mental health issues. Living in high poverty census tracts, which is a common experience among many Hispanic individuals, increases depression levels. Vega et al. (2011) provides evidence that living in a household with high linguistic isolation (i.e., being surrounded by predominately non-English speakers, therein isolating the household linguistically from the majority culture’s language) may reduce depression. *Linguistic isolation* refers to those settings wherein the native language of immigrants is the predominate language spoken. Vega and colleagues (2011) found that depression levels were lower among Hispanics living in high linguistic isolation households in comparison to those living in low linguistic isolation households. This is evidence of cultural homogeneity within one’s home buffering against environmental disadvantages outside one’s household.

Alternatively, living in a high linguistic isolation household was also associated with feeling less close to one’s neighbors. The authors posit that as individuals learn English, the social utility of being in a household that predominately speaks a minority language may be reduced. For example, the positive influence of cultural homogeneity inside the home may begin to shift downwards as an acculturating adolescent acquires a mastery of the English language. This may suggest that their household environment is then inhibiting their developing mobility within the majority culture. These findings further explicate the complex experience of the acculturation
process. Rather than conceptualizing the acculturation process as an on/off switch experience, this is a graduated experience of easing into the majority culture. The acculturation process is impacted by social environments and, likewise, experiencing a shift in cultural identity involves a give and take relationship between one’s social environments and the support they may offer or inhibit. The current study aided in the understanding of the acculturation process as experienced within an adolescents’ home and expanding social life outside the home, such as their neighborhood.

**Neighborhood Safety.** Previous research assessing the negative outcomes of neighborhood violence provide grim outcomes of living in dangerous neighborhoods. The detriments of dangerous neighborhoods not only affect individual factors but also affect interpersonal relationships, such as family and peer relationship quality (Harding, 2008; White & Roosa, 2012). White and Roosa (2012) described the effects of increased levels of perceived neighborhood danger among Mexican-origin fathers. The results of this study indicated that as the perception of neighborhood danger increased, family cohesion decreased. These circumstances served to increase family stress, which resulted in adolescent internalizing symptoms. Other studies support these findings and identified additional repercussions of other components of neighborhood disorganization, such as safety, cohesion, and socioeconomic status (SES). Neighborhood disorganization is related to increased negative school behaviors, such as poor grades and attrition (Bowen et al., 2002). The same research discovered neighborhood disorganization decreased youths’ perceptions of their parents as being supportive of their education. Neighborhood disorganization, specifically threats to neighborhood safety, has the potential to cause significant breaches in the parent-child relationship.
**Neighborhood Cohesion.** Neighborhoods and schools inhere a complex relationship. Neighborhood characteristics strongly predict students’ education outcomes on multiple levels. Utilizing Add Health data (Owens, 2010), SES has been found to be one of the strongest neighborhood characteristics for predicting both high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment. Specifically, students who live in high SES neighborhoods may have more people in this environment who have experience with postsecondary education. This concept exemplifies the importance of social capital and having access to other people in the immediate environment who are able to transfer useful information to developing individuals. Owens (2010) accentuates the role of the neighborhood as a context which continues to play an influential social role even after previous school peer groups dissolved once an adolescent graduates from secondary school.

In accordance with social disorganization theory, additional studies have shown that living in disadvantaged neighborhoods affects internalizing behaviors. Residents in disadvantaged neighborhoods are less likely to view themselves as being capable of achieving a postsecondary education (Stewart, Stewart, & Simons, 2007). However, in a study examining neighborhood cohesion among African American Adolescents, the authors found that neighborhood cohesion increased the likelihood that adolescents would express confident postsecondary aspirations, such as believing that they would attend college. The results of this study illuminated the role of neighborhood cohesion as a protective mechanism despite other elements of neighborhood disorganization, such as a lack of safety. The current study expanded upon these findings by investigating postsecondary attainment, rather than aspirations. Additionally, the current study’s sample included Hispanic adolescents, rather than African-American adolescents, thus broadening the current understanding of adolescent experiences.
In a study examining neighborhood influences on parental involvement in adolescents’ education, researchers identified Hispanic American parents to be overall less involved than their white peers (Crosnoe, 2001). Neighborhood characteristics, such as maternal employment and education level, proved to be more instrumental than school characteristics for predicting parental education involvement. Hispanic individuals are more likely to live in disorganized neighborhoods and therefore Hispanic adolescents are more likely to experience a deficit in parental education involvement. Moreover, the overall education level of neighborhood residents influences the tendency that neighborhood parents will attend school functions. This suggests a collaborative element of the neighborhood functioning as a collective unit to influence the lives of child residents. This is perhaps similar to when neighborhood children interact with neighborhood adults and use them as resources by relying on adults’ experiences (i.e., social capital), such as academic or career attainment, to learn more about possible goals to work towards. These results may accentuate the utility of neighborhood social cohesion to protect developing adolescents from certain social disadvantages. Again, these results support the concept that an adolescent’s relationship with other individuals in their neighborhood may be crucial for bolstering success. This indicates that neighborhood cohesion is important for protecting neighborhood children against neighborhood disadvantages and may also be important for promoting healthy behaviors which carry on into young adulthood.

The Current Study 1

By itself, neighborhood cohesion lacked a comprehensive scope for assessing major neighborhood effects, as neighborhood cohesion could be a result of increased violence in the case that adolescents are seeking protection from violence. Similarly, neighborhood safety improved as a measure of neighborhood influence when paired with a measure of cohesion in
order to assess dimensions of neighborhood safety and cohesion. The current study aimed to identify how neighborhood cohesion and safety functioned simultaneously as a substantial assessment of neighborhood characteristics with regards to predicting outcomes in young adulthood. Furthermore, the current study addressed gaps in the literature regarding how cohesion and safety had implications upon education and career development among Hispanic young adults. Study 1 hypotheses were:

H1a: Acculturation will be positively associated with young adult outcomes (i.e., college enrollment and occupation status).

H1b: Above and beyond acculturation, parent-child relationship will be positively associated with young adult outcomes.

H1c: Above and beyond acculturation and parent-child contexts, higher neighborhood safety and cohesion will be positively associated with young adult outcomes.

H2: Exploratory analyses will examine potential group differences in neighborhood experiences among Hispanic ethnic groups.
Study One Method

Participants

Data were from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health; Harris, 2009; see Harris, Halpern, Whitsel, Hussey, Tabor, Entzel, & Udry, 2009, for design information), which is a school-based, nationally representative and longitudinal study that began in 1994 and assessed health-related behaviors of adolescents and later outcomes. The Study 1 analyses uses Wave I (1994 - 1995) that included Hispanic adolescent reports of parent-family connectedness, neighborhood cohesion, and their parents’ (mostly mothers) perceptions of neighborhood safety, as well as Wave III (2001 - 2002) data that included education and career attainment outcomes during young adulthood.

