

Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency

<http://jrc.sagepub.com/>

Reconsidering the Relationship between Race and Crime : Positive and Negative Predictors of Crime among African American Youth

Bradley R. Entner Wright and C. Wesley Younts

Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 2009 46: 327 originally published
online 26 May 2009

DOI: 10.1177/0022427809335170

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://jrc.sagepub.com/content/46/3/327>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:

[School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers - Newark](#)

**Additional services and information for *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* can
be found at:**

Email Alerts: <http://jrc.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://jrc.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations: <http://jrc.sagepub.com/content/46/3/327.refs.html>

Reconsidering the Relationship between Race and Crime

Positive and Negative Predictors of Crime among African American Youth

Bradley R. Entner Wright
C. Wesley Younts
University of Connecticut

Studies of race and crime have emphasized the effects of social disadvantage and discrimination on increasing crime among African Americans. The authors extend this literature by examining various beliefs and institutions that have developed within African American communities that, in contrast, decrease criminal behavior. A model of cross-canceling, indirect effects between race and crime was developed and tested with data from the National Youth Survey. The results demonstrate that some factors, such as single-parent families, lowered educational attainment, and crime-ridden neighborhoods, increase criminal behavior among African American respondents relative to Whites. However, other factors, such as increased religiosity, strong family ties, and lowered alcohol consumption, decrease crime. These findings highlight the complex effects of race on crime.

Keywords: *crime; race; adolescence*

The criminological literature on race has highlighted the effect of structural disadvantage and discrimination in increasing African American crime rates. This article complements this previous work with the identification of other institutions and beliefs that decrease crime among African Americans. Although some mediating, causal linkages result in higher rates of crime among African Americans, other linkages simultaneously result in

Authors' Note: We thank David Weakliem, Larry Wu, Andrew Haakensen, and, especially, Gary Jensen for their input to this article. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Bradley R. Entner Wright, University of Connecticut, Department of Sociology, Unit-2068, Storrs, CT 06269-2068; e-mail: bradley.wright@uconn.edu.

lower rates. Drawing from the research literature, we identify both types of mechanisms, termed *positive* and *negative* mediators. We tested the relative impacts of these mediators with data from a national probability sample of adolescents and young adults.

Literature Review

A comprehensive study of race and crime requires treatment of many different races and ethnicities, but in this article, we examine only African Americans and Whites. The “Black-White” difference in crime has received more research attention than any other racial difference (Hill and Crawford 1990), and so it provides the richest body of literature from which to draw.

Do African Americans Disproportionately Commit Crime?

Many people in society perceive that African Americans commit more crimes than Whites (Davis and Smith 1996; Quillian and Pager 2001). In fact, how this question is answered—do African Americans commit disproportionately more crimes than Whites?—depends on how crime itself is measured (Sampson and Lauritsen 1997). Official measures of crime, such as arrest and imprisonment rates, show that African Americans are substantially overrepresented at every stage of the criminal justice system (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2004; Krivo and Peterson 2000). Victimization studies echo official data, for African Americans are more frequently identified as the culprits in crimes for which victimization data are available, such as robbery, rape, and assault (Hawkins et al. 2000; Hindelang 1978). Self-reported studies tell a different story. Although somewhat mixed, the evidence from them indicates little difference in criminal behavior between African Americans and Whites (Hawkins et al. 2000; Haynie and Payne 2006).

Despite ambivalent evidence, criminologists have developed explanations for racial differences in crime and delinquency at both the community and individual levels, typically focusing on factors that presumably increase the criminality of African Americans relative to Whites. As a notable example, Sampson and Wilson (1995) argued that macro-structural forces (e.g., historical discrimination, residential segregation, residential mobility) concentrated poverty and other structural disadvantages within predominantly African American neighborhoods. According to the theorists, this resulted

in both structural deficiencies (e.g., family disruption, social disorganization) and cultural processes (e.g., a perception of crime as a fact of everyday life) that exacerbated crime and delinquency in these communities. At the individual level, Matsueda and Heimer (1987) and Heimer (1997) similarly argued that structural location (e.g., race) affects individuals' exposure to and internalization of cultural definitions, which directly affect their involvement in violence and delinquency.

Even studies that have used both structural and cultural factors to explain the effects of race on crime, however, seem to consider only those factors that presumably increase crime among African Americans. Such a stance ignores the ethnographic evidence suggesting that even in the most structurally disadvantaged, socially isolated, and drug-ridden African American neighborhoods, many residents develop noncriminal adaptations to defend themselves and their families from crime. For example, Anderson (1999) examined violence as an aspect of the "code of the streets," in which readiness to engage in aggressive behavior represents an adaptive mechanism for protecting one's reputation and for responding to status threats. More important, however, Anderson noted that even the self-described "decent families" in such areas had to adapt to the reality presented by the prevalence of the code of the streets, despite their personal rejection of the code.

Despite the lack of firm evidence regarding the causes, and even the existence, of racial differences in criminal behavior, to search solely for the factors that increase criminality among African Americans implicitly validates the view that African Americans are actually more criminal than their White counterparts. A focus on multiple, potentially cross-canceling mechanisms linking race to crime, in contrast, acknowledges not only the clear macro-structural disadvantages faced by many African Americans relative to Whites, but also the rich diversity and frequently prosocial elements of the culture maintained within even the most disadvantaged communities.

In this article, we develop such a multiprocess, cross-canceling model linking race and crime at the individual level.

Cross-Canceling Mechanisms

In this context, the concept of cross-canceling mechanisms allows for the disentanglement of the effects of race on crime. Generally speaking, cross-canceling mechanisms occur when one factor increases another factor through some mediating variables but decreases it through other mediators; that is, it has both positive and negative indirect effects. A positive, bivariate correlation exists between A and B when the magnitude of the

positive linkages exceeds that of the negative linkages. A negative correlation exists when the negative linkages exceed the positive. No correlation occurs when the positive and negative linkages are of similar magnitude. Just as an observed correlation is insufficient to demonstrate causality between two variables, it is also not necessary. As a result, criminologists may have overlooked factors that are causally linked to, but empirically uncorrelated with, crime.

Previous studies have taken this methodological approach to questions of crime. Wright et al. (1999a) examined the relationship between social class and crime, finding that through some mechanisms, increased social class decreases criminal behavior, as traditionally held by sociological theories, but through other mechanisms, social class increases crime. Similarly, Messner and Sampson (1991) use countervailing mechanisms to explain the null effect of sex ratios on delinquency rates.

The Current Study

In this article, we apply cross-canceling causal mechanisms to race and crime by identifying some processes that might increase criminality by African Americans relative to Whites and others that might decrease criminality by African Americans relative to Whites.

Rather than focusing on race-specific explanations of crime, we take existing, general theories of crime and applies them to race. These general theories include social control theory, strain theory, deterrence theory, and social disorganization theory, and they are used to generate hypothesized positive and negative linkages.

