THE ROLE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY IN PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES THAT

FACILITATE PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AMONG URBAN YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

The current study involved the development and testing of a path model to predict

psychological empowerment for urban youth ages 13-17. Data from a survey of urban

youth in a city in the northeast United States were analyzed to test the model. The

variables included in the model were: perceived neighborhood problems, neighborhood

sense of community, social support, participation in community and school activities, and

ethnic identity. Utilizing structural equation modeling, survey data were analyzed to

determine whether the hypothesized model fit the data and to examine how the five

predictor factors influenced an individual's level of psychological empowerment, as

measured by the revised sociopolitical control scale. Path models were developed for the

full sample and for gender-specific subgroups. Results showed that the hypothesized

model provided a good fit to the data from the full sample of participants and crucial

differences existed in the models for females and males. A key finding of this study was

the critical role of ethnic identity in the psychological empowerment process; it was

empowerment's strongest predictor variable for all three models. Key gender-related

differences included the direct effect of perceived neighborhood problems on

empowerment and the negative effect of perceived neighborhood problems on social

support being mediated by neighborhood sense of community for females but not males.

Strategies to promote ethnic identity development and implications for practice based on

full sample and gender-specific differences are presented. Limitations and directions for

future research are also discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The current study examined the relationship between five predictor variables –

perceived neighborhood problems, neighborhood sense of community, social support,

participation in community and school, and ethnic identity – and psychological

empowerment in urban high school youth. This study was rooted in research conducted

by Peterson and Reid (2003) whereby the researchers developed a path model to predict

psychological empowerment in urban adults using survey data from 661 randomly

selected residents from the same city. Their model included the following four predictor

factors, variations of which are replicated in the current study: awareness of

neighborhood substance abuse problems, alienation, neighborhood sense of community,

and participation in substance abuse prevention activities. Peterson and Reid's model

suggests that awareness of substance abuse problems has a paradoxical effect on the other

predictor factors; it increases citizen participation and empowerment by serving as a

catalyst for action but negatively impacts neighborhood sense of community. The current

research expanded upon the 2003 study by comparing Peterson and Reid's model to that

which is deemed the best fit for youth. The present model tested the relationship between

five predictor factors. Four of the factors - perception of neighborhood problems, social

support, neighborhood sense of community, and participation in community and school -

are variations of Peterson and Reid's 2003 factors. The fifth, ethnic identity, introduced a

new predictor to the pathway toward empowerment.

Theory has suggested that the development of one's ethnic identity can be a central predictor of empowerment (Garcia-Ramirez, Martinez, Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar, Albar, Dominguez et al., 2005), though research to support this hypothesis is limited with regard to the demographics of the sample populations (Livingston, 2004; Reid, Brown, Peterson, Snowden, & Hines, 2009). To that end, the addition of ethnic identity (as measured by the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure) was also a focus of the proposed study. To investigate the function of ethnic identity in this model, the study asked if ethnic identity served as a mediational mechanism. For example, does ethnic identity mediate the effect of social support on neighborhood sense of community or empowerment? Additionally, previous research suggests that multiple criteria measured in the current study typically differ based on gender (e.g., Itzhaky & York, 2000a). To that end, an additional question was asked to determine the role of gender on the path model: Does gender serve as a moderator for a path model toward empowerment? For example, does the model that fits for youth in general fit equally as well for males as it does females? Are different models necessary based on gender?   In summary, the following research questions were examined in the current study: (1). Does the hypothesized model, including the suggested role of ethnic identity development, fit the data from the sample of youth in this study? (2). Does the model differ based on gender? The findings from this study can serve the youth development field in that they can shape interventions aimed at increasing psychological empowerment in urban youth. In addition, the findings can help tailor interventions for females and males.

Review of the Literature

The present study examined the relationship between ethnic identity, psychological empowerment, and four additional predictor variables – perceived neighborhood problems, neighborhood sense of community, social support, and participation in community and school activities. To this end, a path model using a random sample of urban high-school youth was tested. The path model included perceptions of person, situation, and environment-related factors hypothesized as pathways to psychological empowerment. The Person x Situation x Environment ("P x S x E") framework was developed by Pentz (1995, 1999) for the design of substance abuse programs. He hypothesized that the most successful substance abuse prevention programs would incorporate those factors that recognized both individual and social factors in the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol and intervened at both levels. More recent research has applied Pentz's framework to the development of community-based programs and empowerment models (Peterson & Reid, 2003) and has supported the notion that both individual and environmental characteristics are important to consider in other areas of research – such as citizen participation – as well (Foster-Fishman, Pierce, & Van Egeren, 2009).

The data collected for this study were collected as part of a needs assessment for the development of a substance abuse prevention program under Project C.O.P.E (Communities Organizing for Prevention and Empowerment). Because these data were collected in a substance abuse prevention context, the Pentz model is an appropriate framework for considering and/or organizing predictors of empowerment. In the current study, participation in community and school and ethnic identity were person factors,

social support and neighborhood sense of community served as situational factors, and

perception of neighborhood problems was considered an environment factor under Pentz'

framework (Peterson & Reid, 2003). This chapter presents a review of relevant literature

on these constructs with the purpose of providing the reader a thorough understanding of

the research as it applies to pathways toward psychological empowerment in youth.

Emphasis will be placed on ethnic identity and empowerment as the primary constructs.

The additional four predictor variables will be examined as they relate to the primary

constructs.

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is rooted in "a sense of peoplehood within a group, culture, and a

particular setting" (Phinney, 2007). The development of ethnic identity is similar to that

of personal identity in that it refers to a sense of self, developed through the process of

learning about one's beliefs, and it is comparable in some ways to racial identity because

both involve a sense of belonging to a group and are associated with attitudes about and

behaviors toward that group. That is, the development of one's ethnic identity is a

longitudinal construction and reflection of one's sense of self – both as an individual and

as a member of a group – and one's beliefs about those group memberships. Theory and

research both support the notion that ethnic identity increases with age, with development

taking place primarily during adolescence and early adulthood (Erikson, 1968). However,

it should be explicitly noted that ethnic identity formation is a dynamic process. It

changes over time and may not fully develop until adulthood, if at all (Phinney, 2007).

Ethnic identity has been proven to be especially important for minority group

members. Phinney & Alipuria (1990) found that a secure ethnic identity was central to

sense of self for ethnic minorities in a majority society. The development of a strong

ethnic identity has also been proven as a basis for positive attitudes toward other groups

(Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). In a 2007 study, Phinney, Jacoby, & Silva found that

minority college students who had given serious thought to and then committed to their

ethnic identity were more open and accepting of members of different ethnic groups than

those who had not explored and committed to their ethnicity. The impact of ethnic

identity is much less meaningful for majority group members; research has shown that

majority group members are significantly less likely to have given thought to their

ethnicity, their ethnic identity plays a less salient role in their lives, and their ethnic

identity is less important in group interactions (Phinney, Jacoby, & Silva, 2007).

Researchers interested in studying culture as a factor influencing individual or

group development have always struggled to find means to empirically measure the

construct (Phinney, 2000). This is due to a variety of factors, including the importance

researchers and the populations they are studying place on personal versus group identity.

Traditionally, when Western researchers focus on culture formation, they study

individual identity development (Marcia, Waterman, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993). Group

identity formation more often comes up in non-Western, collectivist cultures and when

studying minority groups within a multicultural society (Phinney, 1990).

Because ethnic identity is a multi-dimensional construct, it is increasingly

difficult to measure. In meta-analyses of relevant research, researchers identified eight

core components important in the development of one's ethnic identity (Ashmore, Deaux,

& McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Phinney & Ong, 2007). They are: self-categorization and

labeling, commitment and attachment, exploration, ethnic behaviors, importance and

salience, evaluation and ingroup attitudes, national (or American) identity, and values and beliefs. Because they are so difficult to measure, aspects of only six of the eight components listed here were measured in the current study. Conceptual definitions and empirical research on the components in the development of ethnic identity, as identified by Phinney and others, are provided below.

Self-categorization and labeling, or the process of identifying oneself as a member of a particular social group is a core component in developing one's ethnic identity (Phinney, 2007). In order to measure one's ethnic identity, it must first be asserted by the individual that he/she belongs to a particular ethnic group. Research has regularly supported the notion that individuals can self-identify as members of multiple ethnic groups, with some memberships acting as more salient than others depending on the social conditions one is faced with (Alderfer, 1986; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), making it important to provide space for participants to identify their own ethnic/racial classification in each research setting. This is typically done through an open-ended question or with lists that are appropriately inclusive. For the purposes of this study, appropriately inclusive lists were provided.

Researchers list commitment (personal investment in a group) and attachment (sense of belonging) as perhaps the most important factors in the development of a sense of ethnic identity (Ashmore et al., 2004; Phinney, 2007). Cokey (2005) includes the caveat that this component need not be measured in conjunction with the content of the identity (i.e. the specific group of which an individual may or may not feel committed). This component is included in the ethnic identity measure administered for the current study, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM).

Exploration (seeking information and experiences related to one's ethnicity) is also included in the measure administered for the current study. This component is most common in adolescence and has been positively linked to individuals solidifying their ethnic identity and being less likely to change their beliefs with new and different experiences (Phinney, 2006). The MEIM also includes an item that measures self-reported participation in ethnic experiences ("I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs"); while research has shown that behaviors should not necessarily be considered strong indicators of ethnic identity on their own, a strong sense of ethnic identity is usually comprised, in part, of ethnic behaviors, practices, and social interactions. Finally, depending on one's ethnic group membership and where they are in the process of personal identity formation, the importance and salience of their particular ethnic group identities can vary. For example, research has shown ethnic group memberships tend to be more salient with ethnic minority group members (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Yip & Fuligni, 2002). The MEIM includes aspects of this component.

In the theoretical literature on ethnic identity formation, Tajfel (1978) wrote that it is important for individuals, especially those with ethnic minority group memberships, to associate positive emotions and attributes to their group membership, that is to generally feel good about being part of their ethnic group. In fact, research has found that feeling positively about one's ethnic group predicts happiness on a daily basis. (Kiang, Yip, Gonzales, Witkow, & Fuligni, 2006) However, it is also important that these emotions are developed after evaluating one's self and their place within the group. Phinney (2007) wrote that "an achieved ethnic identity implies that attitudes about one's group have been

examined and evaluated independently and are not simply the internalization of what other people think." Therefore, examining both one's ingroup attitudes and one's individual evaluation of one's ethnic group are important steps in determining the development of his/her ethnic identity. Ingroup attitudes are examined in the current study via the MEIM; individual evaluation is not directly included.

In order to have a reference point for individual development of ethnic identity, Western researchers often study it in relation to the individual's national (or in this case, American) identity. This is often referred to in acculturation literature, where there is research to support various types of relationships between two or more identities. Research trends have most recently uncovered a neutral or, in some cases, positive correlation between multiple identities, contrary to the theoretical hypotheses that multiple ethnic identities would be negatively correlated (Berry, 2003). This core component of ethnic identity formation was not explored in the current study.