Participants included Hispanic adolescents (and their parents), \( N = 1814 \) (51% girls), with a mean age of 15.5 at Wave I and 21.95 (\( SD = 1.65 \); Range 18-27) at Wave III. At Wave I, adolescents identified as Mexican American (51%), Chicano (5%), Cuban (14%), Puerto Rican (17%), Central/South American (11%), and other Hispanic-origin (9%).

Measures

Acculturation. Measures of acculturation in the Wave I In-Home Interview included adolescent reports of the language spoken at home (Lee & Hahm, 2010). Language was employed as a measurement of acculturation because it indicates ethnic identity (Kang, 2006). Regarding language, Hispanic adolescents were asked, “What language is usually spoken in your home?” and reported either 0 = Other, 1 = Spanish, 2 = English. For this sample, 54.6% spoke Spanish, 44% spoke English, 1.4% reported speaking a language other than Spanish or English.

Parent-Family Connectedness. The In-Home Interview included a six-item parent-family connectedness scale assessed in Wave I (Mueller, 2009). Hispanic adolescents were asked
to report their perceptions of parent-family connectedness prompted by statements which included: “How close do you feel to your mother/father”, “How much do you feel that your parents care about you”, and “How much do you feel that your family pays attention to you” Each item was scored on a 5-point Likert ranging from 0 = not at all to 5 = very much. These items were averaged into a single, internally consistent measure with a mean of 17.49 (SD = 4.41). Cronbach’s alpha was equal to .80.

*Neighborhood Safety.* The In-Home Interview included a seven-item neighborhood safety scale assessed in Wave I (Benson & Faas, 2014). Hispanic adolescents’ parents were asked to report their perceptions of neighborhood safety prompted by several statements with varying Likert scale responses. These statements included questions such as: “You live here because there is less crime in this neighborhood than there is in other neighborhoods” and “You live here because there is less substance use and other illegal activity by adolescents in this neighborhood”. These items required no = 1, or yes = 2 responses. Additional questions such as: “In this neighborhood, how big a problem are drug dealers and substance abuse?” consisted of scaled responses ranging from no problem at all or not at all = 3 to a big problem or very much = 1. Each item was scored on a Likert scale. Items were reverse-scored and standardized into a single, internally consistent measure with a mean of -.16 (SD = 4.42). The standardized Cronbach’s alpha was equal to .74.

*Neighborhood Cohesion.* Measures of neighborhood cohesion were assessed by combining six items composed of Hispanic adolescent perceptions and attitudes about the neighborhood and neighborhood interactions. These items were collected during the Wave I In-Home Interview. Similar to neighborhood safety measures, item responses were Likert scales that varied in scaling size. Questions, such as: “You know most of the people in your
neighborhood” and “People in this neighborhood look out for each other” were answered in the form of true = 2 or false = 1 ratings. These items were based upon previously combined-item measurements of neighborhood cohesion (Deutsch, Crockett, Wolff, & Russell, 2012); however, the current study found that Cronbach’s alpha increased by adding two additional items, such as: “On the whole, how happy are you with living in your neighborhood?” and “If, for any reason, you had to move from here to some other neighborhood, how happy or unhappy would you be?” Responses for these two additional measurements ranged from very much or very unhappy = 5 to not at all or very happy = 1. All items were standardized with an internal consistent measure with a mean of -.51 (SD = 3.79). The standardized Cronbach’s alpha was equal to .66.

**Education Outcome.** In Wave III, Hispanic young adults reported the highest grade or year of regular school they had completed. Responses were coded on a 0 to 3 scale: No high school diploma = 0, Having a high school diploma = 1, Completing between one and five years of college = 2, and Completing one to five or more years of graduate school = 3.

**Career Outcome.** In Wave III, Hispanic young adults reported their current status of occupation. Participants were asked “Are you currently working for pay for at least 10 hours a week?” Responses were coded as either 0 = no or 1 = yes.

**Control Variables.** Additional control variables were utilized, which included parents’ level of education (M = .87, SD = .94, range: 0 indicating no high school attendance to 3 indicating graduate school and beyond), participant gender, age, and participant GPA averaged over Wave I and II (M = 2.59, SD = .72, range: 1 indicating a D average or lower to 4 indicating an A average).
Analytic Procedure

Two regression analyses were conducted to evaluate how acculturation, parent-family connectedness, and neighborhood effects (safety and cohesion) were associated with education (hierarchical linear regression) and career outcomes (hierarchical linear regression) among a sample of Hispanic adolescents. Model one included only control variables (parental education, participant gender, age, and GPA). The second model included acculturation (i.e., language); the third model included parent-family connectedness; and the final model included neighborhood safety and neighborhood cohesion. Lastly, Hispanic ethnic group differences were be explored to examine potential group interactions.
Study One Results

Two hierarchical regression analyses were used to investigate factors influencing education and career outcomes among Hispanic young adults, as shown in Tables 2 and 3. Model one of the regression analysis predicting employment outcomes included control variables (participant age at Wave III, gender, GPA, and parental education). Participant age, gender, and GPA (but not parental education) were all found to be significant predictors of employment status, as shown in Table 2. Language was added in the second model and accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in employment status over and above the effects of participant age at Wave III, gender, GPA, and parental education, $b = -.05, SE = .02, p = .02$, which supported Hypothesis 1a. Parent-family connectedness was added in the third model and was approaching significance in accounting for a proportion of the variance in employment status over and above the effects of participant age at Wave III, gender, GPA, parental education, and language, $b = .03, SE = .02, p = .06$, therefore Hypothesis 1b was unsupported but approaching significance. Neighborhood cohesion and neighborhood safety were added in the final model, however neither variables accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in employment status over and above the other variables. Because there were no significant neighborhood effects, Hispanic group differences were not assessed. Thus, the Hypothesis 1c and 2 were not supported in terms of Hispanic young adult employment status.

The second hierarchical regression analysis examined variables predicting education status. Model one of the regression analysis included control variables (participant age at Wave III, gender, GPA, and parental education). Language was added in the second model, however it did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in education status over and above the effects of participant age at Wave III, gender, GPA, and parental education. Parent-family
connectedness was added in the third model, however it did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in education status over and above the effects of participant age at Wave III, gender, GPA, parental education, and language. Thus, Hypothesis 1a (acculturation) and 1b (parent-child connectedness) failed to support an association with Hispanic young adult education. Neighborhood cohesion and neighborhood safety were added in the final model. Neighborhood cohesion did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in education status over and above the other variables. However, neighborhood safety did account for a significant proportion of the variance in education status over and above the effects of participant age at Wave III, gender, GPA, parental education, language, and connectedness, $b = .02$, $SE = .00$, $p < .001$. Hypothesis 1c (neighborhood effects) was only partially supported for the educational outcome.

