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# Ethnic Differences in the Effect of Perceived Parenting on Juvenile Violent Delinquency of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch Boys

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**Abstract** This study considers ethnic differences in the effect of perceived parenting on juvenile delinquency in a sample of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys, by focusing on several perceived maternal and paternal parenting variables. Research has since long acknowledged the association between parenting and juvenile delinquency. However, extent literature appears divided over whether or not the etiology of juvenile delinquency for ethnic minority youth is somehow distinct from standard criminological theories, or whether parenting is a culturally distinct source. Cross-cultural studies on the effect of parenting on juvenile delinquency show inconsistent findings. Furthermore, most studies focus on only one aspect of parenting resulting in limited information regarding the relative importance of various parenting aspects in the etiology of juvenile delinquency. Lastly, almost all work in this area has focused solely on maternal variables or combined maternal and paternal variables in a general categorization without considering the contribution of each parent separately. Overall, the results seem to suggest both specificity and generalizability in the effect of parenting on violent delinquency by ethnicity. Despite the mean level differences on perceived parenting variables and violent delinquency, and despite the moderate differences in the predictive relationships of the variables by ethnicity, the results suggest similarity in the patterns of associations as well. Given that both paternal and maternal parenting variables were significantly related to violent delinquency in Moroccan-Dutch boys in a manner similar to Dutch

peers, it is important that social services and criminal justice offices provide prevention and intervention strategies for both fathers and mothers.

**Keywords** Juvenile delinquency · Violence · Parenting · Ethnicity · Adolescence

## Introduction

Juvenile delinquency remains a serious problem in today's society (Hoeve et al. 2011; Van der Laan et al. 2010; Wampler and Downs 2010). Adolescent boys with a minority background account for a large share in juvenile crime both in the United States as well as in Europe. In the United States, boys with a African-American or Hispanic-American background are overrepresented in juvenile crime figures (Stahl et al. 2007); in Europe, ethnic minority boys with a non-Western background are disproportionately represented among juvenile offenders, such as Turks in Germany, Algerians in France, and Moroccans in Belgium (Esterle-Hedibel 2001; von Gostomski 2003; Put and Walgrave 2006). In the Netherlands, official crime records have long reported Moroccan-Dutch boys as disproportionate juvenile offenders (e.g., De Jong 2007; Jennissen et al. 2009; Stevens et al. 2005, 2007; Van der Laan and Blom 2011) and there has been increasing concern among the police and the general public about the seriousness of the criminal involvement of Moroccan-Dutch boys (Stevens et al. 2007; Van der Laan and Blom 2011).

Research has since long acknowledged the association between parenting practices and juvenile delinquency (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber 1986; Palmer and Hollin 2001; Rankin and Kern 1994; Simons et al. 2007; Stouthamer-Loeber et al. 2002). However, extent literature

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appears divided over whether or not the etiology of juvenile delinquency for ethnic minority youth is somehow distinct from standard criminological theories, or whether parenting is a culturally distinct source (Davalos et al. 2005; Lindahl and Malik 1999; Smith and Krohn 1995). Cross-cultural studies on the effect of parenting on juvenile delinquency show inconsistent findings (Davalos et al. 2005; Davidson and Cardemil 2009; Smith and Krohn 1995). With the growing number of ethnic minorities in Westernized societies and the high rates of registered delinquency among ethnic minorities, the necessity of an examination of ethnic differences in the relation between parenting and juvenile delinquency is underlined.

Family functioning, in particular parenting, is an important predictor for later behavioral outcomes in adolescence (for a review, see Hoeve et al. 2008; Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber 1986; O'Brien and Scott 2007; Stormshak et al. 2000). Three aspects of parenting are relevant with respect to the development of juvenile delinquency: emotional warmth, control, and consistency (Cottle et al. 2001; Steinberg and Silk 2002; Simons et al. 2004; Stouthamer-Loeber et al. 2002; Wissink et al. 2006). Youth who are safely attached to and subjected to sufficient monitoring by their parents are less likely to be involved in delinquency (Palmer and Hollin 2001; Reid et al. 2002), whereas parental rejection has been shown to be positively related to juvenile delinquency (Bogaerts et al. 2006; Hoeve et al. 2011; Low and Stocker 2005; Vazsonyi and Pickering 2003).

However, a number of limitations hinder a more extensive understanding of the relationship between parenting practices and juvenile delinquency. First, most studies focus on only one aspect of parenting. Therefore, information regarding the relative importance of various aspects of parenting in the etiology of juvenile delinquency is limited (Hoeve et al. 2008; Milevsky et al. 2007; Simons et al. 2007). Second, almost all work in this area has focused solely on maternal parenting variables or combined maternal and paternal characteristics in a general categorization without considering the contribution of each parent separately (Hoeve et al. 2011; Milevsky et al. 2007; Williams and Kelly 2005). Fathers and mothers play a distinct role in the lives of their children and the nature of parental involvement differs between fathers and mothers as well as the quantity of the time fathers and mothers spend with their children (Bowlby 1969; Hoeve et al. 2011; Lamb and Oppenheim 1989; Videon 2005). Research has further shown that a father's behavior is predictive of a child's competence above and beyond the mother-child relationship (Cox 2004). Finally, the findings of parenting on juvenile delinquency are mainly applicable to Western societies (Eichelsheim et al. 2010). Considering the fact that current international migrations are of an

unprecedented volume and ethnic minorities constitute a considerable part of the population in Westernized societies, it is an important question to be studied.