Factors Associated with Increased Crime among African Americans

Starting with positive linkages, social control theory (e.g., Hirschi 1969) identifies weak social bonds as the general cause of criminal behavior. To the extent that African Americans experience lower levels of some social bonds, those bonds should serve as positive mediators between race and crime.¹ Starting with education, high levels of education prevent crime by fostering commitment to and involvement in conventional activities (Hirschi 1969), and higher levels of educational attainment correspond to decreased criminal behavior (e.g., Hirschi 1969; Wiatrowski, Griswold, and Roberts 1981; Wright et al. 1999b). Because of historical discrimination and other factors, African Americans have had less opportunity for

educational achievement, and they continue to average lower levels of education than Whites (Fischer et al. 1996).

Marriage reduces criminal behavior by redirecting delinquent individuals into more conventional behavior, and empirical studies have found marriage to predict significantly fewer crimes over the life course (Sampson and Laub 1990). African Americans display relatively low rates of marriage in part because of the paucity of eligible African American men to marry, the result of African American men's dying, being imprisoned, or not receiving sufficient education (Bennett 1989; Wilson 1987). African Americans are less likely to form unions than Whites, and when they do, they are more likely to form cohabitations than marriage (Raley 1996). In addition to marrying less often, African Americans place less importance on marriage (Ovadia 2001).

Children coming from families without two parents, termed "broken homes," have displayed high levels of delinquency in many studies (Wells and Rankin 1991). Broken homes increase criminal behavior for various reasons, including reduced formal and informal social control as well as increased socialization to aggression (Sampson 1987; Sampson and Lauritsen 1997). Racial differences in family structure have long been recognized in both research and public forums (LaFree, Drass, and O'Day 1992). Far more African Americans experience broken homes. For example, in 2000, 75% of White children lived in two-parent homes, whereas only 38% of African American children did (Fields 2003).

Another criminological theory with implications for race and crime is strain theory (Merton 1957). According to strain theory, criminal behavior results from blocked opportunities. Groups within a society that do not have access to legitimate means to obtain culturally valued ends might turn to illegitimate means such as criminal behavior to obtain them. Racial discrimination reduces conventional opportunities, and so African Americans might more readily accept unconventional means of obtaining conventional goals. Reflecting their disadvantage, African Americans average substantially lower levels of income than Whites (U.S. Census Bureau 2006). This difference both reflects and creates strain, and so it should create higher levels of crime among African Americans.

Deterrence theory holds that sanctions deter criminal behavioral, and informal sanctions, such as the disapproval of parents and friends, deter crime as much if not more than formal sanctions, such as threatened arrest and imprisonment (Paternoster 1985). Several studies have suggested that African Americans perceive lower levels of informal sanctions for criminal behavior than Whites (Blackwell, Grasmick, and Cochran 1994; Tittle 1980).

Sampson and Wilson (1995) related this difference to the concentration of African Americans in disorganized, extremely poor communities. In such areas, community disorganization works against informal control and supervision of adolescents as crime becomes less often condemned and more often a part of everyday life.

A final criminological theory relevant to positive linkages is social disorganization theory. Extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods are socially isolated from mainstream society, and as such, their residents have less access to jobs, fewer opportunities to interact with positive role models, and fewer strong social institutions. In this milieu, crime can flourish (Sampson and Wilson 1995; Wilson 1987). Predominately African American urban neighborhoods have been characterized as having high levels of poverty, joblessness, family disruption, and other aspects of deprivation (Krivo and Peterson 1996). African Americans are substantially more likely to live in poor, disorganized areas (Sampson and Wilson 1995).

To summarize, African Americans, relative to Whites, are hypothesized to experience the following factors associated with increased criminal behavior (i.e., positive mediators): lower educational attainment, lower marriage rates, greater importance placed on marriage, greater likelihood of coming from a single-parent family, greater acceptance of unconventional means, lower social class, greater perceived approval of crime by parents and families, and greater likelihood of living in a disadvantaged, crime-ridden neighborhood.

Factors Associated with Decreased Crime among African Americans

The discussion above presents a fairly conventional understanding of the relationship between race and crime. In this article, we develop a complementary approach that emphasizes various institutions and beliefs that counter the criminogenic influences described above. These factors result in less criminal behavior among African Americans, and they are drawn from social control theory, deterrence theory, and studies of substance abuse and crime.

As discussed above, some types of social bonds are found to be weaker among African Americans, but this is only part of the story, because other social bonds are found to be stronger. These other bonds include religiosity, family ties, educational aspirations (as opposed to attainment), and moral beliefs. With regard to religion, a meta-analysis of 60 empirical studies found consistent evidence that both religious beliefs and behaviors exert a

moderate deterrent effect on individuals' criminal behavior (Baier and Wright 2001; see also Johnson et al. 2000). In addition, empirical studies have found that African Americans have higher levels of church attendance, identification, and membership (Hunt and Hunt 2001). One explanation for this finding holds that being excluded from secular outlets for achievement, African Americans have historically turned toward greater involvement in their churches (Hunt and Hunt 2001).

Another social bond with racial implications is family ties. Hirschi (1969) found that adolescents who reported strong family relationships committed less overall delinquency. Likewise, Cernkovich and Giordano (1987) identified various dimensions of family ties, with each one being associated with lessened delinquency. Historically, African Americans have used strong family ties to adapt to their disadvantaged situation in society. Family ties among African Americans are a way of coping with both poverty and high rates of single parenthood (Ruggles 1994). Studies have documented that family ties among African Americans differ from Whites in both quantity and quality. African Americans receive more assistance from their extended kin in the form of child care, emotional support, and practical assistance (McCleod, Kruttschnitt, and Dornfeld 1994). African American parents, when interviewed about their strengths as parents, point to family connections as giving both strength and support (Hurd, Moore, and Rogers 1995). The relationship between family ties and delinquency appears to be especially pronounced in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Carter et al. 2006). African American families, relative to Whites, demonstrate higher levels of caring, trust, control, and supervision and lower levels of conflict (Cernkovich and Giordano 1987).

A third relevant social bond is aspirations for educational and occupational success. High levels of aspirations represent stronger commitment to conventional society, which in turn lessens criminal behavior. Hirschi (1969) found that although 56% of boys with low educational aspirations committed delinquent acts, only 38% to 40% of those with high aspirations (i.e., college graduation) did so. Recent studies have found educational and occupational aspirations to be robust predictors of decreased self-reported criminal behavior (e.g., Wright et al. 1999b). African Americans display relatively high levels of educational and occupational aspirations, aspirations that aid in adapting to and compensating for having fewer legitimate opportunities in society. In a study of high school seniors, 38% of African Americans wanted to do graduate work, whereas only 33% of Whites did (Qian and Blair 1999). Likewise, other studies have found African American youth as having higher educational aspirations than White youth (Cernkovich,

Giordano, and Rudolph 2000; Fine, Schwebel, and James-Myers 1987; MacLeod 1987). In studies of employment aspirations, Hochschild (1995) and MacLeod (1987) found that African Americans adhered more strongly to the American dream of employment success and had stronger career goals than Whites. Using Monitoring the Future data, Ovidia (2001) found that African Americans placed more importance on being successful in their line of work. In supporting these aspirations, African American parents have been found to have stronger long-term educational and employment goals for their children than White parents, and they place a higher priority on their kids doing well in school (Hill and Sprague 1999).

