

# The Impact of Negative Social Contexts on Low-Income Single Mother's Aggressive Parenting Practice

Saijun Zhang, Ph.D. Candidate

School of Social Work

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

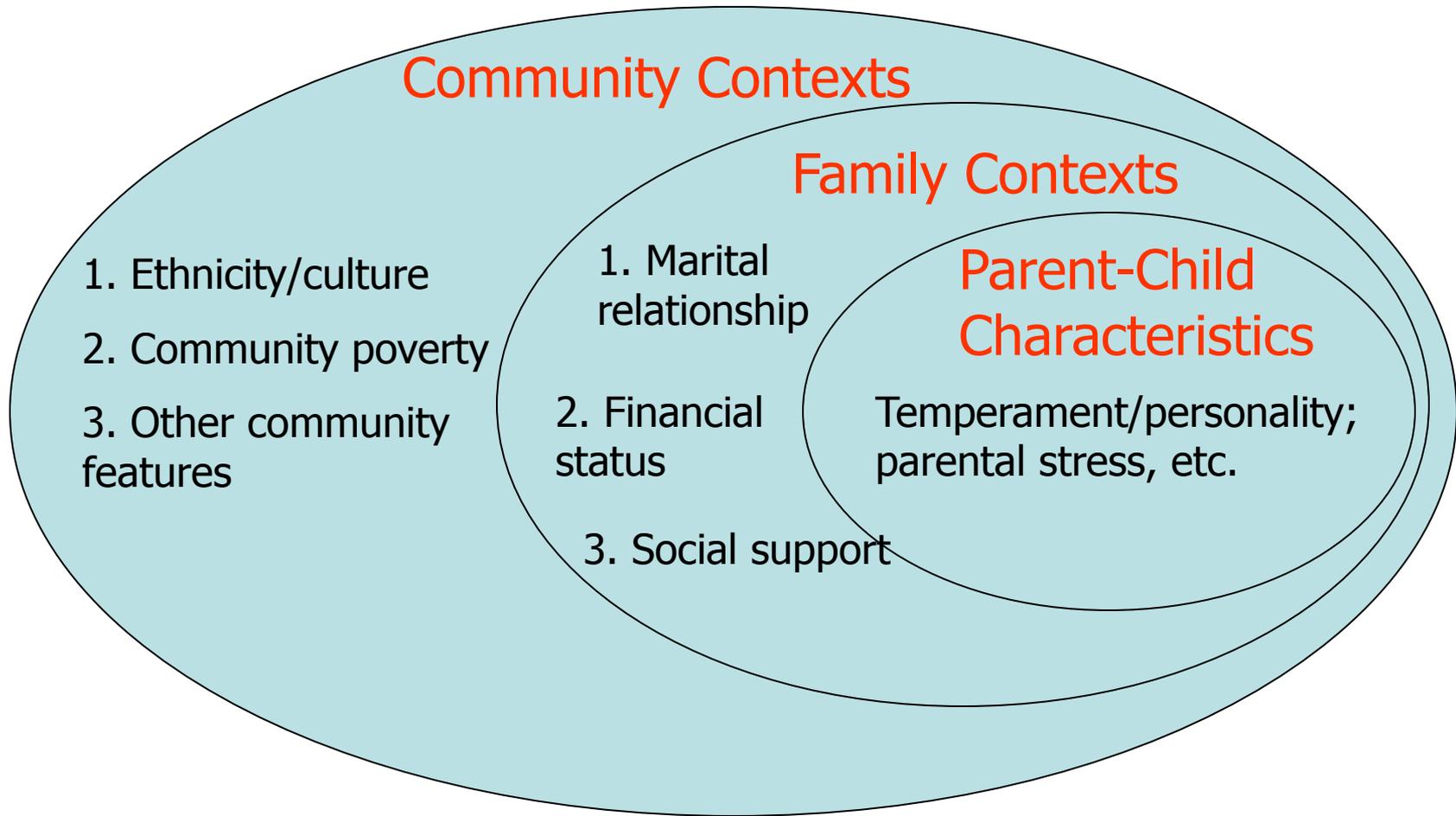
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# Importance of Parenting Practice

- Parenting practice affects children's social competence, academic achievement, psychological development, and behavioral problems.
- Punitive and physically aggressive parenting predict children's disruptive, aggressive and oppositional behaviors
- Such behaviors are often associated with negative mental health outcomes in children's future life (Stormshak, et al., 2000)