Values and beliefs are an important indicator of closeness to a group. In fact, the relationship between an individual's values and beliefs and those of their ethnic group is strongly correlated with an individual's commitment or sense of belonging. In order to measure the correlation between individual values and beliefs and those of one's ethnic group, scales are often created with particular ethnic groups in mind and should not be used across different groups (Felix-Ortiz et al., 1994). However, it would be a misconception to assume there is always a group consensus on the values and beliefs of even a particular ethnic group, and to that end, more empirical research around how to appropriately measure the relationship between individual and group values and beliefs is

necessary. Because the MEIM is a general scale designed to be used across ethnic groups, this component is not measured in the current study.

Psychological Empowerment

Yowell and Gordon (1996) wrote that there is no universal definition of empowerment or any guaranteed strategies to use when implementing empowerment programs. Empowerment has been described as both a process and a state, a construct that is simultaneously individual and collective, and something that can shift based on situational and environmental factors (Koren, DeChillo, & Friesen, 1992).

Key early contributors to empowerment theory include Zimmerman, Rappaport, and Kieffer (Chinman & Linney, 1998). "Rappaport defined empowerment as a way people gain control over their lives through active participation, with an emphasis on strengths instead of weaknesses, an acknowledgement of cultural diversity, and the use of language that reflects the empowerment ideals (Rappaport, 1981, 1984, 1985, 1987)" (Chinman & Linney, 1998). Kieffer (1984) suggested that empowerment was a dynamic, developmental process of self-discovery and recognition of strengths and abilities; he called this "participatory competence." The process he described was a cyclical one, where reflection led to action, and action led to increased reflection. In 1990, Zimmerman offered an empowerment framework that included variables at the individual and environmental levels and factors that were both cognitive and behavioral. According to Gutierrez (1995), "empowerment is the process of increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power so that individuals, families, and communities can take action to improve their situations." Another similar conceptual definition of empowerment is "the process of gaining influence over events and outcomes of importance to an individual or group"

(Fawcett, 1994). All of the definitions and frameworks for empowerment share some similar core features that are central to its definition; that is, theories and research on empowerment have focused on how thoughts about the self impact change at three levels: individual, community, and social environment. Additionally, definitions and frameworks describe the influence of active participation in the development of empowerment and how it can (and usually will) be different for different people. Finally, many definitions acknowledge that empowerment is tied closely to the development of a certain awareness of the surrounding world (Chinman & Linney, 1998).

For the purposes of this research, empowerment is understood as the process by which individuals gain influence of events and outcomes of importance to them (Rappaport, 1984). Central to it is the interaction between an individual and his/her geographic, cultural, social, and contextual settings. As such, empowerment means different things for different people, contexts, and time periods (Zimmerman, 1995). In addition, researchers have also argued that individual desire for empowerment is dynamic – that is, how much empowerment one wants varies, based largely on individual, social, and historical characteristics. Individuals with different backgrounds – such as class, race, gender, ethnicity, etc. – will likely desire different forms and types of empowerment (Collins, 1986). Psychological empowerment is in many ways an individual perception of a unique and dynamic process, and thus it is often difficult to measure.

Chinman and Linney (1998) suggested that the core elements of empowerment theory (active participation, impacting change at multiple levels, developing an awareness of the surrounding world) are similar to some of the core elements of adolescent development, and as such, the two developmental processes should be studied

in tandem. Others have reinforced this idea by suggesting that exploration of civic issues is essential in the development of identity in adolescence (Youniss & Yates, 1997, as cited in Watts & Flanagan, 2007, p. 780).

Chinman and Linney developed a cycle of adolescent empowerment that overlaps with adolescent identity development and focuses on positive relationships and strengths. It takes adolescents from "a need to experiment with different roles and need for a stable identity" through participation in meaningful activities and receiving reinforcement for their participation, to learning new skills including a critical awareness of how to contribute to the world, bonding to positive community institutions, and ends with the developmental gains of positive identity development, positive role choice, and enhanced self-efficacy and self-esteem (all core empowerment constructs).

Following Chinman & Linney's (1998) framework development, Altman and Feighery (2004) argued that the future of psychological empowerment will continue to more explicitly study youth empowerment as a construct separate from the broader construct of psychological empowerment, especially as a tool toward tobacco and alcohol prevention programs. Altman and Feighery argued that empowerment has received considerable attention as an intervention tool, despite its differing frameworks and plethora of definitions. It is a core value of public health practice, and there has been some empirical research to support its importance. For example, consider the case of a federally funded research and demonstration intervention designed to reduce and/or delay drug and sex risks in adolescents. The intervention was designed for urban youth and with empowerment as its cornerstone. It focused on three critical intervention levels and did so sequentially: first individual, then group, and finally community (aligning with the

empowerment literature and different from many programs that tackle multiple levels simultaneously). The intervention strategy focused on individual developmental outcomes before emphasizing the development of group identity and cohesion within a cohort of participants. The final area of focus, after successful individual and group outcomes, was at the community level; participants were engaged in designing and implementing a research for social action project in their neighborhoods. An evaluation of the intervention found that participants had, among other positive changes, developed personal agency and direction and developed a sense of collective empowerment and self-efficacy with regard to social action (Berg, Coman, & Schensul, 2009).

In youth, the psychological empowerment process typically builds self-confidence and self-efficacy and helps individuals become bonded to a larger system (Holden, 2004). In addition, the literature on youth organizing, a process which is described as seeking empowerment as both a process and an outcome, encourages leadership, active civic participation, service learning, political advocacy, and youth development (Speer, 2008). Previous research on the empowerment process in youth has yielded specific outcomes including changes in youth attitudes and beliefs, increases in specific knowledge, and development of skills in acting as effective social change agents. The present study operationalized empowerment by focusing on the first of these characteristics: changes in youth attitudes and beliefs as evidenced through the revised sociopolitical control scale.

Relationship between Ethnic Identity and Psychological Empowerment

A number of scholars have suggested that in order to fully engage in social change, individuals must first develop a critical consciousness (e.g., Gutierrez, 1990, 1995). The development of one's critical consciousness helps individuals and groups

believe in their ability to effect change, and research shows that a higher belief in effecting change makes one more likely to make efforts to increase his/her power (Bandura, 1982). The process of developing this critical consciousness requires three psychological processes, the first of which is the development of group identification: "Group identification includes identifying areas of common experience and concern, a preference for one's own group culture and norms, and the development of feelings of shared fate: group membership becomes a central aspect of one's self-concept" (Gurin, Miller & Gurin, 1980). The psychological process of group identification relates closely to the psychological process of developing one's ethnic identity, and one could make a case that the relationship between ethnic identity and empowerment is such that a strong sense of one's ethnic identity can enhance one's ability to impact social change, especially around issues of ethnicity. In her examination of the impact of empowerment theory in Latino individuals' participation in social change, Gutierrez (1995) found that one's ethnic consciousness had a direct impact on his/her intention to engage in activism. Her research supports the link between ethnic consciousness and empowerment in relation to ethnic issues, and it raises the question of whether ethnic consciousness can contribute to greater psychological empowerment more generally. The current study contributes to this body of research in that it suggests that ethnic identity may in fact contribute to empowerment more broadly.

Research has also uncovered an important link between acculturation - a core component of ethnic identity, as described above - and empowerment (Reid et al., 2009). In a study conducted by Diversi and Mecham (2005), researchers found individual-level empowerment in youth increased with participation in an after-school program that

offered them opportunities to explore their ethnic identity and biculturalism. In the same year, Garcia-Ramirez et al. (2005) found that acculturation is also linked to empowering processes like the structure of social support networks. The relationships between these constructs are examined in the current study.

Relationship between Predictor Factors and Ethnic Identity and/or Psychological Empowerment

The present study examines the relationship between ethnic identity, psychological empowerment, and four additional predictor variables – perceived neighborhood problems, neighborhood sense of community, social support, and participation in community and school activities. Research has already uncovered some links between these predictor variables and ethnic identity and/or empowerment.

Perceived neighborhood problems.

Pentz hypothesized that variables in one's environment are important components of the P x S x E framework. The problems one perceives in his/her neighborhood have been empirically linked to the development of empowerment. For example, Chavis (1990) found that increased community problems led participants to more commonly join local organizations. That is, more problems led to more citizen participation and increased empowerment. Peterson and Reid (2003) found perceived neighborhood problems having a paradoxical effect on citizen participation and empowerment. The findings corroborated Chavis' notion that increased problems led to increased citizen participation, but this effect was diminished by the negative relationship between perceived neighborhood problems and neighborhood sense of community. However, this is a difficult relationship to predict because research has also suggested that when

neighborhood problems are particularly high, this can be debilitating to residents who

may withdraw in return (Foster-Fishman et al., 2009; Korbin & Coulton, 1997). In

research with youth, exposure to community and school problems – specifically violence

– has been linked to various emotional, social, and psychological difficulties (Aisenberg

& Mennen, 2000; Buka, Stichick, Birdthistle, & Earls, 2001; Davis & Siegel, 2000;

Garbarino, 2001; Reid, 2008; Veenema, 2001). Additionally, when researching the

relationship between community problems and empowerment, Chinman and Linney

(1998) suggested that communities that do not offer significant positive roles for

adolescents reduce the adolescents' potential to become empowered and may actually

have negative implications for them. To that end, we might expect to find perceived

neighborhood problems inversely related to empowerment in our study.

   Neighborhood sense of community.

   Another important variable linked to the development of empowerment is

neighborhood sense of community. In fact, studies have positively correlated sense of

community directly with action-taking to address individual level and community level

problems – an element of psychological empowerment (Altman et al., 1998; Perkins,

Florin, Rich, Wandersman, & Chavis, 1990, as cited by Foster-Fishman et al., 2009). A

situation-related variable, neighborhood sense of community has predicted level of

psychological empowerment in numerous research studies (e.g., Speer, 2000).

Neighborhood sense of community was found to be a mitigating factor in the effect of

perceived neighborhood problems on increasing empowerment and thus has been deemed

an important focus for community-based interventions (Peterson & Reid, 2003). In 2009,

Foster-Fishman et al. expanded their 2007 model that linked neighborhood capacity to

citizen participation and empowerment (as measured by norms for neighborhood activism) by focusing specifically on neighborhood sense of community (a core element of neighborhood capacity) and how it related to the other two constructs. Their findings suggested that neighborhood sense of community was a very strong predictor of neighborhood norms of activism, and as such, activism interventions should focus on building strong neighbor connections as preconditions to empowerment. Based on this and the other research in this field, we would expect that neighborhood sense of community would be positively correlated with psychological empowerment in the present study.