A fourth social bond regards conventional beliefs. In control theory, delinquency is made possible by an absence of conventional beliefs that forbid it. Youth who view delinquency as wrong, respect the police and other authority figures, and accept the legal code are less likely to commit criminal behavior (Hirschi 1969:197-224). Various studies have found that, somewhat contrary to prevailing stereotypes, African Americans uphold conventional "American" values, sometimes at higher levels than Whites. For example, in a study of aspirations in a racially mixed low-income neighborhood, MacLeod (1987) reported that an African American group of teenagers, the "brothers," had substantially more conventional beliefs than a corresponding group of White kids, the "hallway hangers." MacLeod wrote of the brothers as being "conspicuous by their conventionality": They not only accepted conventional definitions of success, but they also judged themselves by these definitions (p. 45). Although their styles of dress, speech, and greetings came from African American subculture, their beliefs were more mainstream than those of the White kids. They would view a night in jail as tarnishing and become embarrassed by disciplinary problems they had experienced. Not only do African American youth hold conventional moral beliefs, but so too do their parents. In a study of racial differences in parental values, Hill and Sprague (1999) found that African American parents of elementary school kids were more likely than Whites to value their children's being "respectful and obedient" to authority.

Negative linkages between race and crime also exist in deterrence theory. Rational choice theories of crime assume that individuals commit crimes when the benefits of the crimes outweigh the costs. Applying this assumption to social policy, deterrence theory holds that increases in the severity, celerity, or certainty of punishment will deter criminal behavior and lower crime rates. Although deterrence theory is typically applied to the population as a whole, the logic certainly applies to racial differences in criminal justice. As discussed above, African Americans have much higher

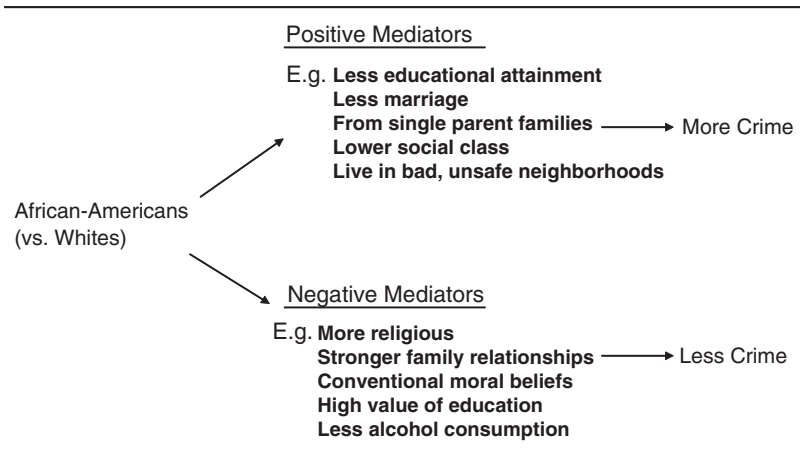
rates of arrest and imprisonment, and this should deter them from committing additional crimes. African Americans also have higher arrest rates for given crimes. In a study comparing arrest and victimization data, Yu and Liska (1993) found that African Americans were more likely than Whites to be arrested for robberies, assaults, and rapes. Furthermore, not only do African Americans experience higher actual rates of legal sanctions, but, important from the perspective of deterrence theory, they also perceive themselves as being at higher risk for sanctions (Blackwell et al. 1994; Tittle 1980).

The final negative linkage comes from the research literature on alcohol and criminal behavior. Various causal mechanisms link alcohol to criminal behavior, one of which is the effect of alcohol on individual judgment. Individuals under the influence of alcohol are more likely to misinterpret the actions of others, to focus on immediate, short-term goals, and to act outside of their own best interests (Parker 1998). At a broader level, changes in alcohol consumption rates over the twentieth century have been linked to homicide rates (Parker 1998). Regarding race, numerous studies have found that African Americans consume less alcohol, on average, than Whites. In 2000, 51% of Whites in the United States reported using alcohol in the previous month, whereas only 34% of African Americans did (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2001). Likewise, Herd (1988) examined a national probability sample of over 2,000 women and found that African American women both abstained more than White women and were less likely to be heavy drinkers. More recent studies of adolescent girls have found a similar racial difference (Holsinger and Holsinger 2005). Even in federal prisons, African American prisoners are less likely to have alcohol- and drug-related misconduct charges than Whites (Harer and Steffensmeier 1996).

To summarize, African Americans, relative to Whites, are hypothesized to experience the following factors associated with decreased criminal behavior (i.e., negative mediators): stronger religious beliefs and greater involvement in religious practices, stronger bonds to parents and family members, greater importance placed on education and employment, stronger sense of crime being wrong, more perceived risk for being arrested and punished, and lower alcohol consumption.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model developed above. African Americans experience increased rates of crime through various positive mediators, such as less educational attainment, lower likelihood of marriage, more single-parent families, and living in worse neighborhoods. They experience decreased rates of crime through negative mediators, such as

Figure 1
Conceptual Model



being more religious, having stronger family relationships, having more conventional moral beliefs, placing more emphasis on educational attainment, and having lower alcohol consumption.

Method

Data

We analyzed data from the National Youth Survey (NYS) collected in its first, sixth, and seventh waves. The NYS drew respondents from throughout the continental United States using a multistage, clustered probability sample (Elliott and Huizinga 1983; Elliott, Huizinga, and Menard 1989). In the first wave of the NYS, collected in 1976, 1,725 respondents ranging in age from 11 to 17 years were interviewed, and the demographic characteristics of these respondents corresponded to those of similarly aged youth from throughout the country (Elliott et al. 1983). The sixth wave of the NYS was collected in 1983, when the respondents were aged 17 to 23, and the seventh wave was collected in 1987, when the respondents were aged 21 to 27.

Of the initial 1,725 respondents in wave 1 of the NYS, 1,497 were present for wave 6. Of these, 1,383 were present in wave 7, and 1,314 were

either African American or White. We analyzed data from these 1,314 respondents. Respondents of other races were not included in the analyses so as to clarify the comparison between African Americans and Whites; however, as discussed below, in sensitivity analyses that included the other races, coded as non-African American, we found no meaningful difference in the substantive findings.

Independent Variables

Most of the independent variables were measured in the sixth wave of the NYS, when the respondents were in late adolescence to early adulthood (aged 17 to 23 years). Measuring the variables at these ages allowed for some variation in marriage, children, and educational attainment while still capturing near peak times for criminal behavior. See the Appendix for descriptive statistics of these variables.