Perspectives on which parenting style is most successful in preventing juvenile delinquency may depend quite heavily on what parents and children in a particular society are taught regarding appropriate parenting practices (Chao 2001; Dwairy et al. 2006; Rudy and Grusec 2006) and how it is perceived by the child (Baumrind 1996). For example, the relationship between parents and their children in collective societies (e.g., Moroccan, Chinese, Latin-American, and Puerto Rican) is closer and more mutual dependent than in individualistic societies (Dwairy et al. 2006). In addition, parents in collectivistic cultures emphasize interdependence and commonly use high levels of control over their children to teach them to inhibit the expression of their own needs to attend to the needs of the group they belong to (Bhandari and Barnett 2007; Dwairy and Achoui 2010b; Grusec et al. 1997; Rudy and Grusec 2006). Here, parental control and strictness may be appropriate and even be perceived as an expression of love and care. Several studies have shown that in collectivistic cultures, children experience parental control as normal and not necessarily as reflecting rejection and have found no or a positive association between parental control and a child's developmental outcome (Chao 2001; Dwairy et al. 2006; Kagitcibasi 2005; McWayne et al. 2008). In more individualistic cultures, however, the emphasis is on autonomy, self-reliance and self-confidence (Rudy and Grusec 2006). Parenting that tends to exercise moderate parental control to allow children to become progressively more autonomous, may be appropriate.

With the growing number of ethnic minorities in Westernized societies, numerous scholars called for research on ethnic diverse samples to test the generalizability of past findings (Wissink et al. 2006). Studies with ethnically diverse samples show inconsistent findings. Some studies showed similar relationships across ethnic groups among parenting behaviors and delinquent behavior (Forehand et al. 1997; Gorman-Smith et al. 1996; Vazsonyi et al. 2006), while other studies found ethnic differences in both the strength of the associations between parenting variables and juvenile offending as well as the relationship between parenting variables and juvenile offending. For example, Smith and Krohn (1995) found that parental warmth and support and a greater sense of parental control were related to delinquency for African American and European American adolescents, but not for Hispanic Americans. Further, research has indicated that among African Americans, a higher level of parental warmth and support was associated with fewer behavior problems. However, among Hispanic Americans there was a tendency for higher levels of parental warmth and support to be

associated with more behavior problems (Bradley et al. 2001; Deater-Decker et al. 1996). Similar results were found by Lindahl and Malik (1999), who reported that parental control was positively related to externalizing behavior problems for European American but unrelated for Hispanic American youth, suggesting the possibility of ethnic variation in the effect of parenting on juvenile delinquency. Other studies did not report ethnic differences in the associations between parental warmth and support and criminal involvement. Davalos et al. (2005) found that adolescents' perceptions of parental emotional support were negatively related to criminal involvement for both Hispanic American and White adolescents. Likewise, Vazsonyi et al. (2006) found that the associations between parental warmth and externalizing behavior were not influenced by ethnicity. In summary, studies concerning ethnic differences or similarities in the patterns of associations among parenting variables and juvenile offending provide a mixed picture (Wissink et al. 2006). It seems that the relationship of parental control and delinquent behavior is more culturally influenced, whereas the relationship between parental warmth is more universal (Eichelsheim et al. 2010; Smith and Krohn 1995) albeit results remain inconsistent. Given the inconsistent findings regarding the importance of parenting characteristics in understanding and predicting juvenile delinquency cross-culturally, this study seeks to explore the relationship between parenting and juvenile delinquency in a sample of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. The latter group has the highest crime rates compared to other ethnic groups in the Netherlands, even when corrected for their estimated proportion of the population (Broekhuizen and Driessen 2006).

This study seeks to expand our knowledge of the relationship between ethnicity, perceived parenting and violent offending. In particular, we aim to explore whether different ethnic groups report different levels of perceived parenting measured as a multidimensional construct, while testing the unique contributions for each parent. Furthermore, we aim to examine whether or not the etiology of violent offending for ethnic minority youth is somehow distinct from standard criminological theories, or whether parenting is a culturally distinct source. Juvenile delinquency is often considered to be a predictor of the general crime level of a society. Because the adolescent years are formative, and determine the criminal involvement of young people as they develop into adults, it is important to address juvenile delinquency through effective approaches. From a policy standpoint, it makes sense to concentrate on the most serious offenses. Since youth violence is a visibly significant problem with extremely negative consequences for both society and the particular individuals involved, the focus of our study will be on juvenile violent offending.

Based on previous theory and research, it is hypothesized that ethnic differences in violent offending will be found, with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting higher incidences of violent offending (Hypothesis 1). In addition, it is hypothesized that Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys differ significantly in their perceptions of parental rearing (Hypothesis 2). Furthermore, it is expected that ethnic differences in the association between perceived parenting and violent offending will be found (Hypothesis 3). In addition, although we anticipate that parenting, measured as a multidimensional construct, exerts a significant and direct effect on juvenile delinquency for both groups (Hypothesis 4a), we expect ethnic differences in the effect of parenting on violent offending (Hypothesis 4b). Finally, we anticipate that both paternal and maternal factors each have their unique contribution to juvenile violent offending (Hypothesis 5). It is important to determine whether ethnic differences in levels of perceived parenting exist and add to the differences in levels of violent offending among Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. A focus on both ethnicity and perceived paternal and maternal parenting may serve as a fertile ground for improving theory and research on juvenile delinquency.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

The data used to test these hypotheses are taken from both a school survey and a youth probation office survey. The questionnaire focused on the life-style of adolescents, with a particular interest in both risk and protective factors of juvenile violent offending, in three major cities and two rural districts in the Netherlands in the year 2011.

The intention of the school survey was to survey all fourth, fifth and sixth-grade pupils of five participating high schools via paper-and-pencil interviews during a one hour lesson, while a research staff member was present and surveyed 941 adolescents, both boys and girls. Except for special need schools, all types of schools are represented in the survey. The following analyses were based only on data from 364 Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Compared with the original sample, the number of cases was significantly lower because only adolescent boys who designated themselves as Dutch (295) or Moroccan-Dutch (69) were included in the present analyses.