Neighborhood sense of community has traditionally been measured by some variation of the Sense of Community Index (Peterson, Speer, & McMillan, 2008) which measures the four dimensions of sense of community – needs fulfillment, group membership, influence, and emotional connection – as suggested by McMillan and Chavis in 1986. In more recent years, the validity of some of the items in the measure and the generalizability and applicability of the McMillan and Chavis model have been questioned. This led to the creation of new scales or suggested variations to existing scales, such as the research of Long and Perkins (2003), Obst and White (2004), and Tartaglia (2006). The present study utilized the Brief Sense of Community Scale (BSCS) that revisited McMillan and Chavis' original four dimensions of sense of community and measured them in new ways (for example, utilizing only positively worded items). The BSCS, which is comprised of eight items, was developed primarily by McMillan and validated by Peterson, Speer, and McMillan in 2008.

Participation in community and school.

Participation has been identified as "both a manifestation of empowering processes and the direct cause of empowerment outcomes" (Holden, 2004, p. 551). Citizen participation, a "person" factor in Pentz' model, has been linked to empowerment in many empirical research projects, leading the field to label it a key factor in the development of psychological empowerment (Foster-Fishman et al., 2009; Peterson & Reid, 2003).

According to research by Carlton-LaNay (2001), participation in community provides a mechanism for social change, a process through which psychological empowerment can occur. In addition, Zimmerman and Rappaport (1998) suggested that there was a strong link between empowerment and participation in volunteer activities in one's community. In fact, they demonstrated that community participation led to increases in a series of empowering constructs including self-confidence, self-acceptance, social and political understanding, and the ability to be assertive and confident in controlling one's resources. In a different study, the research pair not only found a correlation but demonstrated that the greater the participation in community activities, the greater the psychological empowerment (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). Participation in positive, meaningful activities in one's community is the first step in a model of adolescent empowerment developed by Chinman and Linney (1998).

Community participation has also been linked to acculturation (a core component of ethnic identity) in Latinos (Gutierrez, 1997). In addition, community involvement has also been positively correlated with self-efficacy (Moens & Fields, 1999) and with positive self-image (Ramirez-Valles, 2002). The relationship between participation and

the construct of ethnic identity development will be explored, for all respondents, through the path model analysis in this study.

Social support.

Social support is essentially the converse of alienation, which has been inversely linked to the development of empowerment (Peterson & Reid, 2003). Broadly defined as "the range of interpersonal relationships that have an impact on an individual's functioning" (Caplan, 1974 in Cauce, Felner, & Primavera, 1982), social support for youth can include peers, friends, family, teachers, and any other adults in one's life. Minority youth and those from more impoverished backgrounds are more likely to be at risk for lower levels of social support; the consequences of this could include heightened levels of stress with lower coping mechanisms (Cauce et al., 1982).

Social support is a situation-related variable recognized as a fundamental predictor of psychological empowerment (Itzhaky & York, 2000b). Chinman and Linney's (1998) cycle of adolescent empowerment includes social support as an important factor toward developing empowerment, specifically as it relates to adolescents receiving positive reinforcement from others for the decisions they make and skills they acquire. This has also been supported empirically; research by Schunk (1991) found that the reactions adolescents receive regarding the experiences they decide to undertake play a significant part in shaping self-efficacy, a core component of empowerment.

All five predictor variables in the proposed study have been linked to empowerment in theory and in various research settings, but these relationships have not been measured for youth. A primary goal of the study is to add to the literature that explains the mechanisms by which adolescents become empowered. This research can

also help inform the development of programs that utilize an empowerment framework to reduce substance abuse and risky sexual behavior.

The present study extends the empowerment literature in a number of other ways as well. First, it incorporates Pentz' (1999) Person x Situation x Environment framework in the development of a psychological model toward empowerment for youth; this work has previously focused on adults. In addition, it focuses on an urban population. Through the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, the present study utilizes ethnic identity as a variable and highlights its role in the process of psychological empowerment development. Additionally, it includes a positive predictor variable - social support - rather than a negative variable - alienation - in the model. Finally, it analyzes the direct and indirect relationships between various factors leading to empowerment including school and community participation, and social support; this was directly listed as an area for future research by researchers in this field (Reid et al., 2009).

CHAPTER II

METHOD

This study examined the roles of five psychological constructs in the development of psychological empowerment in urban youth. These constructs included: (a) perceived neighborhood problems, (b) social support, (c) participation in community and school, (d) neighborhood sense of community, and (e) ethnic identity. See Chapter I for a description of each construct. The study involved the analysis of secondary data from a larger needs assessment in an urban public school system.

Participants

Surveys were administered and data collected in 2006 as part of a comprehensive needs assessment to assist with the planning and implementation of a federally funded substance abuse and sexual risk-taking behavior prevention program for racial and ethnic minority youth in an urban community in northern New Jersey. At the time of data collection, the setting was considered among the 30 poorest districts in the northeast and was amongst the highest in substance abuse rates and crime in the state. The city's school district was mandated to design and provide specific programs for its students in reading and other educational assessment measures.

Surveys were administered to and collected from 634 participants. Demographic information self-reported by respondents included: gender, race/ethnicity, free/reduced lunch eligibility, age, and grade. The sample was primarily female and Latino/Hispanic.

The majority of respondents were in the 9th and 10th grades, with the remaining students in the 11th and 12th grades. Most students received free or reduced priced lunch, and more than one third lived with a single parent. Table 2.1 outlines all respondent demographics.

Table 2.1
<u>Respondent Demographics</u>

	Number	**Percentage**
Gender		
Female	409	65
Male	220	35
Race[1]		
Latino/Hispanic	397	63
Black/African American	221	35
Other[2]	166	26
Asian	73	12
White	22	4
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	5	< 1
American Indian/Alaska Native	4	< 1
Live with[3]		
Mother, father, and at least one sibling	135	22
Mother	83	13
Mother and at least one sibling	75	12
Mother, stepfather, and at least one sibling	39	6
Free/reduced lunch eligible	444	73
Age		
13	6	1
14	84	13
15	168	27
16	174	28
17+	197	31
Grade		
9th	248	39
10th	167	26
11th	124	20
12th	95	15

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[1] Respondents were instructed to select all responses that applied.

[2] Respondents who selected "other" predominantly classified themselves as multi-ethnic or reported a specific Hispanic/Latino ethnicity such as Cuban, Dominican, or Puerto Rican.

[3] Respondents were asked to select all family members that lived with them most of the time from a list of 15 that included mother, father, step-parents, siblings, step-siblings, aunt and uncle, and grandparents. The five most common household make-ups and their frequencies are presented here.

Measures

The development of the youth survey was a collaborative effort among teachers, school administrators, and the researchers. The survey was conceptualized using a risk and protective factor framework that addressed the following spheres of influence: individual, peer, family, school, and community. Respondents self-reported on 190 items across 16 constructs. Constructs relevant for this study included: perceived neighborhood problems, social support, participation in community and school, neighborhood sense of community, ethnic identity, and psychological empowerment (see Appendices A through F for the scales utilized for the present study).

Perceived Neighborhood Problems

Perceived neighborhood problems were categorized as reports of negative behaviors going on in respondents' neighborhoods and their ability to access negative things such as drugs and handguns. A self-report measure of ten items was administered to measure participants' perceptions of problems in their neighborhood (see Appendix A). Part A asked participants to rate how often various activities such as drug selling and fights occurred in their community. Respondents were provided a four point Likert scale where 1 = "Strongly disagree," 2 = "Disagree," 3 = "Agree," and 4 = "Strongly agree." One item in Part A utilized the same four-point Likert scale and asked respondents to indicate whether they agreed with the statement, "I feel safe in my community." Being the only positively worded item in the section, this item was reverse coded. Part B of the Perceived Neighborhood Problems Scale included the Perceived Availability of Drugs and Handguns Scale developed by Arthur, Hawkins, Pollard, and Catalano. The scale was designed for use with middle and high school age use and has an internal validity of .84.

Part B (The Perceived Neighborhood Problems Scale) asked participants about the availability of obtaining alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, and handguns in their community. Respondents were provided a four point Likert scale where 1 = "Very hard," 2 = "Sort of hard," 3 = "Sort of easy," and 4 = "Very easy." A perceived neighborhood problems variable was created by computing the mean of all ten items. A high score on this variable indicated that an individual perceived increased problems in their neighborhood. The Perceived Neighborhood Problems Scale had an alpha of internal consistency of .87.

Neighborhood Sense of Community

Sense of community is "the fundamental human phenomenon of collective experience" (Peterson, Speer, & McMillian, 2008, p. 62). A self-report measure of eight items, a variation of the Brief Sense of Community Scale (BSCS), was administered to measure participants' neighborhood sense of community (see Appendix B). The original BSCI measured McMillan and Chavis' original four dimensions of sense of community – needs fulfillment, group membership, influence, and emotional connection – developed in 1986. The BSCS was created by McMillan in collaboration with Peterson and Speer and validated with a sample of adults in the Midwestern United States in 2008. Cronbach's alpha for the BSCS was .92. For this study, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the BSCS's eight statements about their neighborhoods. The statements were: "I can get what I need in this neighborhood," "This neighborhood helps me fulfill my needs," "I feel like a member of this neighborhood," "I belong in this neighborhood," "I have a say in what goes on in this neighborhood," "People in this neighborhood are good at influencing each another *[sic]*," "I feel connected to this neighborhood," and "I have a good bond with others in this

neighborhood." Respondents were provided a six point Likert scale where 1 = "Strongly disagree," 2 = "Disagree," 3 = "Somewhat disagree," 4 = "Somewhat agree," 5 = "Agree," and 6 = "Strongly agree." A neighborhood sense of community variable was created by computing the mean of the eight items. A high score on this variable indicated that an individual felt as though he/she lived in a neighborhood with a strong sense of community. The neighborhood sense of community scale (the revised BSCS) had an alpha of .90.

Participation in Community and School

Participation in community and school, i.e. how often participants engaged in extracurricular activities beyond the requirements of the school day, was another important variable in the present study. A self-report measure of five items was administered to measure participants' participation in community and school activities (see Appendix C). All five questions asked respondents how often they undertook particular activities and utilized a five point Likert scale where 1 = "Almost every day," 2 = "Once or twice a week," 3 = "A few times a month," 4 = "A few times a year," and 5 = "Never." Questions covered the following activities: go to sports practice or play in games; take lessons or attend classes out of school; go to a summer program for learning or for fun; talk to an adult about what you are doing or thinking; go to meetings or activities for a club or youth group. A participation in community and school variable was created by computing the mean of the five items. This scale was an inverse of the others, such that a high score on this variable indicated that an individual had a low level of participation in community and school. The participation in community and school scale had an alpha of .67.