Positive mediators. Ten different variables were used to investigate the positive effect of race on crime. To simplify the analysis, each of these positive mediators was coded in the direction hypothesized to increase criminal behavior. The first four variables regarded education and family. “Less education” measured the highest grade of schooling attained by respondents by the time of the wave 6 interview, coded in yearly increments from grade school through graduate school. It was reverse coded so that high scores represented less educational attainment. “Not currently married” indicated whether respondents were currently single or divorced as opposed to being married. “Marriage less important” summed two questions about the importance of marriage and long-term partnerships: how important it was for respondents to become married, and how important it was for them to have long-term, intimate relationships with persons of the opposite sex. It was reverse coded. “Single-parent family” was measured at wave 1, and it indicated whether the respondents were not living with both biological parents.

The next two variables measured respondents’ place in society and their attitudes toward obtaining it. “Unconventional means” summed together 21 different items regarding the appropriateness of lying and cheating to obtain conventional goals. These items included lying to get a job, make it at work, avoid fights with a partner, stay out of trouble with teachers, make a good impression on friends and teachers, keep a partner out of trouble, keep parents’ trust, make a good impression with teachers, keep friends out of trouble, and keep parents from being angry. They also included cheating

on exams to make it in school and get ahead, breaking the rules to be popular with friends and to keep friends, playing dirty to win, and needing to beat up people to keep friends' respect. "Low social class" measured socioeconomic status of the head of the family using the Hollingshead scale. It was a seven-level measure reverse coded so that higher scores reflected lower levels of social class.

The next two variables measured crime by significant others. "Parents approve of crime" recorded respondents' perceptions of how their parents would react, from strongly disapproving to strongly approving, to their committing various misdeeds. These misdeeds included cheating on school tests, stealing something worth less than \$5, selling hard drugs, using marijuana, stealing something worth \$50, hitting someone without reason, purposely damaging others' property, or breaking into a vehicle or building to steal something. "Friends approve of crime" recorded respondents' perceptions of their friends' reactions to the same deeds plus two additional actions of pressuring someone to have sex and having sexual intercourse.

The final two positive mediators measured aspects of the respondents' neighborhoods. "Bad neighborhood" averaged five negative characteristics: high unemployment, vandalism, winos and junkies present, abandoned houses, and rundown buildings and lots. Respondents rated their neighborhoods on each of these characteristics on a three-point scale ranging from *not a problem* to *a big problem*. "Crime-ridden neighborhood" likewise measured whether respondents viewed their neighborhoods as having problems with prostitution, sexual assaults, burglaries and thefts, gambling, organized crime, assaults, delinquent gangs, and residents' having little respect for the law.

Negative mediators. Ten variables were analyzed as negative mediators, and they were coded in the direction hypothesized to reduce crime. Two variables tapped aspects of religious experience. "Religious attendance" measured how often during the past year respondents attended church, synagogue, or other religious services. It was coded on a five-point scale ranging from *never* to *several times a week*. "Religious importance" measured how important religion was in the respondents' lives, ranging from *not important at all* to *very important*.

Two variables measured aspects of family relationships. "Parental bonds" summed together respondents' replies to six different questions: How much have parents influenced what respondents have thought and done? How important have been the things respondents have done with their families? How satisfied have respondents been with their relationships with their

parents? How much stress is there in respondents' relationships with their parents (reverse coded)? How much warmth and affection have respondents received from their parents? How much support and encouragement have respondents received from their parents? "Time with family" averaged three variables, measuring, on average, how many weekday afternoons, weekday evenings, and weekends respondents spent playing, talking, or working with members of their families.

Two variables measured the importance of school and work. "Educational importance" averaged respondents' scores on three different measures: How important is educational experience to respondents? How important is a high grade point average? How important is it to graduate from college? "Employment importance" averaged four work-related measures: How important is it to have a job? To be a success at respondents' work or careers? To have a good job? To earn an annual salary of \$20,000 or more?

"Arrest and punishment" created an interaction term between two items. In the first item, respondents reported their perceived likelihood of getting arrested or ticketed if they were to commit various crimes. These crimes include exceeding the speed limit by 10 to 20 miles per hour, stealing something worth \$5 or less, stealing something worth \$50 or more, breaking into a building or vehicle, using force to get money or other things from people, and attacking someone to seriously hurt or kill them. Respondents ranked their perceived likelihood of arrest from 0% to 100%. In the second item, respondents reported what they thought would happen to them if they were caught for the above items. These outcomes were ranked in terms of severity, and they included having charges dismissed at court, paying a fine, being placed on probation, serving a short sentence in jail, or serving a long sentence in jail. Previous work has suggested that these two variables interact; that is, expecting a severe punishment matters only if one also expects to get caught (Heckathorn 1985). As such, these two items were multiplied together to form the variable arrest and punishment. A high score on this variable indicated an expectation of getting caught and punished for committing crime, and as per criminal deterrence, it should result in lessened criminal behavior.

The final two negative mediating variables regarded alcohol. "Low alcohol consumption" recorded the rate at which respondents drank alcohol during the previous year. It was coded on a nine-point scale ranging from *never* to *two or three times a day*. "Alcohol disapproval" combined seven attitudinal items regarding the acceptability of drinking. The first four items measured respondents' perceptions of whether their drinking was approved or disapproved by parents, peers, people at work, and partners. The remaining three items assessed respondents' own views of alcohol, specifically,

whether they thought that it was wrong for someone their age to use alcohol, get drunk, or give or sell alcohol to others.

The independent variables had relatively few missing cases, except for the measures of low social class and time spent with family. In our analyses, we used multiple imputation for the missing values (using the MI procedure in the software package SAS). This approach replaces each missing value with a set of plausible values that represent the uncertainty about the correct value to impute. The result is an unbiased estimate of the unknown parameter (Rubin 1987). In our analyses, we used five imputations for each model.

Dependent Variables

Criminal behavior was gauged using self-reported offenses measured in the seventh wave of the NYS. Being collected four years after the sixth wave, criminal data from the seventh wave allow for temporal ordering with the independent and dependent variables. For 50 different crimes, respondents were asked if, and how frequently, they had committed each crime in the 12 months prior to the wave 7 interview. The crimes included violent crimes, such as attacking others and gang fights; property crimes, such as vandalism and theft; public disorder crimes, such as being loud and rowdy; and drug offenses, such as using and selling hard drugs. (For a complete listing, see Elliott and Huizinga 1983.)

Several variety scales were created from these self-reported data. The first measure, "self-reported offending," was an overall scale that assigned 1 point for every type of crime committed, regardless of how often, and then summed total points across all 50 crimes. As such, this scale potentially ranged from 0, meaning no crimes committed, to 50, meaning every type of measured crime was committed at least once. Variety scales have been described as the best operational measure of general criminal offending (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1995). The remaining criminal measures were subscales of this total variety scale that measured participation in particular types of offenses. These subscales included property crimes (e.g., theft and vandalism), violent crimes (e.g., assault and robbery), drug crimes (e.g., drug use), service crimes (e.g., prostitution, drug selling), and disorder crimes (e.g., disorderly conduct).

In addition to variables described above, the analyses also included several demographic variables. "African American" coded whether respondents were African American or White. Of the sample members, 190 (14%) were African American and 1,124 (86%) were White. In addition to race,

measures of respondents' age at the time of the sixth interview as well as their gender were included.