Second, with the goal of oversampling delinquent boys (Loeber et al. 2005), participants were recruited among Dutch ( $N = 70$ ) and Moroccan-Dutch ( $N = 43$ ) boys subjected to a supervision order either at the time of the study or in the period preceding the study ( $N = 113$ ), in two (regionally operating) youth probation offices, located

in the same cities as the participating schools. To avoid that boys were selected twice, via both school and the youth probation office, probation officers were asked to exclude boys attending one of the five participating high schools. In addition, when a research staff member contacted the boy for scheduling an appointment, a boy was asked which school he attended. None of the boys attended one of the five participating high schools. A research staff member was present while the boys completed the questionnaire on their own either at their school or at a time and place convenient to them but did not look at the participants' responses unless the subject asked for help.

A national evaluation study of youth probation services in the Netherlands, revealed that three types of youth probation clients can be distinguished (Kruissink and Verwers 2002): (1) *occasional offenders*, who committed only one offense or just a few minor offenses; (2) *high risk juveniles*, who have already been in contact with the judicial authorities before. These juveniles do not have day-to-day activities in terms of school or work, and too often use drugs; and (3) *very high risk juveniles*. The living conditions resemble those of the juveniles in the previous category. However, the *very high risk juveniles* have had more contacts with the police and judicial authorities and the reason for the contact with the youth probation service is a more serious offence. This type has already made a small start with a criminal career and tends to continue that path. The occasional offenders represent about one quarter of the sample, about one-third of the sample can be characterized as high-risk juveniles and almost one-third as *very high-risk juveniles* (Kruissink and Verwers 2002). The boys of our sample all belonged to the occasional offenders and were not in custody nor sentenced to prison. They were all school-going youth who lived with (one or both of) their parents. In addition, we would like to emphasize that these boys were suspected of or convicted for any criminal offense and not necessarily suspected of, or convicted for a violent offence. It may very well be the case that some boys were convicted for example skipping school, fare dodging in public transport or shoplifting.

An information letter describing the study was sent to parents who could indicate if they did not wish their son to participate. Participants were informed that the information provided in the questionnaire would remain confidential and that they were free not to participate in the research. Inclusion criteria were (a) sufficient reading ability to complete self-report measures (b) age between 15 and 18 years old. As no background information of the non-participants was available, possible non-response bias could not be estimated.

Participants' anonymity was maintained by ascribing identification numbers to surveys rather than names. At the project site, surveys were inspected for validity (e.g.,

incomplete sections or identical responses to every item). Fifteen boys subsequently were disqualified because they failed the initial validity check. Five boys did not complete the questionnaire, the remainder either filled in identical responses to every item (2) or filled in 'abnormally' high scores on all juvenile delinquency items (8) (for example, stating that he committed each offence thousand times). All the boys came from the school-sample: twelve of them were Dutch; the mean age was 16.01 (SD = 0.91); and socio economic status ranged from medium to upper class.

## Measures

### *Demographics*

Participants were asked to indicate their *age* on a single item: "What is your age?" A measure of *socio-economic status* was captured through the participants rating of his family's wealth. Responses were given from very rich, quite rich, medium rich, not so rich, not rich. Traditionally, SES is measured using a scoring regime based on occupation, monthly household income and education. However, previous research in the Netherlands has shown that relatively many adolescents do not know whether their parents are employed or not and about 40 % does not know the educational level of the parents (Lamers-Winkelman et al. 2007). Since our sample consists of self-reports of adolescent boys, we preferred to capture SES through the boy's rating of his family's wealth (cf. Lamers-Winkelman et al. 2007; Ter Bogt et al. 2005). Finally, participants were asked to indicate their *family structure* by answering the following question: "Which of the following 'home situations' applies best to you?" 'I live with ...' Responses to this item were given as (1) both parents, (b) my father, (c) my mother, (d) both parents on different addresses, (e) other.

### *Ethnicity*

Adolescents' ethnicity was classified based on their responses to a single item in the questionnaire: "What ethnic group best describes you?" (see also Dekovic et al. 2004). Only those adolescents who designated themselves as Dutch, or Moroccan-Dutch were included in the present analyses. Dutch boys serve as the reference category in all regression models in this research.

### *Perceived Parenting Styles*

Based on the original EMBU (Egna Minnen Beträffande Uppfostran: My memories of child upbringing; Perris et al. 1980) Gerlsma et al. (1991) developed the EMBU-A, a

self-report instrument for measuring adolescents' current perception of parental rearing. The EMBU-A consists of two parallel questionnaires concerning relationships with father and mother, each with 56 items, and using a 4-point Likert-type scale (i.g., 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often and 4 = most of the time).

For the present analyses, we only used the subscales *Emotional Warmth*, *Rejection*, and the two items measuring *Strictness* and *Consistency*, because research has shown that these aspects of parenting are seen as relevant with respect to the development of juvenile delinquency (Cottle et al. 2001; Hoesve et al. 2011; Palmer and Hollin 2001; Reid et al. 2002; Stouthamer-Loeber et al. 2002). The questionnaire was introduced with instructions that read: in the next section, we would like to find out more about your relationship with your mother/stepmother/female caretaker and your father/stepfather/male caretaker. Thus, for example, responses would include ratings of a maternal relationship, even though a participant may have indicated living in a single father home. Examples of items measuring *Emotional Warmth* and *Rejection* are "Does your father/mother show you that he/she loves you?" and "Does your father/mother blame you for everything?" respectively.

For paternal emotional warmth, alpha coefficients were 0.95 for Dutch boys and 0.97 for Moroccan-Dutch boys respectively. For maternal emotional warmth, alpha coefficients were 0.93 and 0.97 respectively. As for paternal rejection, alpha coefficients were 0.96 for Dutch boys and 0.93 for Moroccan-Dutch boys. For maternal rejection, alpha coefficients were 0.93 and 0.91. All coefficients indicate a high reliability (Kline 1999; Murphy and Davidshofer 1998).

### *Violent Delinquency*

*Violent delinquency* was assessed using the Youth Delinquency Survey of the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice (2005), a self-report measure of delinquent behaviour by the youngsters. For each offense, the youngster was asked whether he had 'ever' committed it (lifetime prevalence) and, if so, 'how often in the previous 12 months' (number of incidences in the previous year). For the present analyses only the number of *violent incidences* (nine-item index) committed in the previous year was considered.