Social Support

For the purposes of this study, social support was defined as the interpersonal relationships – including those with peers, friends, family, and other important adults – that can shape the adaption and functioning of an individual. A self-report measure of twenty-four items was administered to measure respondents' sense of social support (see Appendix D). The scale utilized was the Social Support for Adolescents Scale (SSAS) (Cauce et al., 1982) which was designed for use with youth and has an internal consistency of .80. The first eight questions (Part A) asked how helpful various types of people were when the respondent needed "money and other things." The questions asked about: group of close friends, kids his/her age, father, mother, sisters/brothers, principal/assistant principal, teachers, and other people such as guidance counselors and adults not listed above. Respondents were provided a four point Likert scale where 1 = "Not at all helpful," 2 = "A little helpful," 3 = "A great deal helpful," and 4 = "Somewhat helpful." "A great deal helpful" and "somewhat helpful" responses were recoded to reflect the intensity of the response (i.e. "A great deal helpful" was recoded to 4 to receive the highest value and "somewhat helpful" was recoded to 3 to receive the second highest value). The next seven questions (Part B) asked respondents to indicate how much fun they have with each of the groups/individuals asked about in the previous set of questions (group of close friends, kids his/her age, father, mother, sisters/brothers, principal/assistant principal, teacher, and other people such as guidance counselors and adults not listed above). Respondents were provided a three point Likert scale where 1 = "Not at all," 2 ="Somewhat," and 3 ="A great deal." The final set of questions related to social support (Part C) asked respondents, generally, how helpful they found each of the

individuals/groups mentioned above. To answer these questions, respondents were provided a five point Likert scale where 1 = "Not at all helpful," 2 = "A little helpful," 3 = "Somewhat helpful," 4 = "Helpful," and 5 = "Very Helpful." A social support variable was created by computing the mean of the 24 items. A high score on this variable indicated that an individual felt as though he/she had a high level of support from his/her social support networks. The Social Support scale had an alpha of internal consistency of .88.

Ethnic Identity

For the purposes of this study, ethnic identity is defined as having a relationship with a broader group, culture, and setting (Phinney, 2007); it focuses on sense of self, learning about one's beliefs and attitudes about groups of which one is a part, and involves a sense of belonging to those groups. Ethnic Identity was measured using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), a survey designed to be used across different ethnic groups. It includes some of the core components of ethnic identity development identified in the literature review but does not encompass them all (for example, specific cultural values and beliefs). To date, the MEIM is the most widely used self-report tool for determining ethnic identity development (Kazarian & Boyadjian, 2008); as of January 2006, over 145 studies were conducted using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure. It has been validated among youth and adults across the United States and beyond North America. For example, Kazarian and Boyadjian validated the measure with ethnic Armenian high school students in Lebanon (2008).

The MEIM was originally designed as a twenty item measure, made up of two subscales: self ethnic identity (fourteen items) and other group orientation (six items).

The other group orientation subscale measures an individual's attitudes regarding members of other racial and ethnic groups and their preferences for interacting with them (Phinney, 1992). The subscales can be administered separately (as they measure different constructs) or together, depending on research population and goals of the study. Later research determined that two scale items were not consistent with the other twelve in the self ethnic identity sub-scale and were removed (Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts, & Romero, 1999). This left a twelve item self ethnic identity scale that empirical research suggested constituted two primary factors of ethnic identity: exploration of one's ethnic identity and commitment to one's ethnic group (Marcia, 1980). "The exploration factor included items dealing with efforts to learn more about one's ethnic group and participation in ethnic cultural practices. The commitment factor included items reflecting both a positive affirmation of one's group, based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and a clear sense of commitment" (Phinney, 2007, p. 275). These two factors are very closely correlated, as exploration is unlikely without at least a minimal level of commitment, and with more exploration will likely come increased commitment (Phinney, 2007).

Recent research with the tool has uncovered some contradictory findings. Some researchers returned to the notion that the MEIM is better suited as a single factor measure, others have suggested that it might be a three factor scale (Lee & Yoo, 2004), and some research continues to suggest it is best treated as a two factor measure. It remains unclear what factors best encompass the measure; Phinney and Ong (2007) suggest this is due to methodological differences in analysis, while Pegg and Plybon (2005) have pointed to demographic factors of respondents such as age and gender.

Nonetheless, the MEIM has been reported – across research studies – as having fairly

high internal consistency (alphas ranging from .71 to .92) and validity and is a strong tool

to measure the development of ethnic identity in diverse groups of respondents

(Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi, & Saya, 2003; Worrell, 2000).

For the purposes of this study, the MEIM refers to the 14 item self ethnic identity

subscale which measures ethnic identity exploration (a developmental and cognitive

component) and affirmation, belonging, and commitment (an affective component).[4] The

MEIM was administered to participants, with 12 of the 14 items analyzed for the

purposes of this study (see Appendix E). The MEIM asked respondents to indicate their

level of agreement with a series of statements about their ethnic identity. Respondents

were provided a four point Likert scale where 1 = "Strongly disagree," 2 = "Somewhat

disagree," 3 = "Somewhat agree," and 4 = "Strongly agree." An ethnic identity variable

was created by computing the mean of the MEIM. A high score on this variable indicated

that an individual had a high (well-developed) sense of ethnic identity. Alpha reliability

of the twelve-item MEIM scale was .89.[5]

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[4] The Other Group Orientation (OGO) scale measures attitudes regarding members of other racial and
ethnic groups and an individual's preferences for interacting with them. Although respondents completed
the scale, it was not analyzed for the purposes of this study for two primary reasons. Phinney's ethnic
identity research suggests that Other Group Orientation is best measured once a foundational sense of
ethnic identity is developed in individuals To that end, participants simply may not have been
developmentally ready for OGO. Additionally, the analyses without OGO may be stronger; factor analyses
on the MEIM have consistently yielded a self ethnic identity factor with reliability estimates higher than
those for the Other Group Orientation factor, sometimes differing as much as .4 (Worrell & Gardner-Kitt,
2006).

[5] Alpha reliability of the twenty-item 2002 scale (which includes the OGO items) was .88.

Psychological Empowerment

For the purposes of this study, psychological empowerment was categorized as the process by which youth gained influence of events and outcomes of importance to them (Rappaport, 1984). To measure how empowered respondents felt, a self-report measure of seventeen items was administered (see Appendix F). This scale is often referred to as the revised sociopolitical control scale and has been validated to measure the intrapersonal dimension of empowerment for adults by focusing on perceptions of the respondent's ability to organize people and influence decision making in their local community (Peterson et al., 2006). The structure of the scale was supported by factor analysis. For this study, the respondents were asked about organizing people and influencing decision making in their peer group as well as local community. All seventeen items asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a statement about their participation in activities or groups. Respondents were provided a five point Likert scale where 1 = "Strongly disagree," 2 = "Disagree," 3 = "Unsure," 4 = "Agree," and 5 = "Strongly agree." A youth empowerment variable was created by computing the mean of the seventeen items. A high score on this variable indicated that an individual felt empowered. The revised sociopolitical control scale had an alpha of .88.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

The present study used secondary data that were collected by school district personnel. Active parental consent and student assent were acquired from all participants prior to survey administration. The survey was self-administered in English to students in randomly selected health education classes at several high schools throughout the city. It took approximately two high school class periods to complete. Students were informed

that their responses would remain confidential through the use of a unique identifier and

that no one other than the researchers would have access to their surveys. Institutional

Review Board approval was obtained prior to conducting the study by Project C.O.P.E.

and by the present researcher to conduct the current analysis of secondary data, which

were de-individualized and included no identifying information.

<div align="center">Analysis</div>

The study utilized cross-sectional data to analyze relationships between study variables.

Six variables were investigated and analyzed using SPSS and structural equation

modeling (SEM) software package Amos 17.0 to answer two research questions: 1). Does

the hypothesized model, including the suggested role of ethnic identity development, fit

the data from the sample of youth in this study? And 2). Does the model differ based on

gender? Findings associated with this analysis are discussed in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to test a path model toward psychological

empowerment in urban youth. The model included five predictor variables. These

variables were perceived neighborhood problems, neighborhood sense of community,

social support, participation in community and school, and ethnic identity development.

The first research question asked what model toward empowerment fit best for

urban youth and whether ethnic identity served as a mediator in that model. After

calculating variable means (see Chapter II for a list of variables, the scales that comprised

them, and their alpha coefficients), the SPSS data set was loaded into the hypothesized

model. To test the fully saturated hypothesized model, a structural equation modeling

(SEM) procedure was performed with observed variables using Amos 17. Like traditional

path analysis, SEM is used to test the fit of the correlation matrix against two or more

causal models which are being compared by the researcher. However, when the variables

being tested are measured by multiple indicators – as opposed to a single indicator, the

path analysis is termed SEM. In both traditional path analysis and SEM, every variable in

the model is considered dependent on the others (deemed the causes), and a regression is

done for each. Rather than performing a series of regression equations as in traditional

path modeling, SEM allows for simultaneous equation estimation. A comparison of the

regression weights predicted by the model and the observed correlation matrix for the

variables yields a goodness-of-fit statistic for the model, and the researcher selects the best-fitting of numerous models as the most appropriate for advancement of theory.

<center>Model for the Full Sample</center>

For this study, maximum likelihood estimations were used to analyze the variance-covariance matrix. The over-identified model for all participants is presented in Figure 1. This model shows only significant paths. The model's χ^2 (7) = 8.77, p=.27 indicated that it was a good fit to the data from the sample. The model accounted for 19% of the variability in empowerment, 9% of the variability in ethnic identity, 13% of the variability in social support, 2% of the variability in community and school participation, and 4% of the variability in neighborhood sense of community. Table 3.1 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations associated with this study for replication purposes.

Table 3.1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Study Variables, Full Sample

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Psychological empowerment	3.62	.63	--					
2. Ethnic identity	2.77	.65	.39**	--				
3. Social support	2.54	.56	.30**	.30**	--			
4. Participation in community and school	2.49	.99	.04	.04	.14**	--		
5. Neighborhood sense of community	3.11	1.22	.12**	.16**	.32**	.07	--	
6. Perceived neighborhood problems	2.45	.67	.04	.01	-.23**	-.08*	-.18**	--

*p < .05 ; **p< .01.

As can be seen in Figure 1, perceived neighborhood problems predicted psychological empowerment directly and indirectly through both social support and neighborhood sense of community. Individuals who perceived higher levels of neighborhood problems had higher scores on the measure of empowerment. Importantly, however, individuals who perceived higher levels of neighborhood problems also tended to report lower levels of social support, and lower levels of social support were associated with lower scores on the empowerment measure. Similarly, individuals who reported higher levels of neighborhood problems tended to have lower levels of neighborhood sense of community; lower levels of neighborhood sense of community were then associated with lower levels of social support, again leading to lower psychological empowerment. Review of direct, indirect, and total effects showed that the direct effect of perceived neighborhood problems on psychological empowerment was reduced by half by way of its negative indirect effects through neighborhood sense of community and social support.