Regression analyses were run for each Hispanic ethnic group in effort to identify interactions between groups on neighborhood safety by group on the outcome of young adult educational attainment. Each Hispanic ethnic group was compared to each other Hispanic ethnic group, however, no significant differences emerged. The Hypothesis 2 that group interactions would emerge between Hispanic ethnic groups when predicting the effects of neighborhoods on employment and education status was not supported.
Study One Discussion

The results of the current study suggested that neighborhood effects influence Hispanic young adulthood attainment in distinct ways. Participant age, gender, and GPA (but not parental education) were found to be significant predictors of employment in young adulthood. These findings indicated that older Hispanic males with higher high school GPA were more likely to be employed. With regards to acculturation, the current findings suggested that language exposure within one’s household played an important role for employment outcomes. Living in a household in which Spanish was the primary language spoken was related to being employed. From the perspective of acculturation in relation to language-use, it may be the case that less acculturation is synonymous with more adherence to traditional Latino values. This may also explain the positive association between being male and being employed as values embedded in Latino culture, such as *familismo* or even aspects of *machismo*, may proliferate masculine achievement, status, or drive to be the family *breadwinner*. Further, these findings supported Vega and colleagues’ (2011) research that linguistic isolation was a protective factor in general.

The current study utilized English as an assessment of acculturative status (Lee & Hahm, 2010). Households wherein Spanish was the dominate language spoken may have indicated less acculturated parents. Language and parent-family connectedness were both found to be significant predictors of employment status in this sample. If it is the case that the use of the Spanish language was a sign of lower acculturation status, then it may have been an indicator that language was acting as a protective agent of socialization. Issues of cultural incongruence between children and parents would require more refined measurements of language and acculturation (see Vega et al., 2011). This was only found when predicting employment status. Again, suggested affiliation with Latino values as a protective feature rather than an opposing
force with regard to young adulthood attainment. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported for predicting young adulthood attainment, but only when it predicted employment patterns.

Parent-family connectedness in adolescence predicted employment outcomes although neighborhood safety and cohesion were not found to be significant. This finding reinforced previous theory and research (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Brookmeyer, Fanti, & Henrich, 2006) stressing that a sense of connection and belonging within the family unit played a potent role in adolescent development and young adult outcomes. Future analysis may consider how these variables may be involved in employment trends specific to Hispanic young adults.

For education outcomes, participant age, gender, parental education, and GPA were all significant predictors of education status. Similar to employment status, results indicated that older Hispanic males with higher GPAs and whose parents were more educated were more likely to be employed. However, the only significant predictor beyond the control variables was neighborhood safety. This is particularly interesting when considering Bowen and colleagues’ (2002) research which indicates that disorganized neighborhoods increase the likelihood of poor academic performance and attrition. In the current sample, parents’ perception of neighborhood safety predicted post-secondary education attainment for young adult Hispanics. However, the reverse of this progression (i.e., living in a dangerous neighborhood) would imply detrimental outcomes for adolescents. The absence of neighborhood safety queues an adolescent up for compounded negative effects, such as not finishing high school or attending college. In other words, the risks associated with even perceiving that one’s neighborhood is not safe can result in low academic performance and attrition in adolescence and therein an increase in the likelihood that an adolescent will be at risk for depression, anxiety, and substance use (Bond et al., 2007). Future neighborhood research should make an effort to more precisely identify which
mechanisms within the neighborhood possess the strongest impact for influencing perceptions of safety and understanding the risks associated with both subjective and objective neighborhood safety and residual consequences. Further, the current and future findings may aid educators in evaluating at-risk adolescents.

In conclusion, the current study reiterated the importance of contexts in the world of developing Hispanic adolescents. These results stressed the importance of a sense of belonging and connectedness of an adolescent to their family. Likewise, these results highlighted the influence of perceptions of safety within one’s community and how it had the potential to impact later young adult behaviors, such as education.

**Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions**

Considerable strengths of the present study included factors of external validity. The Add Health is a nationally representative longitudinal study which provided the present study with a sample of nearly 2000 Hispanic individuals and an even gender distribution. Likewise, although no significant group differences emerged, the sample consisted of a diverse, representative conglomeration of Hispanic ethnic groups in the US.

A limitation of the present study was the inability to comprehensively examine the issue of acculturation. The process of confrontation, adaptation, and modification to one’s identity and affiliation with social and cultural values disparate from one’s cultural heritage (Lee & Hahm, 2009; Schwartz et al., 2014) cannot be summed in a single measurement of language. Future examinations of acculturation status would benefit from considering multiple elements of this process, such as generational status, timing of immigration, affiliation with Latino cultural values, nativity of adolescent, and parental nativity and language.
Additionally, neighborhood safety assessments would benefit from combining more specific measurements of neighborhood mechanisms that increase or decrease perceptions of neighborhood safety. Future neighborhood measures may also consider including both subjective and objective assessments of neighborhood risk (see Harding, 2008; see also White, Roosa, & Zeiders, 2012).

Finally, with regards to assessments of outcome variables, the current study benefitted from being able to identify multiple levels of education attainment. With regards to predicting employment outcomes, some effects were quite small and should be understood as such. Small effects from large-scale surveys are a starting point for more targeted investigations. Alternatively, when predicting education outcomes, the present study produced greater effect sizes.

Future studies would benefit from identifying more aspects of occupational status. One direction which forthcoming research may consider are the types of jobs in which Hispanic young adults are employed. It will be crucial for future researchers to consider the role of immigrant experiences with regard to employment and education outcomes together, as a mere 67% of Hispanics 16 and older are employed, with nearly a quarter of the Hispanic population living below the poverty threshold and only 62% of having completed high school or its equivalent, 23% having completed or enrolled in a two-year degree or some college, and a mere 14% having completed or been enrolled in a Bachelor’s degree program (Pew Research Center, 2013).
CHAPTER III

Study 2: Neighborhood Violence, School Attachment, and Intimate Partner Violence among Hispanic Young Adults

Introduction

The goal of study two was to understand how exposure to neighborhood violence was associated with school attachment for Hispanic adolescents and how these were associated with the likelihood to perpetrate IPV in young adulthood. As the transition into adolescence takes place, youth undergo a multitude of both internal and external developments. Paramount to the adolescent social transition is the emergence from the family and household being the primary source of social influence to increased engagement with peers, such as those in one’s neighborhood. One such source of social influence includes neighborhoods. Concurrent to a shift of social influences, a number of other issues are brought to the forefront of the adolescent life. Two of these issues in particular are the task of identity development and engagement in romantic partnerships. The confluence of identity development and the changing social world is of particular interest within the framework of the life course perspective theory among individuals living in disorganized neighborhoods. Research suggests that adolescents who are exposed to neighborhood violence experience precocious role exits as a result of these exposures (Haynie, Petts, Maimon, & Pequero, 2009). The authors found that adolescents who were exposed, whether directly or indirectly, to violence experienced role exits at a much higher rate than those adolescents protected from such exposure. These role exits include dropping out of school, running away from home, child-birth, attempting suicide, and encounters with the juvenile justice system. Haynie and colleagues (2009) posit precocious role exits are a maladaptive behavior prompted by exposure to violence. At a time when positive influences and
school attachment are crucial in promoting healthy behaviors and socialization, adolescents who are exposed to violence remove themselves from these environments as a response to violence exposure. From a theoretical perspective, exposure to violence prompts premature life course transitions which negatively impact developing adolescents.