# Factors Affecting Parenting

- Three dimensions of factors affecting parenting (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002):



# Existing Research in Parenting Behaviors

- Selected factors affecting parenting have been examined sufficiently:
  - Child-parent characteristics
  - Family contexts
- Very limited studies have been done on factors regarding social contexts, except:
  - Community poverty
  - Ethnicity/culture

# Importance of Understanding Violence Exposure on Parenting

- Increased violence exposure on children's well-being has been a research concern
- Numerous studies have indicated the influence of children's exposure to violence on their behaviors
- However, very few studies have examined violence exposure on parenting behaviors
  - Focus on school-aged children
  - Use qualitative methods

# Knowledge Gap and Research Question

- Few studies have examined the impact of single mother's violence exposure on their parenting of preschool children
- Research question and hypothesis
  - Does intensity of violence exposure affect low-income single mother's aggressive parenting styles with their pre-school children?
  - Hypothesis: positive relationship between violence exposure and aggressive parenting

# Data and Sample

- Data: Fragile Families and Child Well-Being wave 3 and Three-Year In-Home Longitudinal Study of Pre-School Aged Children
- Sample
  - Low income single mothers (N=352)
    - Low-income:  $\leq 200\%$  of Federal Poverty Line
    - Single mothers: without the presence of a partner or a parent
    - Children: preschool

# Analysis Methods

- Descriptive analyses
- Multivariate analyses – Ordinal Logistic Regression model
  - Allows a dependent variable with three and more ordered categories
  - Models relationships between these ordered categories
  - Has different intercepts for each model equation, but has same parameter estimates for all model equations
  - Should meet the parallel regression assumption