The internal consistency reliability (Alpha coefficient) was 0.71 for Dutch boys and 0.85 for Moroccan-Dutch boys, indicating an acceptable to good reliability (Kline 1999; Murphy and Davidshofer 1998).

### *Social Desirability*

Given the possibility of cultural variance in willingness to self-disclose socially undesirable behavior (e.g., Junger-Tas 1996), the social desirability scale from the "*Dating Violence Questionnaire*" (Douglas and Straus 2006) was used as a control. The scale consists of 13 items, using a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree) on behaviors and emotions that are slightly undesirable but true for almost everyone, such as 'There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone' and 'I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget'. The more of these items the respondent denies, the more likely a respondent is to avoid admitting the undesirable criminal behaviors that are the focus of this study. Scale reliability of the social desirability measure in this study was fair as coefficient alpha was 0.63.

### Statistical Analyses

As a first step, initial descriptive statistics were computed for several demographic variables. Means and standard deviations were computed for continuous variables, while percentages are presented for categorical variables. Additionally, to identify potential confounders we performed independent sample-*t* tests and Chi square tests to compare means and percentages for Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Next, several analyses of covariances (ANCOVAS) were conducted, controlling for background variables such as age, SES and family structure, to examine differences in self-reported juvenile delinquency and parenting variables of fathers and mothers respectively by ethnic group. Further, in anticipation of predictive analyses, a correlation matrix for paternal parenting variables, maternal parenting variables, and self-reported violent delinquency was computed. Finally, hierarchical regression analyses were utilized using both paternal and maternal parenting variables as predictors of violent delinquency by ethnicity and key demographic variables as controls. An inversely repeated 2-step procedure was performed to examine the unique variance explained by each set of father and mother parenting variables. Variance that was shared between the two sets could then be identified (see Vazsonyi and Pickering 2003). In the first analysis, key demographics were entered as a control in step 1, all paternal parenting variables were entered in the second step followed by all maternal parenting variables. In the second part of this analysis, all maternal parenting variables were entered in the second step and then all paternal parenting variables.

All analyses were performed on the total sample as well as the school and offender sample separately. Similar

patterns in results in the separate samples were found as in the total sample. Although effect sizes differed, this indicates that the results on the total sample did not suffer from sample selection bias. We omitted reporting the results of the separate samples to save space; they are available upon request.

## Results

### Initial Analyses

Characteristics of the study participants are reported in Table 1. More than three quarters of the sample identified themselves as Dutch (76.5 %), the remainder as Moroccan-Dutch (23.5 %). Participants of the study ranged in age from 15 to 18, with a mean age of 15.8 years ( $SD = .9$ ). Almost 12 % of the sample indicated his family's socio-economic status as low, rating his family's wealth as not (so) rich. By far, most boys reported that they lived with both parents (84.7 %). Given the possibility of cultural variance in willingness to self-disclose socially undesirable behavior (e.g., Junger-Tas 1996), a social desirability scale was used as a control. The overall mean score on social desirability was 32.6 ( $SD = 4.7$ ). No significant differences in mean scores were found between the two groups ( $t = -.83$ ,  $p = .41$ ) and therefore this variable was not included in further analyses. Significant differences between the groups were found on the variables age

( $t = -4.01$ ,  $p < .001$ ), socio-economic status ( $\chi^2(4) = 63.67$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and family structure ( $\chi^2(4) = 9.88$ ,  $p = .04$ ).

### Analyses of Covariance

A number of ANCOVAs were carried out to examine the effect of ethnicity on the criterion measures using the three background variables age, SES and family structure, as covariates. A summary of these analyses is presented in Table 2.

### Violent Offending

A one-way analysis of covariance showed that ethnicity had significant effect ( $F = 23.47$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). On average, Moroccan-Dutch boys (1.8,  $SD = 2.6$ ) reported committing significantly more violent acts in the previous year than their Dutch peers (.8,  $SD = 1.3$ ).

### Paternal Parenting Variables

Dutch boys reported significantly higher levels of paternal emotional warmth (59.7,  $SD = 13.8$ ) as well as paternal consistency (3.0,  $SD = 1.0$ ) in comparison to Moroccan-Dutch boys (45.7,  $SD = 18.5$  and 2.5,  $SD = 1.1$ ) ( $F = 44.60$ ,  $p < .001$ , for emotional warmth;  $F = 18.94$ ,  $p < .001$ , for consistency). Further, Dutch boys reported significantly lower levels of paternal rejection (33.3,  $SD = 16.6$ ) and paternal strictness (2.2,  $SD = 1.2$ ) in

**Table 1** Sample characteristics

	Dutch boys (N = 365)		Moroccan boys (N = 112)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	
	M	SD	M	SD				
Age	15.7	.8	16.1	1.0	-4.01	<.001	-.44	
Social desirability	32.5	4.7	32.8	4.7	-.83	.41	-.09	
		N	%	N	%	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
Socio economic status						63.67	<.001	.37
Very rich		16	4.4	2	1.8			
Quite rich		127	34.8	8	7.1			
Medium rich		199	54.5	70	62.5			
Not so rich		19	5.2	23	20.5			
Not rich		4	1.1	9	8.0			
Family structure						9.88	.04	.14
Both parents		299	81.9	105	93.8			
My father		5	1.4	1	.9			
My mother		20	5.5	3	2.7			
Parents different addresses		37	10.1	3	2.7			
Other		4	1.1	0	0.0			

Discrepancies between totals when summed reflects rounding errors

**Table 2** ANCOVA results for violent delinquency and parenting variables in Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys

	Dutch boys (N = 365)		Moroccan boys (N = 112)		F	p	$\eta^2$
	M	SD	M	SD			
Violent delinquency	.8	1.3	1.8	2.6	23.47	<.001	.05
Parenting variables							
Father items							
Emotional warmth	59.7	13.8	45.7	18.5	44.60	<.001	.09
Rejection	33.3	16.6	39.6	15.3	9.16	<.001	.02
Strictness	2.2	1.2	2.6	1.2	12.68	<.001	.03
Consistency	3.0	1.0	2.5	1.1	18.94	<.001	.04
Mother items							
Emotional warmth	61.0	11.9	49.5	16.6	36.35	<.001	.07
Rejection	30.9	12.5	34.6	12.2	5.90	.02	.01
Strictness	2.0	1.0	2.1	.9	.84	.36	<.001
Consistency	3.0	1.0	2.6	1.0	12.45	<.001	.03

Missing data (N = 3) were not included in calculations of Means  
df = 1;  $\eta^2$  = the effect size

comparison to Moroccan-Dutch boys (39.6, SD = 15.3 and 2.6, SD = 1.2) ( $F = -9.16, < .001$ , for rejection;  $F = 12.68, p < .001$ , for strictness).

*Maternal Parenting Variables*

Dutch boys reported significantly higher levels of maternal emotional warmth (61.0, SD = 11.9) and maternal consistency (3.0, SD = 1.0) in comparison to Moroccan-Dutch boys (49.5, SD = 16.6; 2.6, SD = 1.0;  $F = 36.35, p < .001$ , for emotional warmth;  $F = 12.45, p < .001$ , for consistency). Lastly, Dutch boys reported significantly lower levels of maternal rejection (30.9, SD = 12.5) in comparison to Moroccan-Dutch boys (34.6, SD = 12.2;  $F = 5.90, p = .02$ ). However, no significant differences were found in maternal strictness.

*Correlational Analyses*

Table 3 displays the associations among the measures separately for Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys. Results show that all (significant) correlations between both paternal as well as maternal parenting variables and violent offending were in the expected direction, although the strength of the associations varied with the specific aspect of paternal and maternal parenting respectively considered and across ethnic group. In general, the indicators of the quality of the parent–child relationship, respectively emotional warmth and rejection, were more strongly related to juvenile violent offending than were the concrete parenting behavior s strictness and consistency. Furthermore, for Dutch boys, two of the predictor variables were unrelated to violent delinquency, namely both paternal and maternal

consistency. The effect sizes of the remaining parental variables and violent delinquency were significant but small, ranging from  $r = .09$  to  $r = .16$  (Cohen 1988). For Moroccan-Dutch boys all predictor variables were significantly related to violent delinquency. The effect sizes of both paternal and maternal strictness and consistency and violent delinquency were small, ranging from  $r = .19$  and  $r = .40$ . For the remaining parental variables all effects were moderate, ranging from  $r = .45$  to  $r = .49$  (Cohen 1988). A z test for comparing independent correlations (DeCoster 2007) showed that with the exception of the variables paternal and maternal strictness (respectively,  $Z = 11.221, p = .22$  and  $Z = 10.661, p = .51$ ), the strength of the associations for all paternal and maternal variables and violent delinquency (all,  $p < .01$ ) were significantly stronger for Moroccan-Dutch boys than for Dutch boys.

The intercorrelations among both paternal and maternal parenting variables were moderate to strong, with especially strong negative associations found between parental emotional warmth and rejection. Here again, differences among both ethnic groups were found, with paternal warmth was positively associated with paternal strictness for Dutch boys, while it was negatively associated for Moroccan-Dutch boys.

*Hierarchical Regression Analyses*

To determine whether it was necessary to analyze separately by ethnicity, regression analyses including ethnicity as a main effect as well as sets of interaction terms (Ethnicity × Paternal variables and Ethnicity × Maternal variables) were conducted to test whether ethnicity added any explanatory power beyond the independent paternal

**Table 3** Correlations of individual predictors and violent delinquency by ethnicity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Violent delinquency		-.16**	.13**	.09*	.04ns	-.14**	.16**	.12**	-.02ns
2. Father warmth	-.45**		-.16ns	.09*	.66*	.59**	-.28**	-.15**	.30**
3. Rejection	.48**	-.51**		.69**	.20**	-.24**	.53**	.26**	-.15**
4. Strictness	.22**	-.42**	.59**		.20**	-.14**	.30**	.40**	-.07ns
5. Consistency	-.33**	.67**	-.39**	-.06ns		.37**	-.12*	-.10*	.54**
6. Mother warmth	-.49**	.59**	-.52**	-.39**	.57**		-.20**	-.14**	.55**
7. Rejection	.49**	-.37**	.76**	.34**	-.35**	-.46**		.49**	-.01ns
8. Strictness	.19*	-.19*	.30**	.61**	.00ns	-.25**	.44**		-.01ns
9. Consistency	-.40**	.55**	-.42**	-.07ns	.77**	.65**	-.49**	.01ns	

Correlation for Dutch boys are found in the top half of the matrix, while those for Moroccan-Dutch boys are in the bottom half

ns nonsignificant; \* $p \leq .05$ ; \*\* $p \leq .01$ ; \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

and maternal variables already included in the model. Hierarchical regressions were run for self-reported violent delinquency. The control variables and the independent variables were entered on the first step, ethnicity was entered as a main effect on the second step, and the set of interaction terms which applied to that particular analysis was entered on the third step. The test of both main effect and interaction terms was necessary to thoroughly exhaust the possibility that ethnicity may add explanatory power which should be explored through separate analyses. In the analysis involving paternal variables as the independent variable, the main effect of ethnicity accounted for only 1 % of variance of violent delinquency ( $R^2 = .01$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, ethnicity added another 5 % of variance ( $R^2 = .05$ ,  $p < .01$ ) through the subsequent entry of the four Ethnicity  $\times$  Paternal interaction terms (entered simultaneously as a set on the third step of the regression after the control and independent variables as well as ethnicity had been partialled out). For the analysis involving maternal variables as the independent variable, the main effect of ethnicity accounted for 2 % of variance of violent delinquency ( $R^2 = .02$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, ethnicity added another 7 % of the variance ( $R^2 = .07$ ,  $p < .01$ ) through the subsequent entry of the four Ethnicity  $\times$  Maternal interaction terms. These findings indicate that ethnicity plays a significant role in the relationship between self-reported delinquency and paternal and maternal parenting domains. The fact that these tests revealed a significant amount of variance explained by both ethnicity and the interaction term sets or both is an indication that it is necessary to complete subsequent regression analyses separately by ethnicity. The results of the separate hierarchical regression analyses are presented in Tables 4 and 5. In these analyses, we controlled for age, socio-economic class and family structure. When all paternal and maternal parenting variables respectively are entered as one block, this study shows the significance of