Results

Table 1 presents the correlations between the mediating variables, race, and self-reported offending. The top half of Table 1 presents the hypothesized positive mediators. Nine of them were significantly correlated with race, and all 10 were correlated with offending, and all significant correlations were in the hypothesized direction. The variables most strongly correlated with race included single-parent family ($r = .30$), bad neighborhood ($r = .27$), and crime-ridden neighborhood ($r = .20$). The variables most strongly correlated with crime included friends' approval of crime ($r = .40$), unconventional means ($r = .34$), and parents' approval of crime ($r = .22$). Multiplying the race and crime correlations estimated the zero-order, indirect effects through each variable. Unconventional means had the strongest positive, indirect linkage between race and crime ($r = .14 \times .34 = .048$), followed by friends' approval of crime ($r = .036$). Not currently married had the weakest linkage at $r = .008$.

Of the 10 negative mediators, 9 were significantly correlated with race and 9 with offending. Low alcohol consumption and alcohol disapproval were the variables most strongly correlated with race ($r = .21$ and $.24$, respectively), and wrong to commit crimes and alcohol disapproval were the most strongly correlated with crime ($r = -.28$ and $-.30$, respectively). The two alcohol variables, low alcohol consumption and alcohol disapproval, provided the strongest negative indirect mediation between race and crime ($r = -.058$ and $-.072$, respectively). Other mediating linkages were through religious importance ($r = -.043$), wrong to commit crimes ($r = -.039$), time with family ($r = -.031$), religious attendance ($r = -.024$), parental bonds ($r = -.019$), and educational importance ($r = -.018$). The weakest linkages were through arrest and punishment ($r = -.007$) and employment importance ($r = -.002$).

As a general observation about Table 1, the correlations of the mediating variables with race tended to be smaller than those with self-reported offending. The former, in absolute value, averaged $r = .15$, while the latter averaged $r = .20$. This difference is not surprising given that the mediating variables were identified from criminological theories.

Moving to multivariate analysis, Table 2 presents regression equations that tested the hypothesized mediation effects. These equations used tobit analysis because of the truncated distribution of the dependent variable.

Table 1
Correlations of Mediating Variables with
Race and Criminal Offending

Mediating Variables (Wave 6)	African American	Self-Reported Criminal Offending (Wave 7)
Positive mediators		
Less education	.12*	.13*
Not currently married	.06*	.14*
Marriage less important	.16*	.14*
Single-parent family	.30*	.09*
Unconventional means	.14*	.34*
Low social class	.12*	.13*
Parents' approve of crime	.05	.22*
Friends' approve of crime	.09*	.40*
Bad neighborhood	.27*	.10*
Crime-ridden neighborhood	.20*	.13*
Negative mediators		
Religious attendance	.10*	-.24*
Religious importance	.17*	-.25*
Parental bonds	.09*	-.21*
Time with family	.18*	-.17*
Educational importance	.14*	-.13*
Employment importance	.20*	-.01
Wrong to commit crimes	.12*	-.39*
Arrest and punishment	.04	-.18*
Low alcohol consumption	.21*	-.28*
Alcohol disapproval	.24*	-.30*

Note: $n = 1,259$ to $1,264$ (except for time with family, for which $n = 857$).

* $p < .05$.

Twenty-seven percent of the respondents reported no offenses, thus violating assumptions of normality. Tobit models allow for the analysis of dependent variables that cannot go below a certain point, such as zero (Roncek 1992). The analyses in Table 2 demonstrate the effect of race on crime when controlling for various sets of the mediating variables. In doing this, they demonstrate the positive and negative effects of African American race on self-reported crime. Model 1 presents the total effect of African American race, which serves as a benchmark by which to judge mediation effects in the following equations. As shown in the first column of numbers, the tobit regression coefficient was $\beta = -1.21$, with a standard error of $\sigma = 0.35$, which was statistically significant. This negative coefficient indicates that, net of age and gender, African American respondents committed

Table 2
Regression of Self-Reported General Offending
on Race and Mediating Variables

Independent Variables, Measured at or before Wave 6	Dependent Variable: Self- Reported Offending at Wave 7			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
African American	-1.21 (.35)*	-1.26 (.37)*	-2.52 (.34)*	.10 (.34)
Positive mediators				
Less education		.21 (.08)*	.09 (.07)	
Not currently married		.38 (.30)	.64 (.30)*	
Marriage less important		-.03 (.10)	.10 (.10)	
Single-parent family		.75 (.25)*	.97 (.25)*	
Unconventional means		.88 (.26)*	1.31 (.26)*	
Low social class		.04 (.08)	.00 (.08)	
Parents' approval		.91 (.35)*	.32 (.34)	
Friends' approval		1.22 (.28)*	2.34 (.25)*	
Bad neighborhood		.56 (.40)	.28 (.41)	
Crime-ridden neighborhood		.63 (.50)	.88 (.51)	
Negative mediators				
Religious attendance		-.19 (.11)		-.31 (.12)*
Religious importance		-.03 (.11)		-.06 (.11)
Parental bonds		-.41 (.17)*		-.68 (.17)*
Time with family		-.08 (.09)		-.20 (.09)*
Educational importance		.07 (.12)		-.07 (.11)
Employment importance		-.15 (.16)		-.10 (.16)
Wrong to commit crimes		-1.11 (.42)*		-1.91 (.39)*
Arrest and punishment		-.28 (.11)*		-.31 (.11)*
Low alcohol		-.27 (.06)*		-.29 (.07)*
Alcohol disapproval		-.29 (.24)		-.31 (.24)
Log likelihood	-3,043.2	-2,857.13	-2,902.56	-2,895.10

Note: $n = 1,314$. Cells present tobit regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. All equations controlled for age and gender.

* $p < .05$.

overall fewer types of crimes than the White respondents. The importance of this effect for this study, however, lies not in its magnitude or direction but rather in what happens to it when other variables are added to the equation. The total effect simply reflects the sum of both the positive and negative mediators, and the goal here was to identify and test for the existence of multiple mediators, not their relative strengths. Even if this positive total effect represented a sample selection bias in the data (e.g., African American

youth with criminal backgrounds were less likely to participate in the study), this bias would serve to attenuate coefficient estimates (Berk 1983), thus actually underestimating the strength of the mediating variables.

Model 2 controlled for all mediating variables at once to estimate the remaining direct effect of African American race. The estimated coefficient was $\beta = -1.26$ ($\sigma = 0.37$), almost identical to the total effect estimated in model 1. This indicates that the measured positive and negative linkages were of similar magnitude. It also identifies that, net of the control variables, African American race still had a negative, significant effect. Models 1 and 2 reflect prior research, and they understate the effect of race by not specifying the positive and negative effects that might cancel each other out. We explored these possibilities in models 3 and 4.