The results shown in Figure 1 also demonstrate the critical role of ethnic identity in the relationship between social support and empowerment. Social support was found to have a direct positive effect on empowerment but also influenced empowerment indirectly through ethnic identity. Individuals with higher levels of social support tended to have higher levels of psychological empowerment. Additionally, higher levels of social support tended to lead to increased ethnic identity development, and increased ethnic identity development led to increased psychological empowerment. An
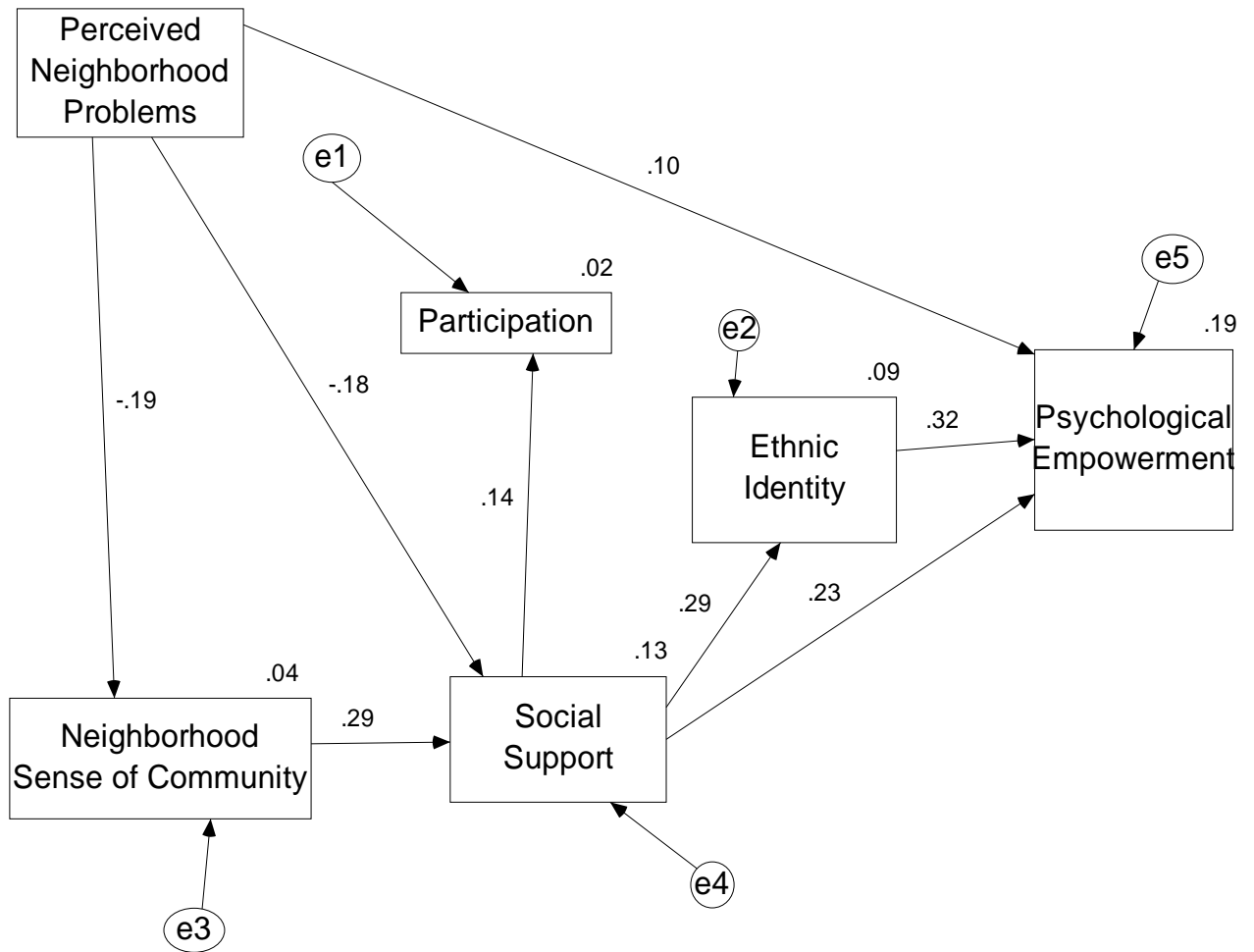
Figure 1. Path model predicting empowerment among urban youth, full sample.

examination of direct, indirect, and total effects revealed that one-third of the total effect of social support on empowerment was indirect through ethnic identity development.

Perceived social support also predicted community and school participation, but community and school participation had no relationship to psychological empowerment or any other variables in the model. Individuals who reported higher social support were more likely to participate in activities in their community and school.

Models by Gender

The second research question asked whether gender serves as a moderator[6] for a path model toward empowerment. It was designed to determine whether the model that fits for youth in general fits equally as well for males as it does females or if different models are necessary based on gender.

Females

The over-identified model for females (N=409) is presented in Figure 2. Like the model for all participants, this model shows only significant paths. The path coefficients presented are statistically significant standardized beta weights. The model's χ^2 (7) = 9.86, *p*=.20 indicated that it was a good fit to the data from the sample. The model accounted for 18% of the variability in empowerment, 7% of the variability in ethnic identity, 10% of the variability in social support, 3% of the variability in community and school participation, and 4% of the variability in neighborhood sense of community.

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[6] A moderator is defined as a variable, either qualitative or quantitative, that affects direction and/or strength of the effect of the predictor variable on the criterion variable.
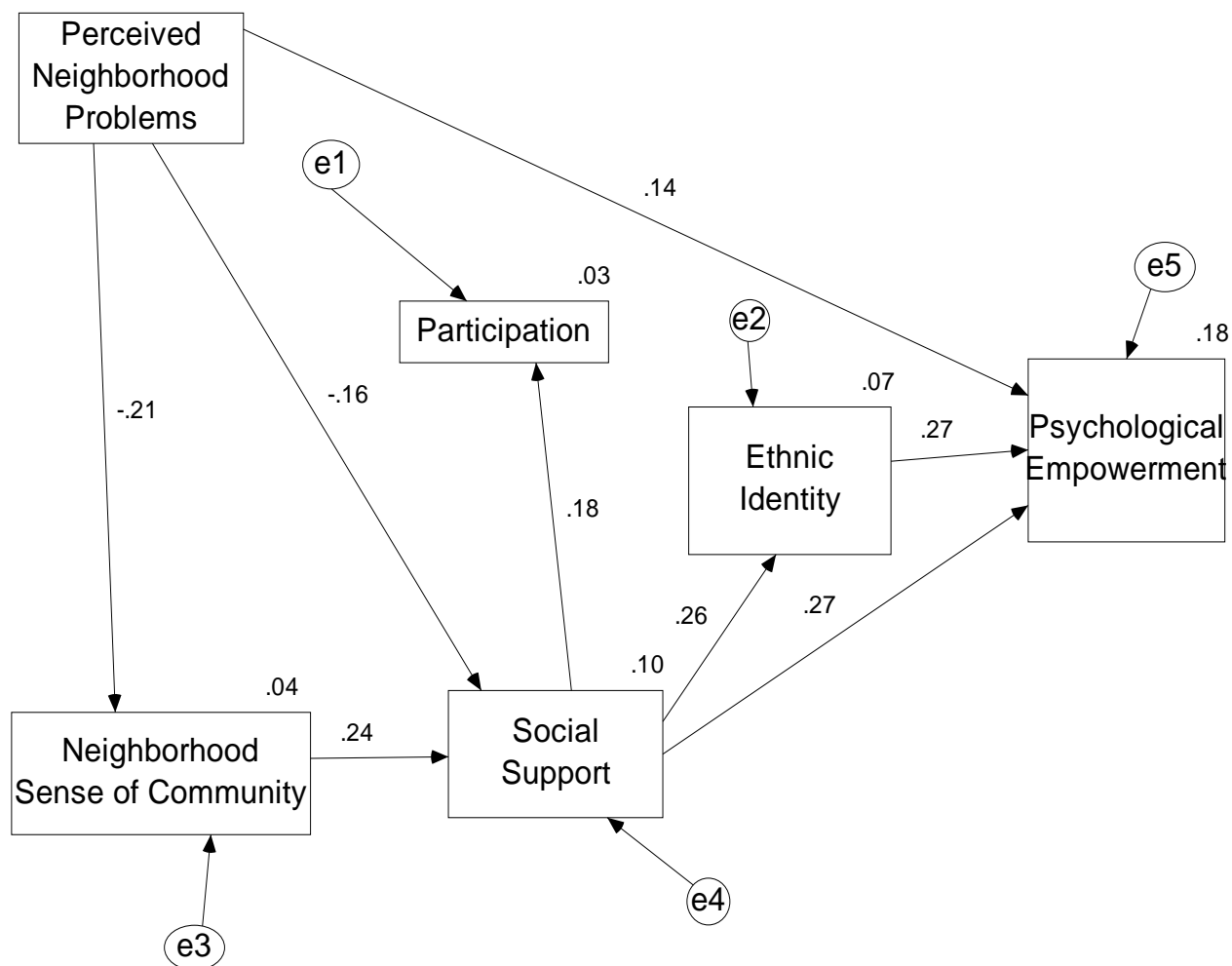
Figure 2. Path model predicting empowerment among urban youth, female sample.

Table 3.2 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations associated with this data

set for replication purposes.

Table 3.2
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Study Variables, Female Sample

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Psychological empowerment	3.69	.57	--					
2. Ethnic identity	2.81	.67	.35**	--				
3. Social support	2.54	.55	.31**	.27**	--			
4. Participation in community and school	2.37	1.01	.09*	.10*	.18**	--		
5. Neighborhood sense of community	3.03	1.17	.12*	.16**	.26**	.03	--	
6. Perceived neighborhood problems	2.47	.78	.08	.01	-.20**	-.11*	-.20**	--

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

By all accounts, the female model is comparable to the model that fits the overall

data set. In fact, the relationships between variables described for females in Figure 2 are

identical to the relationships revealed for all participants in Figure 1, with neighborhood

problems and social support having both direct and indirect effects on psychological

empowerment and ethnic identity serving a critical role in higher scores of psychological

empowerment.

Males

The over-identified model for males (N=220) is presented in Figure 3. Like the model for all participants, this model shows only significant paths. The path coefficients presented are statistically significant standardized beta weights. The model's χ^2 (10) = 8.90, *p*=.54 indicated that it was a good fit to the data from the sample. The model accounted for 23% of the variability in empowerment, 13% of the variability in ethnic identity, 20% of the variability in social support, 0% of the variability in community and school participation, and 0% of the variability in neighborhood sense of community. Table 3.3 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations associated with this data set for replication purposes.