perceived paternal and maternal emotional warmth in self-reported violent delinquency. In addition, the results show that paternal and maternal variables together explain 6 % of the variance in self-reported violent delinquency for Dutch boys and 23 % for Moroccan-Dutch boys. When the amount of variance explained by control variables was included in the model, the predictor variables explained 11 % of the total variance of violent delinquency for Dutch and 38 % for Moroccan-Dutch adolescent boys. The inversely repeated 2-step procedure indicates that for Dutch boys the paternal parenting variables uniquely explain 2 % of the variance and the maternal parenting variables uniquely explain 1 % of the variance. Another 4 % of the variance in self-reported delinquency was shared by both father and mother variables. For Moroccan-Dutch boys, paternal parenting variables uniquely explain 1 % of the variance and the maternal parenting variables uniquely explain 4 % of the variance. Further, about 18 % of the variance in self-reported delinquency was shared by both father and mother variables.

## Discussion

Although both theory and empirical research recognize the family as an important influence on juvenile delinquency (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber 1986; Palmer and Hollin 2001; Simons et al. 2007; Stouthamer-Loeber et al. 2002), extant literature appears divided over whether or not the etiology of violent delinquency for ethnic minority youth is somehow distinct from standard criminological theories, and whether parenting is a culturally distinct source (Davalos et al. 2005; Lindahl and Malik 1999; Smith and Krohn 1995). Studies with ethnically diverse samples show inconsistent findings (Davalos et al. 2005; Davidson and Cardemil 2009; Wissink et al. 2006). Our analyses attend to the much needed empirical research on the etiology of

**Table 4** Hierarchical regression analyses on violent offending: Dutch boys

	B	SE B	β
<b>Model 1</b>			
<i>Step 1. Demographics<sup>a</sup></i>			
Age	.17	.09	.10
SES	-.39***	.10	-.20
Family structure	.18**	.07	.14
<i>Step 2. Father items<sup>b</sup></i>			
Warmth	-.02***	.01	-.23
Rejection	.01	.01	.13
Strictness	-.02	.08	-.01
Consistency	.10	.09	.08
<i>Step 3. Mother items<sup>c</sup></i>			
Warmth	.00	.01	.00
Rejection	.00	.01	.02
Strictness	.14	.09	.09
Consistency	.01	.11	.01
<b>Model 2</b>			
<i>Step 1. Demographics<sup>a</sup></i>			
Age	.17	.09	.10
SES	-.39***	.10	-.20
Family structure	.18**	.07	.14
<i>Step 2. Mother items<sup>b</sup></i>			
Warmth	-.02*	.01	-.14
Rejection	.01	.01	.07
Strictness	.10	.08	.07
Consistency	.06	.09	.04
<i>Step 3. Father items<sup>c</sup></i>			
Warmth	-.02	.01	-.23
Rejection	.01	.01	.14
Strictness	-.07	.09	-.06
Consistency	.11	.11	.08

Model 1

<sup>a</sup> Step 1:  $R^2 = .06$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .06$ ;  $\Delta F = 7.79***$

<sup>b</sup> Step 2:  $R^2 = .11$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .05$ ;  $\Delta F = 4.44**$

<sup>c</sup> Step 3:  $R^2 = .11$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ;  $\Delta F = .62ns$

Model 2

<sup>a</sup> Step 1:  $R^2 = .06$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .06$ ;  $\Delta F = 7.79***$

<sup>b</sup> Step 2:  $R^2 = .10$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .04$ ;  $\Delta F = 3.56**$

<sup>c</sup> Step 3:  $R^2 = .11$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ;  $\Delta F = 1.46ns$

the involvement of juvenile violent delinquency for ethnic minority youth. For these reasons alone, we consider this study on parenting an important step in understanding the involvement of Moroccan-Dutch boys in juvenile delinquency. Results build upon the extant literature in several ways.

First, the current study demonstrates that the number of incidences of violent offending is higher for Moroccan-Dutch boys than for native Dutch boys (*hypothesis 1*). This

**Table 5** Hierarchical Regression analyses on violent offending: Moroccan-Dutch boys

	B	SE B	β
<b>Model 1</b>			
<i>Step 1. Demographics<sup>a</sup></i>			
Age	-.03	.22	-.01
SES	1.25***	.30	.38
Family structure	-.84*	.40	-.19
<i>Step 2. Father items<sup>b</sup></i>			
Warmth	-.04*	.02	-.26
Rejection	.07***	.02	.39
Strictness	-.31	.24	-.15
Consistency	.06	.27	.03
<i>Step 3. Mother items<sup>c</sup></i>			
Warmth	-.02	.04	-.11
Rejection	.04	.04	.19
Strictness	.12	.40	.04
Consistency	-.23	.46	-.09
<b>Model 2</b>			
<i>Step 1. Demographics<sup>a</sup></i>			
Age	-.03	.22	-.01
SES	1.25***	.30	.38
Family structure	-.84*	.40	-.19
<i>Step 2. Mother items<sup>b</sup></i>			
Warmth	-.04*	.02	-.25
Rejection	.07**	.02	.34
Strictness	-.15	.27	-.05
Consistency	-.06	.30	-.02
<i>Step 3. Father items<sup>c</sup></i>			
Warmth	-.02	.04	.16
Rejection	.04	.03	.21
Strictness	-.27	.34	-.13
Consistency	.19	.41	.08