Model 3 estimated the negative effect of race on crime. This equation regressed self-reported offending on race and the 10 positive mediators. As such, this equation isolated the negative effect of race by explicitly modeling the positive effects, thus leaving the negative effects to reside in the estimated race coefficient. Put differently, the total effect of African American race in model 1 contained both positive and negative indirect effects. Model 3 took the positive effects out, by including the positive mediators in the model, thus leaving the negative effect. As shown at the top of model 3, the negative effect of African American race increased in magnitude when only positive mediators were included. The estimated tobit coefficient is $\beta = -2.52$ ($\sigma = 0.34$), and so controlling for the positive mediators more than doubled the size of the race coefficient.

Model 4 took the opposite approach and estimated the positive effect of race by controlling for the 10 negative mediators. The resulting coefficient for African American race is $\beta = 0.10$ ($\sigma = 0.34$). This shift from a negative, significant coefficient reflects the strength of the negative mediators linking race and crime.

It is worth noting the difference in magnitude between the race coefficients in models 3 and 4. If we place a confidence interval around each coefficient, an interval of 2 standard errors, the results are $\beta = -2.52 \pm 0.68$ and $\beta = 0.10 \pm 0.68$. There was little overlap between these confidence intervals, suggesting that the coefficients were distinct in magnitude.

The results in Table 2 support the hypotheses developed above. However, as with any multivariate analysis, the findings might be sensitive to model specification. This raises the question of whether the same results would occur with changes in the analysis. If so, the stability in findings would offer extra confidence in their validity. To appraise the robustness of these findings, several additional analyses were performed. These sensitivity analyses altered the sample, the dependent variable, and the statistical

model. Because of space limitations, however, some of these analyses are described in the text below but not presented as tables.

The first sensitivity analysis estimated the four regression equations presented in Table 2 with a slightly different sample, one including the 69 respondents who were neither African American nor White. With this change, the variable African American compared African Americans with both Whites and respondents of other races. The second sensitivity analysis transformed the dependent variable. The variety measure of crime analyzed in Table 2 was skewed right, with most respondents committing relatively few types of crime but a few committing many. To correct for this, the variety measure was logged. The third sensitivity analysis examined a frequency measure of crime as the dependent variable. Simply tallying up the number of reported crimes would have disproportionately weighted minor crimes, so instead the frequency of each crime was coded into three categories: not at all, monthly, and weekly. These frequency scores were then summed. The fourth sensitivity analysis used the variables shown in Table 2 but linked them together using a different statistical model. Recent studies have identified negative binomial Poisson regression as an effective model for many types of crime-count data (e.g., Osgood 2000). Like a tobit model, a negative binomial model allows for nonnormal distributions, but it treats crimes (or, in this case, types of crimes) as discrete events, as count data, rather than as points on a continuum. All four of these sensitivity analyses produced nearly identical patterns of findings as those shown in Table 2.

The final sensitivity analysis, presented in Table 3, examined the negative and positive indirect effects of race on various subsets of criminal behavior, given that previous studies have suggested that the relationship between race and crime varies by type of crime. For example, race might have the greatest impact on violent crimes (Sampson and Lauritsen 1997). To test the generalizability of the analyses in Table 2 across types of crime, they were replicated five times, each time predicting a variety scale measuring a subset of crime types. These included property, violent, drug, service, and disorder crimes. Table 3 presents these findings, and for parsimony, we present only the race effect from each equation. For example, the first cell in the first row in Table 3 gives the effect of race on property crime, controlling only for age and gender. Race had a nonsignificant, positive effect on property crime of $\beta = 0.07$ ($\sigma = 0.28$). In the second column, controlling for all the mediating variables, the net effect of race on crime approximated that in the total effect equation, $\beta = 0.03$ ($\sigma = 0.32$). In the next column, controlling for the positive mediators, being African American had a negative, almost significant effect on property crime at $\beta = -0.57$ ($\sigma = 0.29$). In the fourth column, controlling for negative

mediators produced a statistically significant effect of African American race on property crimes at $\beta = 0.66$ ($\sigma = 0.30$). As such, the findings presented in the top row of Table 3 suggest that with property crimes, as with a general measure of crime, being African American had both strong positive and strong negative effects.

The remaining rows in Table 3 repeat this type of analysis with measures of violent crimes, drug crimes, service crimes, and disorder crimes. Across these various subscales of crime, the total effect of race changed. It ranged from positive and near significance for violent crimes ($\beta = 0.37$) to negative and significant for service, drug, and disorder crimes ($\beta = -0.44, -0.72, \text{ and } -0.98$, respectively). Regardless of the starting point of the total effect equations, however, race demonstrated both positive and negative effects on each of these types of crime such that controlling for the positive mediators moved the effect of race in the negative direction and controlling for the negative mediators moved its effect in the positive direction. The magnitude of this cross-canceling effect varied somewhat by type of crime, however. It was most pronounced for the more serious crimes, including property, violent, and drug crimes. It was less so for service and disorder crimes.

Discussion

In this article, we propose a cross-canceling, mediated model of the effect of race on crime. Structural disadvantage and discrimination results in increased criminal behavior by African Americans, and countering this effect, various institutions and beliefs decreased crime by African Americans. Analysis of data from the NYS found evidence of both positive mediators (i.e., those that increase crime among African Americans) and negative mediators (i.e., those that decrease it). Significant positive mediators included less education, less marriage, broken homes, unconventional means, lower social class, approval of crime, and poor neighborhood quality. Negative mediators included religiosity, family ties, value of education and employment, moral beliefs, and alcohol use.

These findings have various implications for the study of crime. They identify an issue in need of more research: What are the factors that lead racial minorities to commit fewer crimes than Whites? Although we have identified some such factors, using individual-level data, this issue can be analyzed more broadly, considering cultural or macro-social conditions that likewise decrease crime by African Americans. Furthermore, this analysis could be applied to other racial and ethnic groups as well. Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and others may also exhibit similar mediated

Table 3
Regression of Types of Offending on Race
and Mediating Variables

Dependent Variable (Type of Crime)	Effect of African American Race on Different Crimes			
	Model 1: Total Effect Equation	Model 2: Controlling for All Mediators	Model 3: Controlling for Positive Mediators	Model 4: Controlling for Negative Mediators
Property crimes	.07 (.28)	.03 (.32)	-.57 (.29)	.66 (.30)*
Violent crimes	.37 (.22)	.02 (.25)	-.18 (.23)	.64 (.23)*
Drug crimes	-.72 (.20)*	-.70 (.21)*	-1.34 (.20)*	-.10 (.20)
Service crimes	-.44 (.22)*	-.41 (.24)	-.82 (.23)*	.00 (.22)
Disorder crimes	-.98 (.14)*	-.78 (.15)*	-1.25 (.14)*	-.48 (.14)*

Note: $n = 1,314$. Cells present tobit regression coefficients for the effect of African American race on the various subscales of self-reported offending, with standard errors in parentheses. All equations controlled for age and gender.

* $p < .05$.

linkages to criminal behavior, and these linkages may or may not be the same as for African Americans.