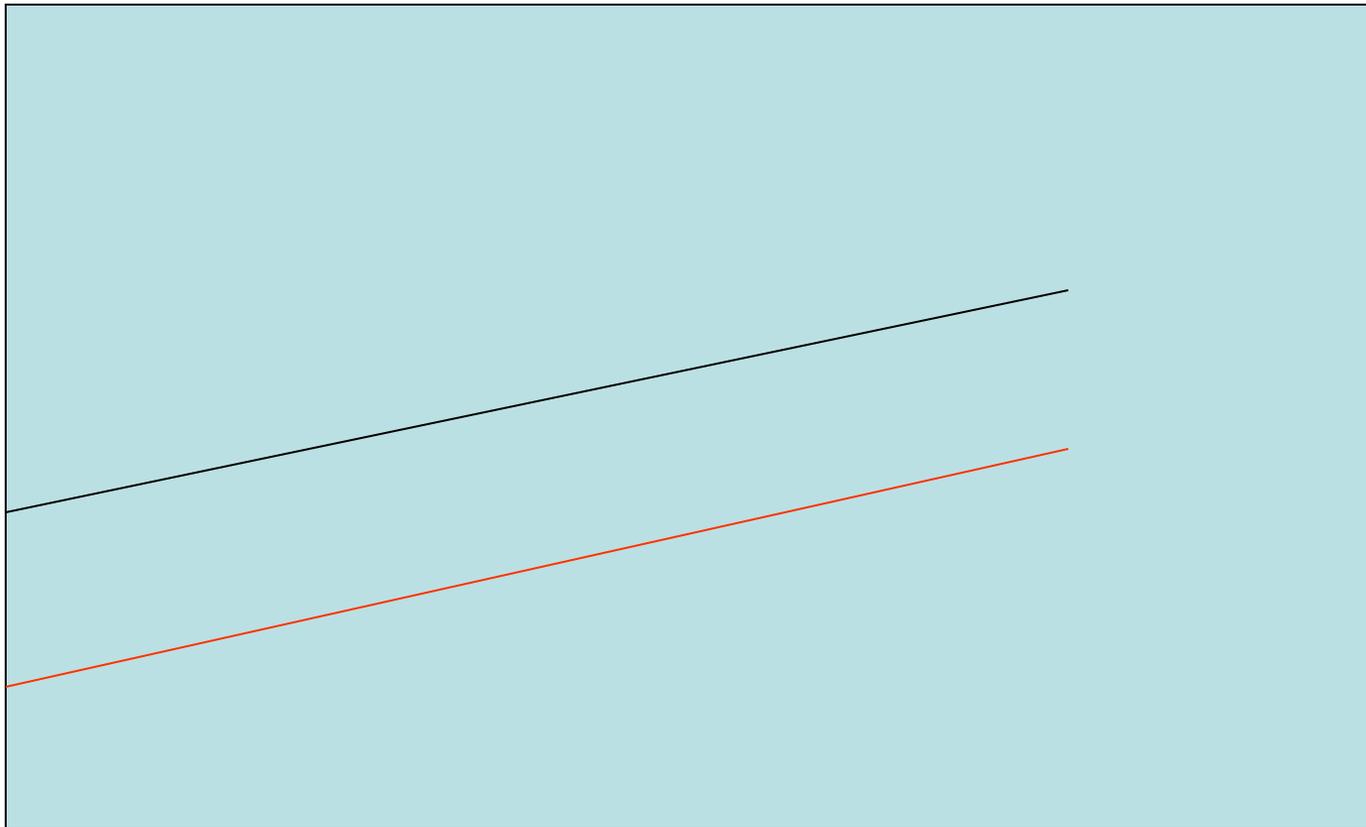
# A Little More Illustration of OLR

- Use a three-category DV for illustration

	Pooled Categories		Pooled Categories
Equation 1	Low	Vs.	Moderate/High
Equation 2	Low & Moderate	Vs.	High

# A Little More Illustration of OLR (cont.)

An illustration of OLR model with a three-category DV



# Questions for Dependent Variables

- Aggressive parenting
  - Psychological aggression
    - Shouted, yelled, or screamed at
    - Threatened to spank or hit but didn't actually do it
    - Swore or cursed at
    - Called him/her dumb or lazy or some other name like that
    - Said you would send him/her away or would kick him/her out of the house
  - Physical assault
    - Spanked him/her on the bottom with your bare hand
    - Hit him/her on the bottom with something like a belt, a hairbrush, a stick or some other hard object
    - Slapped him/her on the hand, arm, or leg
    - Pinched him/her
    - Shook him/her

# Questions for DVs (cont.)

- For each question, subjects were asked to choose one of eight responses to the question: “How many times have you done this in the past year?”
- Each response is weighted and then summed up to form a scale, which is categorized into three levels: low, moderate, & high

Frequency	0	*	1	2	3-5	6-10	11-20	>20
Weight	0	.5	1	2	4	8	15	25

\* Not last year, but happened before

# Questions for Independent Variable

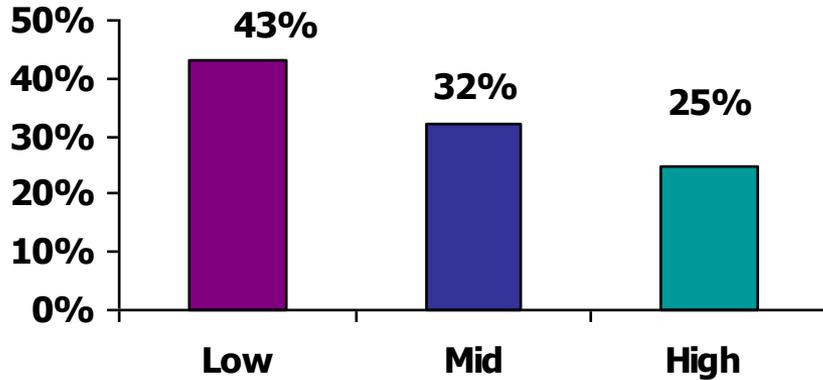
- In the past year, how many times respondents
  - Saw someone get beaten up
  - got beaten up
  - Saw someone attacked with a weapon
  - were attacked with a weapon
  - Saw someone get shot at
  - were shot at
  - Saw someone killed thru violence

# Constructed DVs and IV

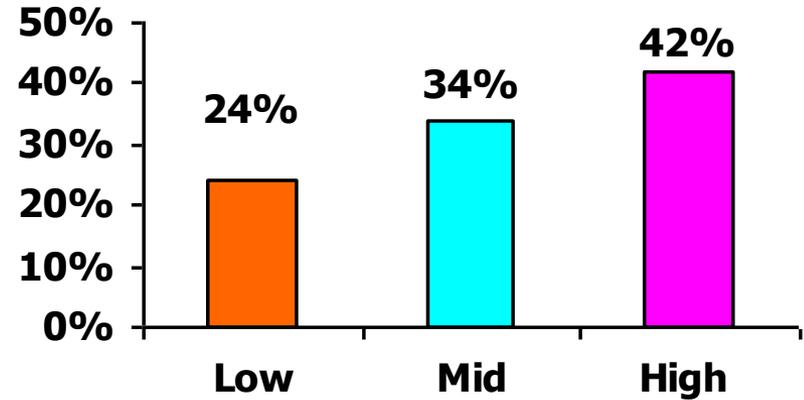
DVs/IV	Categories
Psychological aggression (Std. $\alpha$ =.52)	Low: 0~2 Moderate:3~5 High: 6~22
Physical assault (Std. $\alpha$ =.51)	Low: 0~5 Moderate:6~10 High:11~28
Violence exposure (Std. $\alpha$ =.70)	No: 0 Moderate: 1~2 High: 3~13