The current study examined how Hispanic youths’ exposure to neighborhood violence during childhood was associated with decreased school attachment and increased deviant behavior, such as perpetration of intimate partner violence (IPV) in young adult romantic relationships. The goal of study 2 was to better understand how school attachment mediated the association between neighborhood violence and perpetration of IPV.

**School Attachment**

During adolescence, youth encounter major social transitions, such as the increased influence of peer relationships as they engage in environments outside of the household. The school environment is an important adolescent context. Ideally, schools provide a network of prosocial influences. Engagement with prosocial influences increases prosocial activity, and the opposite is true of engagement with deviant influences (Guo, Hill, Hawkins, Catalano, & Abbott, 2002). School attachment refers to students’ sense of belonging and social connection within their school environment (Dornbusch, Erickson, Laird, & Wong, 2001). As mentioned, exposure to violence may negatively impact youth’s attachment to school resulting in withdrawal from its prosocial influence.

School attachment is a protective factor in the lives of children. One such way is that school attachment helps curtail initiation of deviant behavior. In certain situations, school attachment can even act as a stronger protective factor against negative influences than connectedness to the family. Dornbusch et al. (2001) established that youth who live in
disadvantaged neighborhoods, but who have higher levels of school attachment, are less likely to become involved in deviant behavior. However, another way in which school attachment has been found to influence behavior is that once youth became engaged in deviant behavior, the influence of school attachment plays a *diminished* role with regard to decreasing existing engagement with deviant behavior. In this study by Dornbusch et al. (2001), the role of school attachment to prevent deviant behavior is much more influential than its ability to draw youth away from deviant activity. In other words, school attachment is a *protective* factor against negative influences. However, when adolescents are already engaged in deviant behavior, school influence seem to experience *diminished* effectiveness in drawing adolescents away from deviant behavior. Furthermore, the researchers posit that lower levels of school attachment may simply indicate an increase of opportunities for youth to become involved in deviant behaviors.

However, with mixed findings in the literature on school attachment, the current study aims to test how exposure to neighborhood violence may negatively impact youth’s attachment to school resulting in future young adulthood IPV. The present study examined how the detriment of exposure to neighborhood violence weakens adolescents’ ties to positive school influences and created an avenue for IPV perpetration. In other words, exposure to violence was thought to be associated with IPV perpetration through the mediated effects of reduced school attachment.

Additional evidence suggests that school attachment reduces other negative health behaviors, such as substance use (Henry, 2008). Youth who reported higher levels of school attachment also reported lower levels of alcohol and drug use (Henry, 2008; Henry, Oetting, & Slater, 2009). Conversely, low school attachment predicated increased reports of depression, anxiety, and substance use (Bond et al., 2007). In keeping with Dornbusch and colleagues’ supposition that low school attachment may create space for deviant influence, Henry (2008)
tested a mediation path between school attachment, engagement with peers who use drugs, and subsequent drug use of the youth themselves. Even after accounting for youths’ attachment to family, Henry was able to identify a path to deviant behavior. Youth who reported lower levels of school attachment subsequently reported engagement with friends who use drugs. In turn, engagement with drug using peer positively predicted youths’ own use of drugs as a consequence of this sequence of events.

Regarding gender, school attachment seems to influence males and females in complexly dissimilar ways. School attachment is linked to male academic achievement differently than it is for females. Overall, females demonstrate higher academic performance than males; however, higher school attachment is positively associated with better academic performance among males than among females (Johnson, Crosnoe, & Thaden, 2006). In this study, male adolescents’ school attachment displayed a steady reduction from 7th to 12th grade. These results suggest that males are at increased risk for not only poor academic performance as a function of time but also increased risk of deviant behavior.

Longitudinal data yielded further gender differences for Hispanics at the nexus of parental relationships and school attachment. Examining the function between parental involvement and level of school attachment, the authors found that interparental conflict indirectly influenced Hispanic youths’ school attachment by influencing the parent-youth relationship. Once again, boys experienced the greatest negative impact to school attachment (Taylor, Larsen-Rife, Conger, and Widaman, 2012). When interparental conflict was present, fathers experienced a greater discord in their involvement with children, more so than mothers. Furthermore, for boys, this reduction in paternal involvement resulted in a decline in school attachment.
Ethnic variations exist among Hispanic populations which illuminate the implications of acculturation levels upon school attachment. In a study examining alignment with traditional cultural values, Gonzales et al. (2008) found that Mexican American youth who closely align with traditional cultural values tend to also be more engaged in academics. The authors note that immigrant youth with traditional cultural values place emphasis upon a sense of duty to the family, referred to as *familismo* (Ayón, Marsiglia, & Bernudez-Parsai, 2010). Additionally, cultural variations among Hispanic ethnic groups exist. Variants among Hispanic ethnic groups may inform the likelihood for certain Hispanic ethnic groups to experience disorganized neighborhoods more than other groups (see Cherlin, 2010).

Highly supportive parent-child relationships have been shown to be positively associated with higher grade point average (GPA) and school attachment (LeCroy & Krysik, 2008). In particular, parental support was related to greater school attachment, and school attachment was associated with higher GPA. Hispanic youth who immigrate with their parents (often referred to as the *1.5 generation*) may view academic achievement as a means of supporting their families, and therefore report higher levels of school attachment than peers of successive (or *higher*) generations. These results suggest that the process of acculturation may inflate the risk of disengagement from academic pursuits. It may be that as Hispanic youth of higher generations become more acculturated than their parents, that there is an associated reduction in school attachment as Hispanic youth of second and third generations negotiate their cultural identity and adapt to cultural norms which differ from traditional values embedded within *familismo*.

**Neighborhood Violence**

Exposure to violence of virtually any kind can have a detrimental effect on individuals, particularly youth. Exposure to violence within one’s community increases risk of multitude of
outcomes, such as conduct disorder, increased aggression and other antisocial behavior, depression, and victimization or perpetration of future violence (Hagan & Foster, 2001; Margolin & Gordis, 2000; McCabe, Lucchini, Yeh, Hough, & Hazen, 2005).

In a study examining the relationship between violence exposure and life course transitions among adolescents, researchers found exposure to violence is associated with precocious role exits (Haynie et al., 2009). Role exits refer to transitions out of certain situations, such as a student leaving school. Role exits can be exhibited from normative behaviors, such as graduating school, but they may also be premature, such as a student dropping out of school. These exits may also be applied to other domains of life, such as becoming pregnant during adolescence. For example, adolescent pregnancy marks an exit from the traditional adolescent role or experience into a new role. Recent research extends this process of role exits by examining the composition of friendship groups among adolescents.