Model 1

<sup>a</sup> Step 1:  $R^2 = .16$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .16$ ;  $\Delta F = 6.64***$

<sup>b</sup> Step 2:  $R^2 = .34$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .19$ ;  $\Delta F = 7.48**$

<sup>c</sup> Step 3:  $R^2 = .38$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .04$ ;  $\Delta F = 1.42ns$

Model 2

<sup>a</sup> Step 1:  $R^2 = .16$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .16$ ;  $\Delta F = 6.64***$

<sup>b</sup> Step 2:  $R^2 = .37$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .21$ ;  $\Delta F = 8.83***$

<sup>c</sup> Step 3:  $R^2 = .38$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ;  $\Delta F = .39ns$

is in line with the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch boys in official crime statistics (e.g., De jong 2007; Jennissen et al. 2009; Veen et al. 2011).

Second, the findings of this study demonstrate ethnic differences in the degree to which Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys perceive their parents' upbringing (*hypothesis 2*), with Moroccan-Dutch boys reporting lower levels of parental emotional warmth and parental consistency, and higher levels of parental rejection and strictness in

comparison with their Dutch peers. Here, ethnicity seems to be an important factor associated with parenting styles and patterns. This is in line with previous studies demonstrating that parent–child relationships differ between culture, since parents behave according to the values and norms in their own culture (Dwairy et al. 2006). However, several studies have shown that the relationship between parents and their children in collectivistic cultures, such as the Moroccan culture, is closer and mutually dependent than in individualistic societies, such as the Netherlands (Dwairy et al. 2006). Based on those studies, one would expect that Moroccan-Dutch boys in our study would have reported higher levels of parental emotional warmth and lower levels of parental rejection. However, this is not found. One possible explanation is that perceived connectedness is positively associated with a higher family economic status (Dwairy and Achoui 2010a, b). Significant differences in socio-economic status were found, with Moroccan-Dutch boys rating their family's wealth significantly lower than their Dutch peers. However, alternative explanations are possible and this issue should be studied in greater depth.

Third, this study finds ethnic differences in the association between perceived parenting and violent offending (*hypothesis 3*). Like previous studies, this study finds that, within both groups, emotional warmth and rejection is significantly associated to violent offending. A boy who feels unloved and/or rejected seems unlikely to be very involved with his parents at both an emotional as well as practical level. This provides further evidence that adolescent boys who are reared in a way they perceive to be cold and unsupportive may be more likely to be involved in juvenile violent delinquency and vice versa. Similarly, and in line with previous studies, the results show that for both Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys, perceived strictness is associated to violent delinquency (Hoeve et al. 2011; Low and Stocker 2005; Vazsonyi and Pickering 2003). However, unlike prior research, perceived paternal and maternal consistency are unrelated to violent delinquency for Dutch boys (Cottle et al. 2001; Steinberg and Silk 2002; Simons et al. 2004; Stouthamer-Loeber et al. 2002). This might be due to the fact that the current study is limited in the sense that consistency in parenting was a single-item measure. One of the disadvantages of single-item measures may lie in their psychometric properties, although research has shown the advantages of single-item measures as straightforward, simple and economic (Burisch 1984; Robins et al. 2001).

In addition, and in line with a vast body of research identifying ethnic differences in the strength of associations between parenting variables and violent offending (e.g., Kuperminc et al. 2004; Smith and Krohn 1995; Wissink et al. 2006), the associations of almost all

parenting variables and violent delinquency are significantly stronger for Moroccan-Dutch boys than for Dutch boys. Although the following speculation awaits empirical validation, a possible explanation could be found by the fact that one of the primary values across Moroccan families is the value of familism, as opposed to the Western value of autonomy (ref). Familism carries the expectations and sense of obligation that the family will be the primary source of support, both instrumental and emotional. Thus, when parents fail to provide sufficient help and support due to a lack of resources and skills to do better, which may be particularly true for ethnic minority families in general and Moroccan-Dutch families in particular, it seems reasonable to expect that the effects of perceived parenting on violent offending are much stronger for Moroccan-Dutch boys in comparison with their Dutch peers. Further work should be done to identify possible differences and answers regarding these differences in familial influence on violent offending across various ethnicities.

Furthermore, ethnic differences are also found between the intercorrelations among all paternal and maternal parenting variables. All intercorrelations are moderate to strong, with especially strong negative associations between parental emotional warmth and rejection. Somewhat counterintuitively, paternal warmth is positively associated with paternal strictness for Dutch boys, while it is negatively associated for Moroccan-Dutch boys. Although it is theorized that relatively strict parenting influences the parent–child relationship positively for children with a non-western background, but not western children (Bhandari and Barnett 2007), research has also shown that paternal behaviour is more significant in western societies, while maternal behaviour is more significant in traditional societies (Dwairy et al. 2006). It is likely that Dutch boys perceive paternal strictness as an expression of parental involvement and care, while maternal strictness might be perceived as parental interference. This may be particularly true for late adolescence. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that for Dutch boys the bivariate associations between paternal strictness and paternal emotional warmth is small. For Moroccan-Dutch families, where gender role socialization is still strongly adhered to (Stevens et al. 2007), the mother role traditionally is defined as that of caregiver, while the father role has been traditionally defined as that of a provider and disciplinarian (Stevens et al. 2007). In this perspective, Moroccan-Dutch boys might perceive paternal strictness as a necessity rather than normal paternal behavior.

Fourth, this study shows that perceived parenting exerts a significant and direct effect on violent offending. This is in line with a vast body of research identifying parenting variables as an important influence on adolescent violent offending (e.g., Steinberg and Silk 2002; Steinberg et al.