# Sample Features

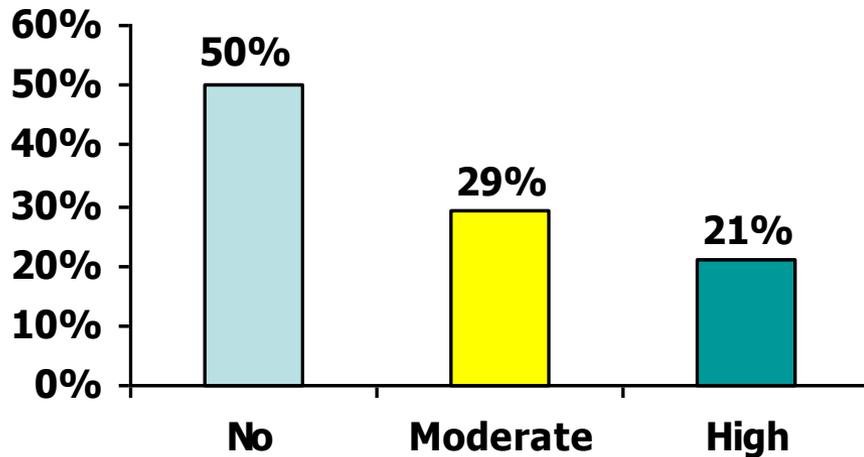
## Physical Assault Style



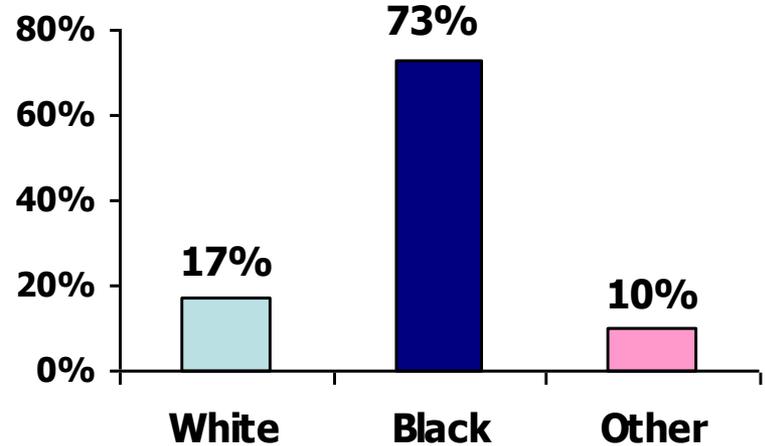
## Psychological Aggression



## Violence Exposure

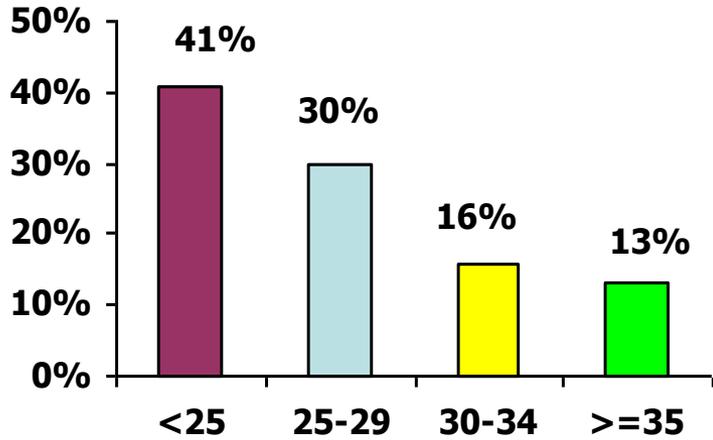


## Race

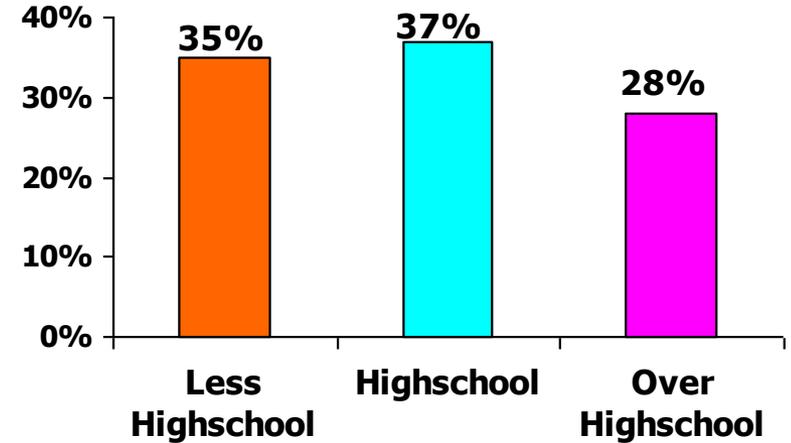


# Sample Features (cont.)

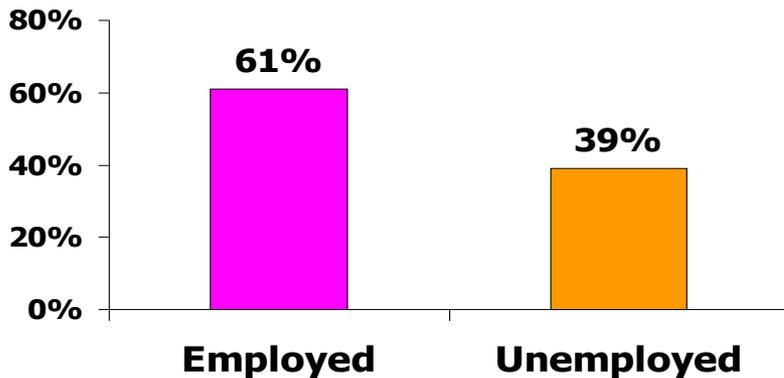
## Age



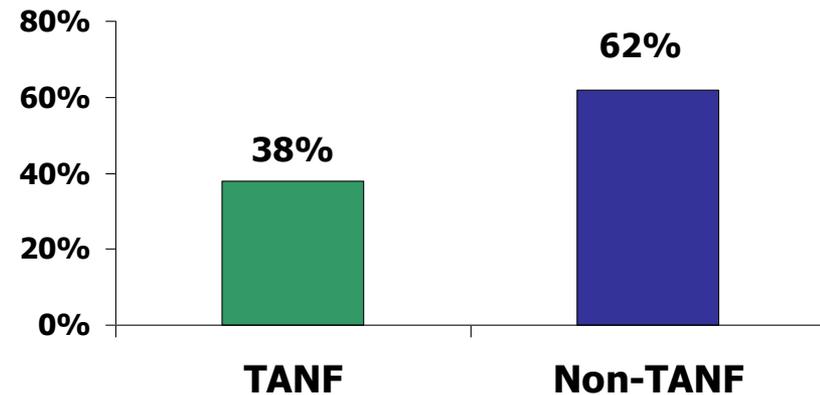
## Education



## Employment



## TANF Recipient



# Multivariate Analyses

Variable	Aggre/OD	Assault/OD
Violence expo - moderate	2.8	1.7*
Violence expo - high	4.4**	2.4***
Stress - moderate	3.1*	1.9*
Stress - high	5.3**	2.8*
African American	4.8***	2.7*
Alcohol - moderate	3.1**	1.9
Alcohol - high	6.0**	2.8
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.19	0.19

- Other factors under control: age, education, number of kids, employment, social support, father support, public assistance recipient, mother health, housing status, etc.

# Conclusions

- Negative social contexts, indicated here by intensity of exposure to violence, has significant impact on low-income single mother's employment of psychological aggression and physical assault in their parenting of preschool children
- Other factors, such as mother's stress levels, being African American, and alcohol use are also positively associated with the likelihood of adopting one or both such parenting styles

# Implications

- Contextual factors such as violent environment should be examined for better understanding of low-income single mother's parenting practice
- Parenting intervention programs should develop strategies to counteract the impact of such negative social contexts
- The mechanism of parent's violence exposure on child well-being merits further investigation

**Thank you!**

- If you have questions or comments, please contact me at:  
[szhang11@illinois.edu](mailto:szhang11@illinois.edu)