Exposure to violence has been found to be associated with removing oneself from positive school peer influences and turning to violent, neighborhood peers for sources of social network support (Harding, 2008). Results of Harding’s research found that the composition of friendship groups were qualitatively different among adolescent males who were exposed to greater neighborhood violence than for males who were not exposed to such violence. Rather than effecting the number of friends or quality of relationships, violence seemed to influence the types of individuals in an adolescent friendship group. Adolescent males living in neighborhoods with higher rates of violence had 15% more friends who did not attend school. Additionally, Harding notes that the increased engagement with both violent and older peers consequently increases adolescents’ susceptibility to deviant cultural values, such as encouraging violent
behavior, while simultaneously alienating adolescents from prosocial cultural values embedded in alternative contexts, such as schools.

Threats to neighborhood safety also disrupt peer relationships. Small gender effects indicate that adolescent males may be more prone to see alterations to their peer groups in the presence of neighborhood violence. Harding (2008) found that the primary shift in peer relationships is not in relation to the *closeness* of relationships, but in the *composition*. When rates of neighborhood violence increase, school friendships reduce and adolescents form more friendships with older boys from within the neighborhood (Harding, 2008). In other words, violent exposure did not necessarily impact the size of one’s peer network, but changed the types of peers with which one associates themselves. Harding (2008) posits that neighborhood violence may cause alterations in the social norms which are communicated to boys as they begin seeking out more violent, older peers because of waning influences from school peers and teachers and added influences from older, violent peers.

In a sample of fourth through sixth graders (64% Hispanic American), exposure to neighborhood violence was associated with biases in social cognition (i.e., an individual’s perception of social situations and relevant outcomes; Schwartz & Proctor, 2000). In this study, exposure to violence, while not directly associated with increased violence, was associated with changes in social cognition. After being presented hypothetical social encounters, youth who had been exposed to violence tended to report aggressive social responses more favorably. Further, the same study found associations between violent victimization and increased aggression through the mediating effects of emotional dysregulation (i.e., not being able to calm down after an excitatory experience, or not responding to situations with appropriate behaviors). Similarly, violent victimization was associated with school peer rejection through the mediating effects of
emotional dysregulation. Both paths of analysis were only significant when including emotional dysregulation as a mediator. These findings compliment Harding’s research that violence exposure negatively impacts relationships within social contexts, whether through more passive results, such as peer rejection, or active results, such as intentionally seeking out alternative peers.

Crosnoe (2001) explained that low neighborhood safety alters parent-child relationships by increasing internalizing symptoms in adolescents and impairing adolescents’ perceptions of parental education support. This is an example of low neighborhood safety negatively influencing family relationships. Likewise, neighborhood violence impacts peer relationships by reducing school peer friendships, subverting other school influences, and promoting relationships with violent neighborhood peers.

Haynie et al. (2009) added further insight to Harding’s research of shifts in friendship networks by elaborating on adolescents’ departures from particular contexts. Mere exposure to violence resulted in a 10.6% increase in likelihood of high school attrition if an adolescent was exposed to some form of either indirect (i.e., hearing about violence) or direct violence (i.e., personally witnessing violence). Moreover, adolescents who were exposed to both indirect and direct violence more than doubled this percentage (23.2%). Haynie and colleagues also found that some adolescents may remove themselves from violent contexts as a response to exposure. Complementary to Harding, Haynie and researchers found that adolescents who are exposed to violence of any kind have a higher attrition rate than adolescents who are not exposed to violence. An interesting pattern emerges from both researchers’ conclusions. In the presence of neighborhood violence, adolescents experienced some form of reduction in school attachment and some altogether dropped out of high school. However, these adolescents did not necessarily
remove themselves from the neighborhood environment. This is of particular interest within the framework of the current study as this indicates the maladaptive response to isolate oneself from more positive influences and, as the previous literature suggests, this reduces social capital, decreases prosocial influences, and increases the input of cultural values from deviant peers.

Understanding how school attachment and neighborhoods influence Hispanic youth is paramount to understanding adolescent identity exploration and the process of negotiating cultural identity during adolescence. The current study examines how exposure to neighborhood violence associated with reductions in school attachment, and in turn negatively influenced romantic partnering through acts of intimate partner violence (IPV) for Hispanic young adults. While research has shown that reduced school attachment is also associated with an increase of association with older, violent peers (See Harding, 2008), peer relationships will not be examined in the current mediation analysis. However, there was great opportunity for employing structural equation modeling with the use of Add Health data in order to better understand how exposure to neighborhood violence resulted in the simultaneous reduction of school attachment and increase of engagement with violent neighborhood peers based on Harding’s (2008) findings. From a theoretical standpoint, it was speculated that school attachment and violent neighborhoods (via peers) would have a mediating effect on IPV perpetration through the subsequent decrease of prosocial influences from school and increased deviant behavior influence from violent peers, and subsequently neighborhoods. This was discussed further in regards to opportunity for future research.

**Intimate Partner Violence**

Diminished levels of social support in general have been found to inflate the likelihood that young adults will become perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Previous research
suggests that perceiving lower levels of neighborhood support increases the possibility that residents will perpetrate IPV. Ramirez, Paik, Sanchagrin, and Heimer (2012) found evidence that adolescents with friends who are violent were more likely to perpetrate IPV in adulthood. The researchers further note that this was an effect of the size of one’s peer group. Those with larger friendship networks (i.e., more than 13 individuals) experienced the greatest tendency to perpetrate IPV if they were involved in a peer network in which fighting was common. The authors note that large, violent peer networks are potent sources for perpetuating violence.

The ramifications of being involved with violent partners are undeniably destructive. Intimate partner violence increases the risk of depression for both victims and perpetrators, and increases even more so for victims who are female and Hispanic (Hagan & Foster, 2001). Further, maladaptive behaviors such as running away from home, contemplating suicide, and attrition increase as a result of being exposed to IPV. Hagan and Foster found that exposure to verbal violence increased these maladaptive behaviors by 7%. Exposure to both verbal and physical violence increased these behaviors by 18%.

Once more, the carryover effect of being exposed to violence or being involved with a violent partner is detrimental, with some gender differences emerging. In young adulthood, for females, violent offending in general is associated with involvement with a violent partner, while exposure to IPV increases risk of perpetration for males (Herrera, Wiersma, & Cleveland, 2008; 2010). These results suggest that both male and female adolescents may experience heightened risk of IPV due to exposure to violence and subsequent increased deviant peer influence as either a perpetrator or victim.

**Acculturation and IPV.** From both theoretical perspectives, Latino populations are faced with the task of overcoming marked difficulties. In addition to having a greater likelihood of
living in socially disorganized neighborhoods, Latino immigrants are simultaneously navigating the acculturation process. During the acculturative process cultural values are assessed and one’s individual cultural identification is modified and reconfigured to accommodate a new cultural setting. This experience may be exacerbated by the confluence of identity development and increased peer influence during adolescence.