The conceptual approach taken here produces a richer, more nuanced understanding of crime and the factors associated with it. It also potentially identifies new factors important to the study of crime. Specifically, although researchers in the past have focused on analyzing those factors with strong, simple correlations with crime, it could well be that some factors are not correlated with, but still have strong positive and negative causal effects on, crime. Therefore, though uncorrelated with crime, they would be important to understand in explaining crime.

In terms of social relevance, the effect of race on crime was of similar magnitude in both the total effect and full regression equations (models 1 and 2 in Table 2), which indicates that the summed effect sizes of the negative mediators were comparable with those of the positive mediators. Deleterious social conditions, such as poverty and economic disadvantage, are thought to produce criminal behavior among African Americans. If, however, the impact of these conditions has been gauged by their net effect on crime among African Americans, then their impact has been underestimated, for this ignores countervailing mechanisms. Put differently, the true effect of social disadvantage on crime among African Americans is partially masked by countering mediating mechanisms, and so the impact of this social disadvantage is perhaps more harmful than previously thought. Similarly

problematic, however, is that the countervailing, prosocial effects of various adaptive social institutions and mechanisms, such as religiosity and strong extended family relationships, have been virtually ignored in studies of race and crime. The overall picture of the relationship between race and crime provided in this study, therefore, contradicts the stereotypical caricature of African Americans as violent, aggressive, and crime prone.

Appendix Description of Variables, by Race

Variable Name	Range	Mean, Overall (<i>n</i> = 1,314)	Mean, African Americans (<i>n</i> = 190)	Mean, Whites (<i>n</i> = 1,124)
Positive mediators				
Less education	6 to 17	10.26*	10.81	10.16
Not currently married	0 to 1	74%*	80%	73%
Marriage less important	1 to 5	2.04*	2.49	1.97
Single-parent family	0 to 1	30%*	62%	24%
Unconventional means	1 to 4	.94*	2.11	1.91
Low social class	1 to 7	5.17*	5.65	5.10
Parents' approval of crime	3 to 5	3.53	3.57	3.52
Friends' approval of crime	1 to 5	2.12*	2.24	2.10
Bad neighborhood	1 to 3	1.38*	1.65	1.33
Crime-ridden neighborhood	1 to 3	1.23*	1.39	1.20
Negative mediators				
Religious attendance	1 to 5	2.49*	2.80	2.44
Religious importance	1 to 5	3.35*	3.88	3.26
Parental bonds	1 to 5	4.05*	4.19	4.02
Time with family	0 to 5	2.57*	3.11	2.46
Educational importance	1 to 5	3.71*	4.08	3.64
Employment importance	1 to 5	4.20*	4.55	4.14
Wrong to commit crimes	1 to 4	3.20*	3.33	3.18
Arrest and punishment	0 to 6	2.40	2.49	2.38
Low alcohol consumption	1 to 9	5.27*	6.36	5.09
Alcohol disapproval	1 to 5	3.01*	3.46	2.93
Demographics				
Age	18 to 24	20.86	20.72	20.88
Male	0 to 1	51%*	58%	50%
Crime				
Self-reported criminal offending	0 to 30	2.89*	2.37	2.97

Note: *n* = 1,259 to 1,314 (except for time with family, for which *n* = 857, and social class, for which *n* = 1,128). Differences in dichotomous variables were examined using χ^2 tests.

*Significant difference in means across racial groups at $p < .05$ (*t* test).

Note

1. Hirschi's (1969) original study contained no African American respondents. As such, it is an interesting exercise to apply his ideas to the race-crime relationship.

References

- Anderson, Elijah. 1999. *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Baier, Colin and Bradley R. E. Wright. 2001. "'If You Love Me, Keep My Commandments': A Meta-Analysis of the Effect of Religion on Crime." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 38:3-21.
- Bennett, Neil G. 1989. "The Divergence of Black and White Marriage Patterns." *American Sociological Review* 95:692-722.
- Berk, Richard. 1983. "An Introduction to Sample Selection Bias in Sociological Data." *American Sociological Review* 48:386-98.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2003. Home Page. Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>.
- Blackwell, Brenda Sims, Harold G. Grasmick, and John K. Cochran. 1994. "Racial Differences in Perceived Sanction Threat: Static and Dynamic Hypotheses." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 31:210-24.
- Carter, Hay, Edward N. Fortson, Dusten R. Hollist, Irshad Altheimer, and Lonnie M. Schaible. 2006. "The Impact of Community Disadvantage on the Relationship between the Family and Juvenile Crime." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 43:326-56.
- Cernkovich, Stephen A. and Peggy C. Giordano. 1987. "Family Relationships and Delinquency." *Criminology* 25:295-319.
- Cernkovich, Stephen A., Peggy C. Giordano, and Jennifer L. Rudolph. 2000. "Race, Crime, and the American Dream." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 37:131-70.
- Davis, James A., and Tom W. Smith. 1996. *General Social Surveys, 1972-1996: Cumulative Codebook*. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center.
- Elliott, Delbert S., Suzanne S. Ageton, David Huizinga, Barbara Knowles, and Rachelle J. Canter. 1983. "The Prevalence and Incidence of Delinquent Behavior: 1976-1980" (The National Youth Survey Report No. 26). Boulder, CO: Behavioral Research Institute.
- Elliott, Delbert S. and David Huizinga. 1983. "Social Class and Delinquent Behavior in a National Youth Panel." *Criminology* 21:149-77.
- Elliott, Delbert S., David Huizinga, and Scott Menard. 1989. *Multiple Problem Youth: Delinquency, Substance Use, and Mental Health Problems*. New York: Springer.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2004. *Uniform Crime Reports: Crime in the United States 2004*. Available at <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/04cius.htm>.
- Fields, Jason. 2003. *Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002*. Current Population Reports, P20-547. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Fine, Mark, Andrew I. Schwebel, and Linda James-Myers. 1987. "Family Stability in Black Families: Values Underlying Three Different Perspectives." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 18 (1): 1-23.
- Fischer, Claude, Michael Hout, Martin Sanchez Jankowski, Sam Lucas, Ann Swidler, and Kim Voss. 1996. *Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Harer, Miles D. and Darrell Steffensmeier. 1996. "Race and Prison Violence." *Criminology* 34 (3): 323-55.
- Hawkins, Darnell, John H. Laub, Janet L. Lauritsen, and Lynn Cothorn. 2000. "Race, Ethnicity, and Serious and Violent Juvenile Offending." *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* June:1-8.
- Haynie, Dana L. and Danielle C. Payne. 2006. "Race, Friendship Networks, and Violent Delinquency." *Criminology* 44 (94): 775-805.
- Heckathorn, Douglas D. 1985. "Why Punishment Does Not Deter." Pp. 279-88 in *The Ambivalent Force: Perspectives on the Police*, 3d ed., edited by Abraham S. Blumberg and Elaine Niederhoffer. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Heimer, Karen. 1997. "Socioeconomic Status, Subcultural Definitions, and Violent Delinquency." *Social Forces* 75 (3): 799-833.
- Herd, Denise. 1988. "Drinking by Black and White Women: Results from a National Survey." *Social Problems* 35 (5): 493-504.
- Hill, Gary D. and Elizabeth M. Crawford. 1990. "Women, Race, and Crime." *Criminology* 28 (4): 601-26.
- Hill, Shirley A. and Joey Sprague. 1999. "Parenting in Black and White Families: The Interaction of Gender with Race and Class." *Gender & Society* 13 (4): 480-502.
- Hindelang, Michael J. 1978. "Race and Involvement in Common Law Personal Crimes." *American Sociological Review* 43:93-109.
- Hirschi, Travis. 1969. *Causes of Delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hirschi, Travis and Michael R. Gottfredson. 1995. "Control Theory and the Life-Course Perspective." *Studies on Crime and Crime-Prevention* 4:131-42.
- Hochschild, Jennifer. 1995. *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race, Class, and the Soul of the Nation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Holsinger, Kristi and Alexander M. Holsinger. 2005. "Differential Pathways to Violence and Self-Injurious Behavior: African American and White Girls in the Juvenile Justice System." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 42:211-42.
- Hunt, Larry L. and Matthew O. Hunt. 2001. "Race, Region, and Religious Involvement: A Comparative Study of Whites and African Americans." *Social Forces* 80:605-31.
- Hurd, Elisabeth Porter, Carolyn Moore, and Randy Rogers. 1995. "Quiet Success: Parenting Strengths among African-American." *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services* September:434-43.
- Johnson, Byron R., Sung Joon Jang, Spencer De Li, and David Larson. 2000. "The 'Invisible Institution' and Black Youth Crime: The Church as an Agency of Local Social Control." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 29:479-98.
- Krivo, Lauren J. and Ruth D. Peterson. 1996. "Extremely Disadvantaged Neighborhoods and Urban Crime." *Social Forces* 75 (2): 619-50.
- Krivo, Lauren J. and Ruth D. Peterson. 2000. "The Structural Context of Homicide: Accounting for Racial Differences in Process." *American Sociological Review* 65: 547-59.
- LaFree, Gary, Kriss A. Drass, and Patrick O'Day. 1992. "Race and Crime in Postwar America: Determinants of African-American and White Rates, 1957-1988." *Criminology* 30 (2): 157-85.
- MacLeod, Jay. 1987. *Ain't No Makin' It: Leveled Aspirations in a Low-Income Neighborhood*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Matsueda, Ross L. and Karen Heimer. 1987. "Race, Family Structure, and Delinquency: A Test of Differential Association and Social Control Theories." *American Sociological Review* 52:826-40.