Table 3.3
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Study Variables, Male Sample

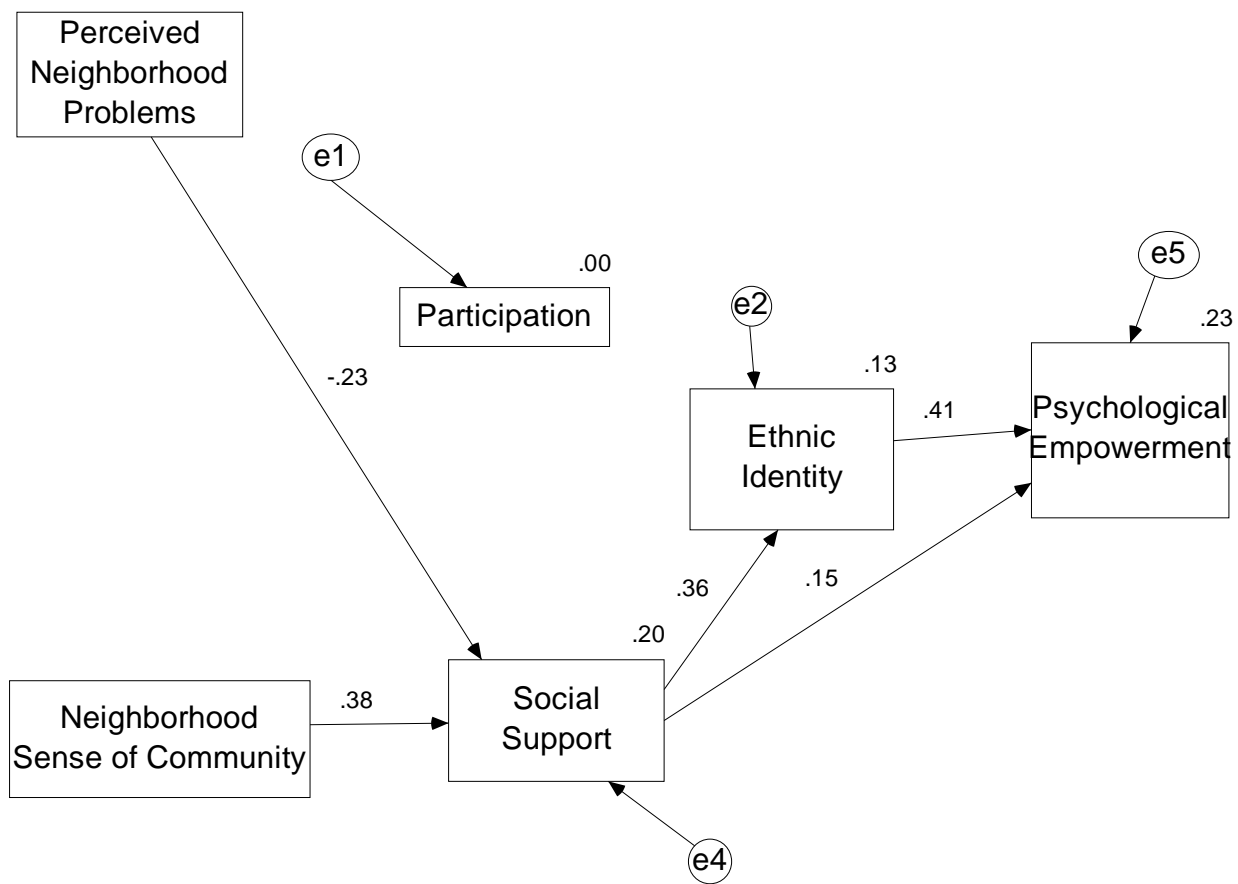|	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Psychological empowerment	3.51	.71	--					
2. Ethnic identity	2.69	.62	.47**	--				
3. Social support	2.52	.59	.30**	.36**	--			
4. Participation in community and school	2.71	.91	.04	-.03	.08	--		
5. Neighborhood sense of community	3.27	1.30	.16*	.18*	.41**	.12	--	
6. Perceived neighborhood problems	2.42	.75	-.03	-.00	-.28**	-.02	-.12*	--

p < .05 ; **p< .01.

Figure 3. Path model predicting empowerment among urban youth, male sample.

The full sample was predominately female, which explains why the model for the full sample closely paralleled that for the female sample. However, the model for males was substantially different from the model for females in several ways. First, perceived neighborhood problems had a direct, positive effect on psychological empowerment for females but not for males, suggesting that perceived neighborhood problems had a driving effect only for females. For males, perceptions of neighborhood problems predicted psychological empowerment only indirectly and negatively through social support. Those who perceived higher levels of neighborhood problems tended to report lower levels of social support; lower levels of social support were associated with lower scores on the empowerment measure. This indirect and negative relationship between perceived neighborhood problems and social support also existed for females, however the negative effect was mediated by neighborhood sense of community among females; the mediating factor was not present for males. In addition, social support had a positive effect on participation among females but not males.

Most importantly, perhaps, was the strength of the mediational[7] effect of ethnic identity for males. Although ethnic identity functioned in the same way for females and males, having a direct effect on psychological empowerment and serving as a mediator between social support and psychological empowerment, the strength of the mediating effect was much stronger for males than for females. An analysis of direct, indirect and total effects shown in the models for females and males shows that, among females, the indirect effect of social support on psychological empowerment through ethnic identity

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[7] A mediating variable is one that intervenes in the relationship between a predictor and criterion variable.

was .07, which was computed by multiplying the beta weight representing the path from social support to ethnic identity (.26) with that of the path from ethnic identity to psychological empowerment (.27). The total effect of social support on psychological empowerment for females (.34) was then computed by summing the direct (.24) and indirect (.07) effects. Notably, the mediating effect of ethnic identity represented only 21% of the total effect among females. Among males, conversely, the indirect effect of social support on psychological empowerment through ethnic identity was .15, which was computed by multiplying the beta weight representing the path from social support to ethnic identity (.36) with that of the path from ethnic identity to psychological empowerment (.41). The total effect of social support on psychological empowerment for males (.30) was then computed by summing the direct (.15) and indirect (.15) effects. It is important to recognize that the mediating effect of ethnic identity among males represented 50% of the total effect, which was more than double the strength of the mediating effect for females.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to test a path model that included five predictor

variables leading to psychological empowerment in urban youth. It grew out of research

conducted by Peterson and Reid (2003) that predicted pathways toward empowerment for

adults and builds off of the literature on the role of ethnic identity in youth development

(Phinney, 1990, 1992, 2000; Phinney & Ong, 2007) and more recent research that

suggests that there are various factors that lead to empowerment in neighborhood leaders

and followers (Foster-Fishman et al., 2009).

Four of the factors in the current study are variations of Peterson and Reid's 2003

factors. The current study's predictor factors include perceived neighborhood problems

(which links to Peterson and Reid's awareness of neighborhood substance abuse

problems), participation in community and school activities (a variation of Peterson and

Reid's participation in substance abuse prevention activities), neighborhood sense of

community (mirroring Peterson and Reid's neighborhood sense of community), and

social support. Social support replaced Peterson & Reid's alienation and was expected to

have an inverse relationship with constructs with which alienation had a positive

relationship in the previous sample. Ethnic identity, which had never been researched in

conjunction with the other variables, introduced a new predictor to the pathway toward

empowerment. To investigate the function of ethnic identity in the hypothesized model,

the present study examined whether ethnic identity (as measured by the Multigroup

Ethnic Identity Measure) mediated the effect of social support or neighborhood sense of

community on empowerment. In addition, with previous research suggesting that

multiple criteria in the current study differ by gender, another key research question

asked if different models were necessary for males and females.

The Peterson and Reid model and the hypothesized model tested in this study

both included person, situation, and environment-related factors (Pentz, 1995, 1999). To

that end, the current model moved from a macro level (neighborhood perceptions and

neighborhood sense of community) to a more micro level (social support from one's

immediate network) to the individual level (ethnic identity, psychological

empowerment), hypothesizing that clear pathways toward empowerment would be

revealed in this progression from larger to smaller systems.

The non-significant chi square value and variability ratings for all variables

indicate that the hypothesized model provided a good fit to the data for the sample group

of 634 high school students.[8] The current model accounted for 19% of the variance in

psychological empowerment in youth, higher than the 14% variance in empowerment

uncovered in the Peterson and Reid model for adults. The model also accounted for a

significant amount of the variance for the predictor variables ethnic identity and social

support. However, the model only accounted for 4% of the variance in neighborhood

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[8] Although it is considered by some to be an unrealistic standard (Long & Perkins, 2003), the discrepancy chi-square goodness-of-fit statistic is reported for the current study; the non-significant chi-square value suggests that the model is a good fit. Although the p-value of .27 suggests that there is a 27% chance that the results may have occurred by chance, further goodness-of-fit indices support the notion that the model is a good predictor of pathways toward psychological empowerment for the sample group. For example, the RMSEA (Root Means Square of Error Approximation), which bases goodness-of-fit on the "discrepancy between the model and the data per degree of freedom for the model" (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999, p. 280) suggests a value of <.05 is a good fit (Long & Perkins, 2003) The model had a RMSEA value of .02.

sense of community and 2% of the variance in community and school participation. The low variability for these variables was likely due to the fact that each was only predicted by one variable; neighborhood sense of community was predicted by perceived neighborhood problems, and participation was predicted by social support.

This study reinforced findings by Kieffer (1984), Peterson and Reid (2003), and Foster-Fisher et al. (2009) that found that neighborhood sense of community and supportive peer relationships were important elements in the development of individual psychological empowerment. In fact, Foster-Fisher et al. suggested that norms for activism within one's neighborhood (i.e. the actions of one's peer group) mediated the effects of readiness and capacity for change for a sub-sample of their participants they deemed as "followers." The current study suggests the same link is present for adolescents; neighborhood sense of community and social support were both involved – although indirectly – in the pathway toward psychological empowerment for the present sample. It is worth noting that a majority of the research on empowerment in youth has linked it with school and community participation (McNeal Jr., 1999). That relationship proved irrelevant for this sample.

<div align="center">The Role of Ethnic Identity</div>

Theory has suggested that ethnic identity can play a role in the development of psychological empowerment in youth (Gutierrez, 1995), but little research has been done to more deeply examine this relationship. For this sample, ethnic identity development was found to be empowerment's strongest predictor. It was an important mechanism that explained how social support influenced empowerment and suggests that while there need to exist strategies to develop neighborhood sense of community and social support

toward increased psychological empowerment, there should also exist empowerment based interventions that work explicitly to incorporate the development of ethnic identity. Implications for the development of substance abuse and drug prevention programs as well as for the structure of organizations as a result of this finding are discussed later in this chapter.

The findings in this study were consistent with previous research that showed no significant differences in MEIM scores for adolescents based on gender or age (Spencer et al., 2000; Ponterotto et al., 2003; Lee & Yoo, 2004; Kazarian & Boyadjian, 2008).

Differences by Gender

After cutting the data by gender, two additional models were found to fit data from samples of 409 female respondents and 220 male respondents. Because the sample was predominately female, the model for the full sample closely paralleled that for the female sample. Interestingly, all of the links that were revealed in the male model also existed in both the female and all-participant models; this suggests that these are key predictors in psychological empowerment for all respondents. They were: the direct effect of neighborhood sense of community on social support, the indirect effect of neighborhood problems on psychological empowerment through social support, the direct effect of social support on psychological empowerment, the indirect effect of social support on psychological empowerment via ethnic identity, and the strong direct link between ethnic identity and psychological empowerment. Further relationships were uncovered in the female and all-respondent models that did not apply to males. These were: the direct effect of perceived neighborhood problems on neighborhood sense of community, the direct effect of perceived neighborhood problems on psychological

empowerment, and the direct effect of social support on participation.