Research also indicates that acculturation may influence the risk of experiencing intimate partner violence. Researchers (Sanderson, Coker, Tortolero, and Reingner, 2004) have identified differences in the likelihood of victimization, perpetration, and reporting IPV with respect to acculturation levels. Higher rates of acculturation seem to increase the risk of experiencing IPV. For example, one study found that Latina females from English-only speaking households were 89% more likely to report IPV victimization within the last year than females living in households in which Spanish and English were both spoken. The researchers posit that machismo (i.e., gender role expectancies for males to be the more dominant, aggressive, authoritative gender) may attribute to this issue. Increased gender role stress and reduction of support from the higher acculturation levels are both thought to be contributing factors to experiencing IPV among both male and female Hispanic adolescents. In general, reports of perpetrating physical IPV are higher among minority adolescents than non-minority (Foshee et al., 2008). Foshee et al.’s research found that Hispanic adolescents were also found to report more destructive communication skills, acceptance of IPV, machismo attitudes, and exposure of IPV among their friends. It may be the case that acculturating males are receiving the cultural messages from the majority culture that are consistent with machismo values which increase the likelihood of IPV perpetration among males. Contrarily, it may be that traditional machismo cultural influences wane as male adolescents acculturate, but messages of dominance and aggression persist in their
environment if they are exposed to violent neighborhood peers. Previous literature (see Herrara, Wiersma, & Cleveland, 2008) notes that both males and females exhibit risk for perpetration of IPV; therefore, exploratory analyses were intended to examine potential gender differences with regard to perpetration.

The present study identified risk factors associated with exposure to neighborhood violence. Hispanic adolescents are more likely to live in disorganized neighborhoods than their Caucasian peers (Bowen, Bowen, & Ware, 2002). Furthermore, disorganization within the neighborhood is generally damaging to social support for adolescents, and may hinder prosocial messages, such as promoting academic involvement. On the basis that neighborhood disorganization is related to more negative school behaviors, such as poor academic performance and dropping out, Hispanics may be more vulnerable than other populations to experience negative school experiences (Bowen et al., 2002). These negative factors may set the stage for an increased risk for association with deviant peers and IPV perpetration in young adulthood (Ramirez, Paik, Sanchagrin, & Heimer, 2012).

The Current Study 2

The present study added to previous research by examining how Hispanic adolescent neighborhood violence and school attachment were associated with overall IPV perpetration in young adulthood, and then identified gender and Hispanic ethnic group differences. By assessing first-hand violence exposure among Hispanic adolescents, the present study expanded upon previous findings and identified how exposure to violence may inhibit prosocial influences (school attachment) that lead to IPV perpetration. Study 2 hypotheses were:

$H_{1a}$: Exposure to neighborhood violence among Hispanic adolescents in Wave I will be associated with youths’ reduced school attachment in Wave II.
$H_{1b}$: Reduced school attachment in Wave II will increase the likelihood of Hispanic young adult IPV perpetration in Wave III.

$H_{1c}$: Reduced school attachment (Wave II) will have a mediating effect between neighborhood violence exposure (Wave I) and IPV perpetration (Wave III) among Hispanic young adults.

$H_2$: Exploratory analyses will examine potential gender differences in young adult outcomes.

$H_3$: Exploratory analyses will examine potential group differences in neighborhood experiences among Hispanic ethnic groups.
Study Two Method

Participants

Data were from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health; Harris, 2009; see Harris, Halpern, Whitsel, Hussey, Tabor, Entzel, & Udry, 2009, for design information), which is a school-based, nationally representative and longitudinal study that began in 1994 and assessed health-related behaviors of adolescents and later outcomes. The Study 2 analyses used Wave I (1994 - 1995) included Hispanic adolescent ($N = 1814$) reports of exposure to neighborhood violence, as well as Waves II (1996) and III (2001 – 2002) which included school attachment and IPV perpetration, respectively.

Participants included Hispanic adolescents $N = 1814$ (51% girls) with a mean age of 15.5 at Wave I and 21.95 ($SD = 1.65$; Range 18-27) at Wave III. At Wave I, adolescents identified as Mexican American (51%), Chicano (5%), Cuban (14%), Puerto Rican (17%), Central/South American (11%), and other Hispanic-origin (9%).

Measures

*Neighborhood Violence.* Measurement of Wave I neighborhood violence was adapted from Harding’s (2008) neighborhood violence scale that contains 9 items assessing the adolescents’ exposure(s) and victimization of violence within their neighborhood from the Wave I In-Home Interview. Six of the items asked the adolescent respondent about specific experiences with violent crime observed within the neighborhood, such as witnessing a shooting or stabbing, having a weapon pulled on them, or being injured in a fight. These items were answered on a binary scale of either $0 = never/no$ or $1 = once/yes$ (although respondents could also answer $2 = more than$ once, or in the case of being injured in a physical fight. However, Harding treats these items as binary responses). The final 3 items included *parents’* perceptions of neighborhood drug
problems. Adolescents’ parents were asked, “In this neighborhood, how big a problem are drug dealers and substance abuse?” Responses ranged from no problem at all = 3 to a big problem = 1. Items were consistent with Harding’s (2008) measure of overall neighborhood violence. All 9 items were standardized and binary, 0 = no violence to 1 = any violence (M = .77; SD = .42; α = .57).

**School Attachment.** School attachment measures consisted of eight scaled-constructs from the Wave II In-Home Interview in which adolescents were asked to rate their feelings towards and belonging to school peer and authority figures (Dornbusch et al., 2001). Five items included questions about attitudes about school, such as “You feel close to people at your school” and “You feel like you are part of your school”. These items ranged from strongly agree = 1 to strongly disagree = 5. Two items assessing experiencing trouble within school such as, “Getting along with your teachers” and “Getting along with other students” were answered on a scale ranging from never = 0 to everyday = 4. The final item asked respondents to answer “How much do you feel that your teachers care about you”. Responses for this item ranged from not at all = 1 to very much = 5. Items were standardized, summed and formed a composite scale (M = -.02; SD = .67; α = .76).

**Intimate Partner Violence.** Measures of intimate partner violence from the Wave III In-Home Interview were combined items assessing whether or not the respondent had perpetrated some form of IPV. Perpetration behaviors included 4 items, such as threats of physical violence, perpetration of violent acts (i.e., hitting, slapping, shoving, kicking), and fighting that resulted in injury towards their heterosexual romantic partner. These items were combined to form a binary measure reflecting either the absence or presence of IPV perpetration (Ramirez et al., 2012; M = .30; SD = .46; α = .68).
**Control Variables.** Additional control variables were considered in the model. These variables included acculturation (i.e., speaking English = 2, Spanish = 1, or a language other than English or Spanish = 0), parent’s level of education (\(M = .87, SD = .94\), range: 0 indicating no high school attendance to 3 indicating graduate school and beyond), participant gender, and participant age at Wave III.