- McCleod, Jane D., Candace Kruttschnitt, and Maude Dornfeld. 1994. "Does Parenting Explain the Effects of Structural Conditions on Children's Antisocial Behavior? A Comparison of Blacks and Whites." *Social Forces* 73 (2): 575-604.
- Merton, Robert K. 1957. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press.
- Messner, Steven F. and Robert J. Sampson. 1991. "The Sex Ratio, Family Disruption, and Rates of Violent Crime: The Paradox of Demographic Structure." *Social Forces* 69 (3): 693-713.
- Osgood, D. Wayne. 2000. "Poisson-Related Regression Analysis of Aggregate Crime Rates." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 16 (1): 21-43.
- Ovadia, Seth. 2001. "Race, Class, and Gender Differences in High School Seniors' Values: Applying Intersection Theory in Empirical Analysis." *Social Science Quarterly* 82:340-56.
- Parker, Robert Nash. 1998. "Alcohol and Homicide in the United States 1934-1995—Or One Reason Why U.S. Rates of Violence Might be Going Down." *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 88 (4): 1369-98.
- Paternoster, Raymond. 1985. "Assessments of Risk and Behavioral Experience: An Explanatory Study of Change." *Criminology* 23:417-36.
- Qian, Zhenchao and Sampson Lee Blair. 1999. "Racial/Ethnic Differences in Educational Aspirations of High School Seniors." *Sociological Perspectives* 42 (4): 605-25.
- Quillian, Lincoln and Devah Pager. 2001. "Black Neighbors, Higher Crime? The Role of Racial Stereotypes in Evaluations of Neighborhood Crime." *American Journal of Sociology* 107:717-67.
- Raley, R. Kelly. 1996. "A Shortage of Marriageable Men? A Note on the Role of Cohabitation in Black-White Differences in Marriage Rates." *American Sociological Review* 61:973-83.
- Roncek, Dennis W. 1992. "Learning More from Tobit Coefficients: Extending a Comparative Analysis of Political Protest." *American Sociological Review* 57:503-07.
- Rubin, Donald B. 1987. *Multiple Imputation for Nonresponse in Surveys*. New York: John Wiley.
- Ruggles, Steven. 1994. "The Origins of African-American Family Structure." *American Sociological Review* 59:136-51.
- Sampson, Robert J. 1987. "Urban Black Violence: The Effect of Male Joblessness and Family Disruption." *American Journal of Sociology* 93 (2): 348-82.
- Sampson, Robert J. and John H. Laub. 1990. "Crime and Deviance over the Life Course: The Salience of Adult Social Bonds." *American Sociological Review* 55:609-27.
- Sampson, Robert J. and Janet L. Lauritsen. 1997. "Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Crime and Criminal Justice in the United States." Pp. 311-74 *Ethnicity, Crime, and Immigration: Comparative and Cross-National Perspectives*, edited by Michael Tonry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sampson, Robert J. and William Julius Wilson. 1995. "Toward a Theory of Race, Crime, and Urban Inequality." Pp. 37-56 in *Crime and Inequality*, edited by John Hagan and Ruth Peterson. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Tittle, Charles R. 1980. *Sanctions and Social Deviance: The Question of Deterrence*. New York: Praeger.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2006. *The 2006 Statistical Abstract: The National Data Book*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2001. *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, 2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Wells, L. Edward and Joseph H. Rankin. 1991. "Families and Delinquency: A Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Broken Homes." *Social Problems* 38 (1): 71-93.
- Wiatrowski, Michael D., David B. Griswold, and Mary K. Roberts. 1981. "Social Control Theory and Delinquency." *American Sociological Review* 46:525-41.

- Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wright, Bradley R. E., Avshalom Caspi, Terrie E. Moffitt, Richard A. Miech, and Phil A. Silva. 1999a. "Reconsidering the Relationship between SES and Delinquency: Causation but Not Correlation." *Criminology* 37:175-94.
- Wright, Bradley R. E., Avshalom Caspi, Terrie E. Moffitt, and Phil Silva. 1999b. "Low Self-Control, Social Bonds, and Crime: Social Causation, Social Selection, or Both?" *Criminology* 37 (3): 479-514.
- Yu, Jiang and Allen E. Liska. 1993. "The Certainty of Punishment: A Reference Group Effect and Its Functional Form." *Criminology* 31 (3): 447-64.

Bradley R. Entner Wright is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Connecticut, where he studies religion, crime, and social psychology.

C. Wesley Younts is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Connecticut. He researches social psychology, small groups, and criminology.

For reprints and permissions queries, please visit SAGE's Web site at <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>.