Although the links present in the male model also existed in the other two models, the strength of the relationships differed between the male, female, and full respondent models. To that end, the male model was substantially different from the female model in a number of ways. For example, perceived neighborhood problems had a driving effect for females but not for males. This finding suggests that empowerment-based prevention initiatives that rely on increasing awareness of neighborhood problems may be less effective with males than females. Additionally, the negative effect of perceived neighborhood problems on social support was mediated by neighborhood sense of community among females. This relationship did not exist for males and implies that efforts of empowerment-based prevention initiatives to improve neighborhood sense of community in order to ameliorate the negative effect of awareness of perceived neighborhood problems on social support, and consequently psychological empowerment, may be more effective with females rather than males.

The importance of ethnic identity was again demonstrated in the gender-specific models. A key element of the male model was the strength of the mediational effect of ethnic identity. Ethnic identity had both a direct effect and an indirect effect via social support on psychological empowerment in both the male and female models. However, the role of ethnic identity as a mediator between social support and empowerment was much stronger in males. This suggests that efforts to improve ethnic identity as a way to facilitate psychological empowerment among urban youth may be more effective for males than females.

Developing Ethnic Identity

The findings from this study suggest that the development of ethnic identity is a key factor in the psychological empowerment process. To that end, school and community based interventions for urban youth should focus efforts on ethnic identity development. Ethnic identity development has been researched in numerous ways; some interventions involve the development of a group's ethnic consciousness while others focus more individually. It is worth noting that in order to engage the broadest group of individuals in an empowerment intervention, multiple strategies that are diverse and inclusive should be used. Research on youth organizing by the PICO National Network, a collection of community organizing groups, has suggested that this includes settings where activities and intended outcomes are structured (the way youth typically spend most of their time) and settings which require youth to take initiative, set goals, and be responsible for their outcomes. In fact, researchers have critiqued youth development strategies for implying an us versus them mentality between adults and youth and have suggested that rather than leading youth through interventions and activities, adults should refrain from being in the forefront. They should act as mentors and facilitators but not ultimately be held responsible for the goals and outcomes of youth, i.e. not be "in charge" of what is going on (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). The opportunities should be provided in group and one-to-one settings. According to PICO, the ultimate goal with regard to youth organizing should be "to alter the pattern of relationships in youth settings" (Speer, 2008, p. 223). This will "modify communication which, in turn, will impact attitudes, perceptions, and ultimately behavior activities" (p. 223). Given the similarities between this idea and the research on ethnic identity development

interventions, these same mechanisms should be focused upon in interventions that focus on developing ethnic identity in the sample population.

A core element of any additional ethnic identity development strategy should be engaging youth in becoming more articulate about their beliefs, views, and experiences and positively reinforcing their efforts to do this. This process is "essential for the intended goal of empowerment based on conscientization" (Diversi & Mecham, 2005, p. 39). With this in mind, a critical element of empowerment theory is that opportunities should be created for active group participation. This aligns with the literature on youth organizing efforts which suggest that opportunities should be provided at the group or collective level (Speer, 2008). These group opportunities should align with positive youth development outcomes (Holden, 2004) and be centered around issues that have direct relevance for the youth involved (Hosang, 2003). Practitioners aimed at increasing empowerment should utilize the Socratic method of posing questions and encouraging constant reflection (Speer, 2008) and should make explicit links to how the intervention is linking back to other elements of the youths' lives.

Practitioners should incorporate opportunities to develop ethnic identity in individual, small group, and large group settings. In fact, Gutierrez (1995) and others have suggested that it is critical for Latinos to develop a collective group identification that transcends specific national origin identity to become politically empowered. This stronger sense of group ethnic consciousness leads into a well-developed individual sense of ethnic identity. The majority of the respondents in this study (63%) self-identified as Latino/Hispanic, so for samples that mirror that which was surveyed here, opportunities for large group discussion and participation may be particularly important. Research has

suggested that this group sense of ethnic consciousness is best developed through a combination of contact within and outside one's subgroup (Gutierrez, 1995). Interactions outside the subgroup help the in-group shape their sense of societal power, authority, and status as compared to other ethnic or racial groups (Gutierrez, 1995). These contacts can also provide opportunities for the in-group members to make their group membership, status, and/or power salient (Brewer & Kramer, 1985; Gurin & Brim, 1984; Rosenberg, 1981). Additionally, the intergroup relationships can develop a sense of camaraderie and common fate among the group members (Espinoza & Garza, 1985; Gutierrez, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Research by Gutierrez (1995) revealed that in-group contact that involved group discussion and problem solving related to the group's social situation and minority status (when applicable) was the most effective means of developing a strong in-group sense of ethnic consciousness.

Based on this body of research, interventions aimed at increasing the development of ethnic identity in urban youth with characteristics similar to those sampled in this study should first group youth by ethnic backgrounds. These subgroups can provide a safe space in which youth can explore and reflect upon their ethnic identity and how it shapes their identity. The intervention should also include opportunities to interact with other subgroups followed by in-group discussion and problem solving about how the group is viewed by and responded to in society. Additionally, prevention researchers should consider explicitly measuring individual and collective participation in their research on empowerment.

Research suggests that some youth are better suited for group interventions, that is those that focus on the development of group ethnic consciousness. Individuals who

naturally identify with and fall into groups and have an interest in political issues will

selectively attend to social stimuli involving group status; they are well-suited for this

type of intervention, as their characteristics will naturally encourage perceptions leading

to the development of group consciousness (Crosby & Clayton, 1987; Gurin & Markus,

1987). Individuals who do not naturally associate with groups and find group boundaries

impermeable are less likely to respond as positively to group-focused interventions and

could better benefit from individually-oriented approaches. Individually oriented

approaches should include what we are terming "facilitated relationship building"

opportunities. This strategy was suggested by Speer (2008) as a tool for youth organizing

efforts. It occurs when youth are provided brief surveys that they can use to stimulate

conversation between themselves and the individuals with whom they are speaking. They

can include targeted conversations with youth from both similar and drastically different

ethnic and racial backgrounds. This focus on one-to-one approaches can build

relationships and shared understanding among youth and can help youth develop a

stronger sense of self and how they relate to others. It is also a useful tool for facilitating

discussions about topics that are often difficult or uncomfortable for youth to breach,

such as ethnicity and race. Incorporating constant individual reflection into the process of

interacting with others can help increase exploration and develop self-categorization and

ethnic group attachment - core elements of a strong ethnic identity.

Psychological empowerment in youth can also be developed through

interventions focused on their neighborhood or locality. For example, Kauffman and

Poulin (1994) found that by showcasing the success of substance abuse prevention efforts

to research participants, they were more likely to participate in other prevention programs

in the community. To that end, Peterson and Reid (2003) suggested that prevention

researchers ought to communicate the effectiveness of programs in ways that will

encourage community members to participate. Critics of youth development research

have critiqued its lack of focus on structural barriers that keep youth from participating in

community programs (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). For the purposes of the sample surveyed

in this study and other urban youth, researchers and practitioners should develop

strategies that keep in mind diversities in race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status,

but also academic development, emotional development, and learning style. By focusing

on the diversity in an urban community, researchers and practitioners alike can reduce the

barriers toward participation in neighborhood activities. Increasing youth accessibility to

these community-based programs could result in their increased psychological

empowerment. Another strategy for developing psychological empowerment through

one's neighborhood or locality came from Diversi and Mecham (2005). In their research

on acculturation and empowerment, they suggested the use of a positive (as opposed to

deficit) model of ethnic identity development. Specific to Latinos (the majority of

respondents in the current sample), they wrote, "With a focus… away from cultural and

genetic deficit models to Latino assets and resilience (Fuligni, 1998; Villarruel &

Montero-Sieburth, 2000), teachers and other adults then can become local socializing

agents against otherness, an us versus them rationale, and negative stereotyping in the

larger community" (p. 39). Other researchers have also supported the notion of a positive

model of youth development, suggesting that adults will notice encouraging youth traits

such as energy and enthusiasm (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). To that end, Diversi and

Mecham offered strategies for systemic ethnic identity development and engagement in

youth that focus on local improvement and suggest involving youth in the transformation of their schools and/or locality to decrease educational isolation and contribute to feelings of positive development.

Similarly, strategies could also be applied to school settings so that psychological empowerment could be sought after by youth in school. This would be a particularly meaningful avenue through which to increase empowerment as youth spend a significant amount of time in school and focus the majority of their energy on school-related matters. Schools "shape the social theories and normative views that young people construct during the course of their development" (Watts & Flanagan, 2007, p. 780). The development of strong in-school groups through shared leadership, peer-based social supports, group-based belief systems, and strong opportunity role structures is one strategy toward achieving a sense of empowerment for youth (Maton & Salem, 1995; Peterson & Reid, 2003, p. 33). Because the ethnic identity literature suggests that youth will often spend leisure time with other youth similar to them, efforts to this end should strongly encourage youth to expand beyond their current cliques and groups of friends to deepen new and different relationships with the expectation that these new relationships will carry over into the adolescents' out of school time activities.

Organizational Development

The present study suggests some relevant implications for increasing psychological empowerment in organizational settings, as well. The constructs measured in this study are elements commonly focused upon in organizational development strategies. Recent literature on efforts to develop organizational effectiveness toward an organization's goals and mission and psychological empowerment among organizational

members, better known as organizational empowerment (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004),

have also involved the constructs examined here.

Organizational development strategies offer ways to promote sense of community

and social support in organizations, and based on the findings in this and other studies,

these link both directly and indirectly to psychological empowerment (Hughey & Speer,

2002; Peterson & Reid, 2003). For example, Hughey, Peterson et al. (2004) found that

sense of community may contribute to organizational and individual psychological

empowerment. To achieve this, they suggested organizations facilitate activities that

focus on multiple levels of relationships: individual, interpersonal, organizational and

community level. To further foster a sense of community, and in turn potentially increase

psychological empowerment, organizational leaders can intentionally link their

employees to local institutions and interweave community participation into the core

values of the organization. In addition, organizations can be structured to facilitate social

support, another element in the stimulation of psychological empowerment. To achieve

this, organizational leaders might provide opportunities for life story telling and

encourage cooperative exchanges between individuals and groups across various levels in

the organizational structure.

As suggested in the literature, ethnic identity development is another empowering

organizational characteristic. It is also the most direct link to the development of

empowerment revealed in the present study. To that end, organizations can be structured

to facilitate the development of ethnic identity through education about and exposure to a

variety of cultural practices and activities, the development of cross cultural and diverse

project teams, placing organizational value on individual reflections about one's own

identity, fostering a sense of belonging for all employees, and facilitating open dialogue about culture and diversity in the workplace (Phinney, 1990). Diversi and Mecham (2005) found that creating vivid images of a specific cultural experience through shared story telling helped train mentors in biculturalism and, in turn, increased their understanding about others' perceptions and make them less judgmental; this strategy could be applied in the workplace to help employees develop an understanding of both colleague and client experiences.