**Analytical Procedure.** Several regression analyses were employed to explore how exposure to neighborhood violence may impact intimate partner violence through the mediating effects of school attachment. This model is an extension of Harding’s (2008) examination of peer network composition alterations following exposure to violence. Social disorganization theory supports this model by establishing that socially disorganized neighborhoods inhibit prosocial behavior. Further, subsequent removal from prosocial environments and subsequent violent behavior demonstrates the progressive nature of the life course theory. Thus, the first regression examines how exposure to neighborhood violence among Hispanic adolescents in Wave I is associated with their school attachment in Wave II. The second regression examines how school attachment in Wave II is associated with young adult IPV perpetration in Wave III. Lastly, a regression tested whether reduced school attachment (Wave II) had a mediating effect between neighborhood violence exposure (Wave I) and IPV perpetration (Wave III) among Hispanic young adults, using tests for mediation. Lastly, these were examined by examining gender and Hispanic group interactions, with follow-up analyses examining the significance and direction of these proposed effects.
Study Two Results

Males ($M = .80, SD = .40$) reported higher rates of neighborhood violence exposure than females ($M = .75, SD = .43$); $t(1812) = 2.46, p = .01$. Males reported lower scores on the standardized school attachment rating ($M = -.06, SD = .71$) than females ($M = .03, SD = .62$, Range -2.33-1.43); $t(1752) = -2.89, p < .01$. Reports of intimate partner violence perpetration were lower among males ($M = .21, SD = .41$) than females ($M = .40, SD = .49$); $t(1211) = -6.95, p < .001$ (as shown in Table 4).

Regression analysis was used to investigate the hypothesis that school attachment mediates the effect of neighborhood violence exposure on IPV perpetration. Models included participant gender, age at Wave III, language, parental education, exposure to neighborhood violence, and school attachment (as shown in Table 5). Model one of the regression analysis included control variables (participant gender, age, language, and parental education). Gender was the only significant predictor of IPV perpetration, which indicated that being female was associated with greater risk for IPV perpetration. Violence exposure was added in the second model, however it did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in IPV perpetration over and above the effects of the control variables. School attachment was added in the final model and accounted for a significant proportion of the variance over and above the influence of control variables and violence exposure. This indicated that lower reports of school attachment were associated with greater risk for IPV perpetration.

Results indicated that neighborhood violence exposure accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in school attachment scores above and beyond parent’s education, participant gender, and participant age at Wave III, $b = -.23, SE = .04, p < .001$, and that school attachment accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in IPV perpetration above and
beyond parent’s education, participant gender, participant age at Wave III, and neighborhood violence exposure, \( b = -0.05, SE = 0.02, p < 0.05 \). Thus, Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported.

These results were used to calculate a Sobel Test estimating the mediating effect of school attachment between exposure to neighborhood violence and IPV perpetration. The Sobel Test was conducted using Preacher and Leonardelli’s (2016) calculation method. The results of the overall mediating effect of school attachment between neighborhood violence exposure and IPV perpetration was significant, \( z = 2.29, SE = 0.01, p = 0.02 \). These results supported the Hypothesis 1c that the meditational influence of school attachment reduces the association between neighborhood violence exposure and IPV perpetration, as shown in Figure 1.

Next, males and females were examined separately. For males (\( n = 736 \)), exposure to neighborhood violence was significantly associated with negative reports of school attachment scores above and beyond parent’s education and participant age at Wave III, \( b = -0.28, SE = 0.06, p < 0.001 \). However, school attachment did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in IPV perpetration above and beyond parent’s education participant age at Wave III, and neighborhood violence exposure. Results of the Sobel Test for males were not significant (see Figure 2). For females (\( n = 766 \)), exposure to neighborhood violence was significantly associated with negative reports of school attachment scores above and beyond parent’s education and participant age at Wave III, \( b = -0.18, SE = 0.05, p < 0.001 \). School attachment accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in IPV perpetration above and beyond parent’s education participant age at Wave III, and neighborhood violence exposure, \( b = -0.07, SE = 0.03, p < 0.05 \). Results of the Sobel Test for females were significant, \( z = 1.96, SE = 0.01, p < 0.05 \), as shown in Figure 3. These results do not support the Hypothesis 2 because the meditational influence of school attachment was found for females, and not males as predicted. However, analysis to test
whether gender was a significant moderator of the mediational model as additional statistical software was required for this analysis. Additionally, each Hispanic ethnic group was tested against each other Hispanic ethnic group in effort to identify significant differences, however no significant differences emerged.

Regression analyses and Sobel Tests were run for each Hispanic ethnic group in effort to identify group differences between groups. The Hypothesis 3 that the mediating effect of school attachment on the association between neighborhood violence exposure and IPV perpetration would differ significantly for Mexican-origin Americans in comparison to other ethnic groups was not supported.
**Study Two Discussion**

Study two results indicated that Hispanic adolescent males are exposed to significantly higher rates of neighborhood violence than females and reported significantly lower levels of school attachment than females. In keeping with Harding’s (2008) findings that adolescent males experienced a residual shift in their academic environment due to the detriments (i.e., violence exposure) within their neighborhood, the current study identified that Hispanic adolescent males experienced a significant decrease in school attachment ratings when they were exposed to neighborhood violence. This was also true among female Hispanic adolescents. This suggested a similar trend found in both Harding’s (2008) and Haynie’s (2009) research which describes that exposure to violence can be a catalyst for exiting environments or normative social roles (i.e., an adolescent dropping out of school). While the parameters of the current study did not specifically assess attrition due to violence exposure, the results were similar in their indication of violence exposure being associated with a general withdrawal from prosocial environments.

Females reported significantly higher rates of IPV perpetration than males. These results complimented findings suggesting that women typically report IPV perpetration more than men, although these data should be interpreted carefully as gender differences in IPV perpetration has been found to be more reflective of defensive acts of violence rather than tendencies of violent behavior in general (Herrera, Wiersma, & Cleveland, 2008). While school attachment was significantly lower for males than females, the relationship between school attachment and IPV perpetration was only significant for females. This suggested a general trend for females, but not males, to perpetrate IPV when school attachment is reduced. Once again, these findings are complimentary to previous literature indicating that reduced school attachment increases engagement of risky behavior and may create avenues for increased deviant influences therein.
disposing adolescents to engage in similar deviant behavior (Bond et al., 2007; Dornbusch et al., 2001; Henry, 2008).

The overall positive mediating effects of school attachment between neighborhood violence exposure and IPV perpetration in the full sample indicated that if Hispanic adolescents are exposed to neighborhood violence, but they are attached to their academic environment, IPV perpetration will be reduced. In other words, school attachment acted as a protective environment mediating the effects between violence exposure and violence perpetration. The overall mediation model was significant for females, but not for males.