2006) (*hypothesis 4a*). This study extends prior research by suggesting that perceived paternal and maternal parenting, measured as a multidimensional construct, contributes to self-reported violent offending in both ethnic groups in a rather similar way. This is in line with studies demonstrating similar relationships across ethnic groups between parenting variables and delinquency (for example Forehand et al. 1997; Gorman-Smith et al. 1996; Vazsonyi et al. 2006). However, this study does show ethnic differences in the strength of this effect (*hypothesis 4b*). In predictive analyses, when all paternal and maternal parenting variables respectively are entered as one block, this study shows that the shared variance of paternal and maternal parenting variables on violent delinquency does significantly differ by ethnicity, with Moroccan-Dutch boys having a larger variance explained. This seems to reflect the notion that the relationship between parents and their children in collectivistic cultures is closer and mutually dependent than in individualistic cultures (Dwairy et al. 2006). Further study using larger and more carefully stratified samples and controlling for any possible mediating factors is required to investigate the effect of parenting on juvenile delinquency cross-culturally.

Finally, although we anticipated that both paternal and maternal factors each would have their unique contribution to juvenile violent offending (*hypothesis 5*) the results of our study do not show significant differences between the unique contribution of fathers and mothers respectively. Apparently, although fathers and mothers differ in both quality and quantity of parental involvement (Dwairy and Achoui 2010b; Hovee et al. 2011; Videon 2005), this does not necessarily reflect differences in the effect of parenting variables on violent delinquency for each parent separately. These findings appear counterintuitive because despite the fact that fathers and mothers play a distinct role in the lives of their children and the nature of parental involvement differs between fathers and mothers, their unique contribution to violent offending is small. This might be particularly true for Moroccan-Dutch families, where gender role socialization is still strongly adhered to (Stevens et al. 2007), with the mother role traditionally defined as that of caregiver; thus, women become socialized to provide warmth and care for their children, while the father role has been traditionally defined as that of a provider and disciplinarian (Stevens et al. 2007). These different responsibilities may in turn prompt mothers and fathers to use different styles of parenting in their interactions with their children. At the same time, in the current social structure the father and mother role is changing, with men helping their spouses in parenting, thus leading to fathers' spending more time with and taking more care of their children. In return women are allowed to be more flexible in their roles balancing a career with motherhood (Bianchi 2000). It may

be the case that due to these role changes mothers and fathers adopt a similar stance to parenting or that a boy perceives their parents as one stance. In addition, because of the multiple associations between maternal and paternal parenting factors, one can assume that the shared variance between the perceived parenting of the mother and violent offending overlaps with the shared variance between the perceived parenting of the father and violent offending. Therefore, when the shared variance of all maternal and all paternal factors is assessed, the unique contribution of each parent might be relatively small.

As our society continues to become increasingly multi-ethnic, a clear mandate exists for research with ethnic diverse samples. This study constitutes an initial effort towards understanding the effect of parenting on violent offending for diverse groups of families and children. The findings of this study seem to suggest both specificity and generalizability in the effect of parenting on juvenile violent delinquency by ethnicity. Despite the mean level differences on predictor and outcome variables, and despite the moderate differences in the predictive relationships of the variables by ethnicity, the results suggest great similarity in the patterns of associations as well. Given that both paternal and maternal parenting variables were significantly related to juvenile violent delinquency in Moroccan-Dutch boys in a manner similar to Dutch peers, it is important that social services and criminal justice offices provide prevention and intervention strategies for both fathers and mothers.

#### Limitations

Several limitations of the research design are worth mentioning. First, conclusions are based on a sample of Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch boys, in which juvenile delinquents are oversampled implicating that our sample is not necessarily representative of all Moroccan-Dutch and native Dutch adolescent boys. Second, measures are based on adolescent self-reports. Although concerns about the relative merits of self-reported delinquency and official statistics exist (Juby and Farrington 2001), self-report measures provide a widely preferred method of measuring juvenile delinquency in research (Thornberry and Krohn 2000; Wells and Rankin 1991). Whereas reliance on official reports might introduce layers of potential bias between the actual behavior and the data (e.g., a substantial amount of crime is not reported, and even many crimes that are reported or brought to the attention of law enforcement agents are not officially recorded), self-reports of delinquency are considered as the data source nearest to the actual behavior (Thornberry and Krohn 2000). Third, the study's reliance on cross-sectional data limits causal inferences. Without longitudinal data, temporal ordering of

the variables cannot be determined nor can ethnic differences be assessed in individual pathways to violent offending. It may very well be that a boy's delinquent behaviour led parents to become more controlling and strict, or to withdraw emotionally. Without longitudinal data, temporal ordering of the variables cannot be determined. Fourth, children construe the meaning of a parenting style on the basis what is normative (Kagitcibasi 2005), but to which context do immigrant children with a non-western background refer to as being normative: the 'new' individualistic host culture or the cultural group they belong to? Further complicating these issues are studies suggesting that individualistic and collectivistic tendencies can coexist (Killen and Wainryb 2000). It may very well be that for some parenting variables a more individualistic approach is seen as normative, and for others a more collectivistic approach. However, our survey data does not inform us on these potential individual differences. Obviously, more studies are needed to broaden our knowledge of ethnic diversity in the relationship between parenting and violent offending. Finally, we classify adolescent boys into ethnic categories according to their responses on a single item in the questionnaire: "What is your ethnicity?" Self-perceived ethnicity might possibly constitute a selective group within the total group of migrants, namely those that choose still to identify with their original ethnic background, whereas those who identify as belonging to their host country are no longer detectable. Thus, migrants who identify with the host culture are left out of the comparison, possibly leading to a biased picture of the ethnic specificity of the relationship between parenting and youth delinquency. However, the definitions for autochthonous and allochthonous derived from the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS, Statistics Netherlands), in which initial immigrants are labeled first-generation allochthonous, individuals born in the Netherlands but at least one parent was born abroad are labeled as second-generation allochthonous and their children are often referred to as third-generation allochthonous, are not neutral either. The stretching of this definition to second and third generation makes that it becomes a discursive impossibility for descendants of Moroccans or other immigrants to ever become Dutch.

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