Limitations & Directions for Future Research

Although this research adds to the body of current literature on pathways toward psychological empowerment in urban youth, it also has some limitations that are important to consider. First, this study was cross sectional in design, limiting causal interpretation of the data. Future research efforts measuring these constructs might incorporate the use of a longitudinal study to examine how these processes, which typically develop slowly, shift over time. Cross sectional design also allows for the possibility of other models that work with the data set. For example, an alternative model might have empowerment predicting citizen participation, neighborhood sense of community, or ethnic identity development; suggestions have been made that the relationship may be more reciprocal than unidirectional (Peterson & Reid, 2003). Because of the types of analyses that were conducted, there may also be curvilinear effects that were not tested in this study; additional research should consider testing for these effects when examining relationships between similar variables in the future.

Another limitation in the present study involves its measures. As discussed in Chapter I, ethnic identity is often difficult to measure. This study only measured six of

the eight core components of ethnic identity development; it did not address national (American) identity and values/beliefs (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Future research should incorporate additional scales that address these components, as well. Further, as a contextually determined construct, sense of ethnic identity is particularly prone to fluctuations over time. Because it is typically developed in adolescence and early adulthood, the findings of this study are limited by the fact that the respondents were being measured on a psychological construct with which they were just beginning to grapple. Phinney's data (1992) showed significantly higher MEIM scores among college students than high school students, and Branch (2001) supported Phinney's research, finding that the pattern of responses to the MEIM differ for individuals 13 to 19 years old compared to those between the ages of 20 and 26. Because the respondents in this survey were likely early in the development of their ethnic identity, their scores on the MEIM were generally lower than they would have been for other groups.

In this study, the MEIM was used to measure ethnic identity development. This supports the way the tool has been used in some previous studies (Branch, 2001; Phinney, 1992; Spencer et al., 2000). However, some research suggests that the most consistent findings involving ethnic identity scores on the MEIM are when the scores are treated as measures of ethnic identity attitudes rather than measures of ethnic identity development. As reported by Worrell & Gardner-Kitt (2006), "members of ethnic minority groups from middle school through college have higher scores than whites, suggesting an attitudinal or social context rather than a development interpretation" (p. 299). To that end, future research using this tool might consider using the score as an attitudinal rather than

developmental measure.

Another limitation with regard to the measures was that the construct of empowerment does not measure the practicality of change happening; while the revised Sociopolitical Control Scale measures whether youth "feel" empowered, it does not address whether they have the appropriate and necessary power to actually create change. This limitation relates to a recent movement in the empowerment literature which differentiates samples by leaders and followers. For example, in their 2009 study on citizen participation and empowerment, Foster-Fishman et al. divided their sample into subgroups based on whether individuals identified as leaders or followers in their school and community. This body of research suggests that there are differences in the pathways toward empowerment for each subgroup and that interventions to increase empowerment ought to be designed with specific characteristics of the participants in mind. Future research should expand on the present model by measuring not only the extent to which youth feel empowered but also their position within their school and community to determine whether they are in the appropriate position to make a difference.

Sense of community is a significant empowering characteristic in the literature (Hughey, Peterson, Lowe, & Oprescu, 2008). In this study, neighborhood sense of community had an indirect effect on psychological empowerment through social support and ethnic identity development. However, neighborhood sense of community in the current study was measured by the revised Brief Sense of Community Scale, a scale which has not yet been validated among youth. Future research for participants similar to the current sample should consider validating this scale or using a measure that has been previously validated for the population.

There were also a few limitations with regard to the scales. Research suggests that individuals expect scales to increase in logical gradients. To that end, the Likert scale for items 57 through 64 in the social support measure should be revised to reflect the continuum of agreement; "a great deal" and "somewhat" should be switched. Further, the social support measure asked different types of question but used the same scale across the board. The question for items 65 through 72 read "How much do you have fun with each of the following people?" and the Likert options were "Not at all," "Somewhat," and "A great deal." It would be a better fit for the items if the scale had been "None," "Some," and "A great deal of fun." In addition, a "not applicable" option should be added for the family members that the respondent does not have and/or the family members with whom the respondent does not spend time. Researchers utilizing this survey tool in the future should ensure the possible responses are all-inclusive and might consider changing the Likert scale to be best applicable to the items being asked. Furthermore, the study measures in this survey are self-reports; that is, they measure individual perceptions about situational and environmental factors. A drawback to this type of measure is that the responses may not accurately represent what is happening in the school, home, and community in the study. To round out this research, future studies may want to collect data on these constructs through multiple measures.

In addition, some of the measures were developed in collaboration with school teachers and administrators and did not come from fully validated scales. These measures included Part A of the perceived neighborhood problems scale and the participation in community and school scale. Future research should use fully validated measures to make it easier to generalize the findings. The organic scale developed to measure

participation in community and school may be one cause for the irrelevant relationship between that predictor variable and psychological empowerment. Another potential reason for this finding centers on the availability of opportunities for urban youth. Some researchers have suggested that there are significantly more opportunities for community-based participation in privileged communities; in fact, "29% of early adolescents are not reached by community youth programs at all" (U.S. Department of Education, 1990, as cited in Watts & Flanagan, 2007, p. 787). Because the availability for participation in school and community activities in the current research setting is unknown, it is unclear whether this relationship did not exist because opportunities were not available, because participants did not partake in them, or some other factor(s), such as the reliability of the scale. Future research in this field can include both a measure of availability of opportunities and participation in them for further exploration.

Another limitation is the study's external validity. Because this study was part of a grant award, it was part of a larger prevention program. This could be an important influencing factor that limits the generalizability of the findings beyond the sample group. In addition, because of the survey's length, it was completed over multiple sessions; administering surveys of this length has been criticized for the increased risk of survey fatigue and unreliability, especially in children and youth. The survey was also completed while in school, and although respondents were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, this raises questions about the reliability of the responses with regard to sensitive items.

Finally, the present study is limited with regard to the gender breakdown of the sample. The model that best fit females was identical to the model that best fit all

respondents. However, the sample was approximately two-thirds female, and as a result the best-fitting model for all participants may have been skewed by the large female subpopulation. Future research should further explore gender differences in comparable sized groups to determine whether the findings in this study stand up to differently sized groups.

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APPENDIX A

Perceived Neighborhood Problems Scale

PART A

This set of questions asks about the activities that occur in your community. For each statement, please answer Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree.

Crime and/or drug selling
Fights
Lots of empty or abandoned buildings
I feel safe in my neighborhood
Lots of graffiti

PART B

This set of questions asks you about your availability to alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. For each question, please answer very hard, sort of hard, sort of easy, or very easy.

If you wanted to get some beer, wine, or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey or gin), how easy would it be for you to get some?
If you wanted to get some cigarettes, how easy would it be for you to get some?
If you wanted to get some marijuana, how easy would it be for you to get some?
If you wanted to get a drug like cocaine, LSD, or amphetamines, how easy would it be for you to get some?
If you wanted to get a handgun, how easy would it be for you to get one?

APPENDIX B

Neighborhood Sense of Community Scale (Revised Brief Sense of Community Scale)

These questions ask about your experiences with the neighborhood in which you currently live. For each question, please mark whether you strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree.

I can get what I need in this neighborhood.
This neighborhood helps me fulfill my needs.
I feel like a member of this neighborhood.
I belong in this neighborhood.
I have a say about what goes on in my neighborhood.
People in this neighborhood are good at influencing each another.
I feel connected to this neighborhood.
I have a good bond with others in this neighborhood.

APPENDIX C

Participation in Community and School Scale

| How often do you go to sports practice or play in games? |
| How often do you take lessons or attend classes out of school? |
| Last summer how often did you go to a summer program for learning or for fun? |
| How often do you talk to an adult about what you are doing or thinking? |
| How often do you go to meetings or activities for a club or youth group? |

Answer options: Almost every day, once or twice a week, a few times a month, a few times a year, never.

APPENDIX D

Social Support Scale

Part A

When you need money and other things, how helpful is each of the following people?
Answer options: Not at all helpful, a little helpful, somewhat helpful, a great deal helpful

Group of close friends
Kids your age
Father
Mother
Sisters/brothers
Principal/assistant principal
Teacher
Other people (Guidance Counselors, other adults not listed above, etc.)

Part B

This question *[sic]* asks how you feel about the amount of fun you have in your social
support network. For each question, please tell me if you feel the amount of fun you have
with the person is not at all, somewhat, or a great deal.

Group of close friends
Kids your age
Father
Mother
Sisters/brothers
Principal/assistant principal
Teacher
Other people (Guidance Counselors, other adults not listed above, etc.)

Part C

This question *[sic]* asks how you feel about the helpfulness of your social support network. For each question, please tell me if you feel the person is not at all, somewhat, or a great deal helpful.

| Group of close friends |
| Kids your age |
| Father |
| Mother |
| Sisters/brothers |
| Principal/assistant principal |
| Teacher |
| Other people (Guidance Counselors, other adults not listed above, etc.) |

APPENDIX E

Ethnic Identity Scale (Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure)[9]

This set of questions asks you about your ethnic identity. For each statement, please tell me if you strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, or strongly agree.

I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
I think a lot about how my life will be affected by the ethnic group I belong to.
I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me, in terms of how to relate to my own group and other groups.
In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my culture.
I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments.
I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.
I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

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[9] Two items were removed to align with empirical research that these items are not as reliable as the other items in the scale. These were: "I am not very clear about the role of ethnicity in my life," and "I really have not spent much time trying to learn more about the culture and history of my ethnic group."

APPENDIX F

Psychological Empowerment Scale (Revised Sociopolitical Control Scale)

This set of questions asks how you feel about your participation in activities or groups. For each statement, please tell me if you strongly disagree, disagree, are unsure, agree, or strongly agree.

I am often a leader in groups.
I would prefer to be a leader rather than a follower.
I would rather have a leadership role when I'm involved in a group project.
I can usually organize people to get things done.
Other people usually follow my ideas.
I find it very easy to talk in front of a group.
I like to work on solving a problem myself rather than wait and see if someone else will deal with it.
I like trying new things that are challenging to me.
I enjoy participation because I want to have as much to say in my community or school as possible.
Youth like me can really understand what's going on with my community or school.
I feel like I have a pretty good understanding of the important issues which confront my community or school.
Youth like me have the ability to participate effectively in community or school activities and decision making.
My opinion is important because it could someday make a difference in my community or school.
There are plenty of ways for youth like me to have a say in what my community or school does.
It is important to me that I actively participate in local teen issues.
Most school or community leaders would listen to me.
Many local activities are important to participate in.