The findings of the current study reinforced the notion that the protective function of academic belonging plays a vital role in the lives of Hispanic adolescents. While significant results were not found for males with regard to the full mediation model, the findings were analogous of previous trends for males to draw away from scholastic environments. This withdrawal, in conjunction with violence exposure, increases the likelihood that adolescent males will suffer academically, engage with deviant peers, and become involved in risky behaviors. Haynie (2009) suggested that some adolescents flee from violent contexts. With regards to the current sample, it seemed that Hispanic adolescents were experiencing an overall downward trend in their connection to the protective aspects of school rather than an increase. Teasing out the difference between adolescents who respond to violence exposure by seeking prosocial environments compared to those who disengage from prosocial environments will be crucial for bolstering healthy behavior among Hispanic adolescents. It may be that there are more complex neighborhood or cultural mechanisms, such as the academic resources available to at-risk adolescents.
From a resiliency perspective, connectedness to the academic environment in the lives of Hispanic females was pivotal. Considering the elevated probability for Hispanic adolescents to live in disorganized neighborhoods, the current study emphasized the importance for this population to feel that they belong within their school. For both males and females, the risk of disengaging from prosocial environments was detrimental. As Dornbusch and colleagues (2001) posited, positive academic influences decrease deviant behavior, but once adolescents decide to engage in deviant behavior, prosocial academic influences are diminished in their ability to recover adolescents away from such behaviors. Fostering a sense of belonging at school is a reasonably achievable goal regardless of education quality.

*Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions*

The present study benefitted from the use of a nationally representative longitudinal dataset. Data from Add Health enabled examination of multiple Hispanic ethnic groups and balanced gender sampling. Limitations included narrow assessments of certain variables of interest. In particular, assessment of acculturation could be improved by including additional features of cultural minority experiences (i.e., immigration timing, affiliation with Latino culture, etc.). This may be particularly crucial for understanding how Latino cultural norms (i.e., *machismo* attitudes) and ethnic differences influence adolescents.

Neighborhood violence assessments utilized measurements employed in Harding’s (2008) seminal research. This research is fundamental to neighborhood studies and neighborhood violence measurements are theoretically sound. However, while theoretically sound, the alpha level for Harding’s measurement of neighborhood violence was quite low. There is great room for improvement with future directions with regards to assessing neighborhood violence exposures and their consequences. Future measurements of the experience of neighborhood
violence may be improved by employing measures which have been constructed with the specific purpose of assessing one’s subjective and objective experience of neighborhood violence.

Future analyses will include testing gender as a moderator of the overall mediation model. Supplementary statistical analyses will allow for an examination of potential gender differences. Moreover, more detailed analyses will include parent-child connectedness within the overall model. The family context is a crucial social environment to be considered, particularly when considering cultural and ethnic identity. More advanced path analyses (e.g., structural equation modeling) will allow for detailed examination of the interplay between family and school contexts. Future directions should also include examining more detailed aspects of IPV perpetration. For example, the current study examined physical and sexual violence together. Future studies may consider separate levels of IPV perpetration in order to determine variations in types of perpetration. Future directions may also consider the role of peer relationships and potential gender differences with respect to peer relationships and their influence in both school and neighborhood contexts.

Lastly, forthcoming research would profit from examining how the academic setting is experienced differently based upon gender. If researchers are able to better understand why school attachment is influential for females and decreasingly for males, then both policy makers and educators may be able to bolster the positive messages in academic belonging. Moreover, although this trend is decreasing, Hispanics currently exhibit the greatest rates of high school dropout compared to other ethnic groups within the U.S. (Krogstad, 2015). As this population increases, the development of targeted policy and interventions directed towards fostering academic belonging would benefit exceedingly more at-risk adolescents.
Chapter IV

General Conclusion

The current thesis examined specific mechanisms of neighborhood effects as influences upon a nationally-representative sample of Hispanic young adults. The results indicated that elements of neighborhood disorganization, such as perceptions of safety and cohesion and objective exposure to violence have ramifications upon developing adolescents in regards to both positive (i.e., pursuing education and employment) and negative (i.e., lack of education, unemployment, and IPV perpetration) outcomes in young adulthood. Findings also indicated that Hispanic males and females may have experienced, been influenced by, and responded to neighborhood effects in qualitatively different ways. Present findings also provide an indication with respect to how detriments in one social context have negative repercussion in other social contexts in the lives of Hispanic adolescents.

Future directions will include identifying mechanisms of neighborhood safety that may hold differentiated weight relative to residents’ assessment of their neighborhood. In other words, it may be of interest to identify how experiences within one’s neighborhood impacts their assessment of the relative risk of living in their particular neighborhood. With regard to neighborhood disorganization and increased likelihood for Hispanic adolescents to reside in these contexts, future research may examine how formal and informal social structures impact this population. For example, although formal social structures may be absent within one’s neighborhood, informal social structures, such as social cohesion, may be a potent influence upon adolescent development. This may be particularly true for Hispanic adolescents due to cultural values. Future research should explore how mechanisms of Hispanic culture may counter negative aspects of neighborhood disorganization. Further, subsequent research should
include more detailed explorations of ethnic identity and how the acculturation process
influences and is influenced by experiences within one’s neighborhood.

In conclusion, the present thesis illuminated the effects of neighborhood characteristics as prevalent to a growing segment of the U.S. population. Together, these studies allowed for a comparison of the implications of perceived neighborhood safety and first-hand experience with neighborhood violence. The current thesis accentuated the role of features of social contexts in the lives of Hispanic adolescents and their impact upon young adulthood attainment. These findings highlighted the need for more detailed and comprehensive assessments of adolescent Hispanic experiences and their implications for young adulthood attainment.
References


Appendix

Table 1

*Study One Means and Standard Deviations (n = 1814)*

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*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 ~indicates approaching significance

Note. This table shows the unstandardized and standardized coefficient for each variable added to the model.
Table 3

Study One Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Education Status (n = 1814)

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*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Note. This table shows the unstandardized and standardized coefficient for each variable added to the model.
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*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001
Table 5

*Study Two Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting IPV Perpetration (n = 1814)*

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*R²*  

*Note.* This table shows the unstandardized and standardized coefficient for each variable added to the model.

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001*
**Figure 1**

*Study Two Summary of Mediational analysis of the Relationship between Neighborhood Violence Exposure and IPV Perpetration by School Attachment (n = 1502)*

Note. This figure shows the unstandardized coefficients.

- \( a = -.23^{***} \)
- \( b = -.05^* \)
- \( c = .02 \)
- \( a \times b = 2.3^{**} \)

\( *p < .05 \) \( **p < .01 \) \( ***p < .001 \)
Study Two Summary of Mediation analysis of the Relationship between Neighborhood Violence Exposure and IPV Perpetration by School Attachment for Males (n = 736)

*Figure 2*

Note. This figure shows the unstandardized coefficients.
Study Two Summary of Mediational analysis of the Relationship between Neighborhood Violence Exposure and IPV Perpetration by School Attachment for Females (n = 766)

* $a = -0.18^{***}$
* $b = -0.07^*$
* $a \times b = 1.96^*$

*p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001*  
*Note. This figure shows the unstandardized coefficients*