

Supportive Parenting Moderates the Effect of Discrimination upon Anger, Hostile View of Relationships, and Violence among African American Boys*

RONALD L. SIMONS
LESLIE GORDON SIMONS
CALLIE HARBIN BURT

University of Georgia

HOLLI DRUMMUND
Western Kentucky University

ERIC STEWART
University of Missouri–St. Louis

GENE H. BRODY
University of Georgia

FREDERICK X. GIBBONS
CAROLYN CUTRONA
Iowa State University

Delivered by Ingenta to :
American Sociological Association
Tue, 09 Jan 2007 16:22:52

Journal of Health and Social Behavior 2006, Vol 47 (December): 373–389

Studies have shown that exposure to discrimination increases the probability that African American adolescents will engage in delinquent behavior, especially acts of violence. The present study extended this research by examining the extent to which supportive parenting buffers a youth from these deleterious consequences of discrimination. Analyses based upon two waves of data from a sample of 332 African American adolescent males and their caretakers supported this hypothesis. Further, the results indicated that there are two avenues whereby supportive parenting reduces the probability that discrimination will lead to violence. First, supportive parenting decreases the chances that discrimination will lead to anger and a hostile view of relationships. Second, supportive parenting lowers the risk that anger or a hostile view of relationships, when they develop, will result in violence.

Several child and family researchers have called for studies investigating developmental processes and patterns of resilience that might

be unique to particular ethnic groups (Garcia-Coll et al. 1996; Hughes, Seidman, and Williams 1993; McLoyd 1990; Spencer 1990).

* This research was supported by grants MH48165 and MH62669 from the National Institute of Mental Health and by grant 029136-02 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Additional funding for this project was provided by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute on

Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station (Project 3320). Address correspondence to Ronald Simons, Department of Sociology, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 (email: rsimons@uga.edu).

These researchers warn against the dangers of adopting a "one model fits all" approach when studying children of color, and they emphasize the importance of considering factors common to the everyday lives of the cultural group that is the focus of study. Such factors include racial and ethnic values that may influence competencies, as well as events that pose threats to adjustment such as racism, discrimination, and prejudice.

In response to this appeal, numerous recent studies have investigated the link between perceived discrimination and psychological distress. This research has reported an association between exposure to ethnic discrimination and depression for African Americans (Williams et al. 1997), Hispanics (Salgado de Snyder 1987), and Asians (Noh et al. 1998). Although most studies have focused on adults, Rumbaut (1994) found a positive relationship between discrimination and depressive symptoms for Latino adolescents, and recently both DuBois and associates (2002) and Simons and associates (2002) reported such an association for African American children.

While a number of studies have investigated the association between perceived discrimination and internalizing problems, much less attention has been devoted to the possible link between discrimination and externalizing problems. This is unfortunate, as children and adolescents of color have been shown to have significantly higher rates of antisocial behavior than the white population (see Hawkins 2003). This is particularly true for African American youths. Although their rates of depression are comparable to those of white youngsters, evidence from a variety of sources suggests that African American children are much more likely than European American children to display conduct problems, delinquent behavior, and crime (Gibbs 1998). The differences are especially large for acts of aggression and violence. Official statistics indicate that the delinquency case rate for black juveniles is more than double that for whites (U.S. Department of Justice 1998), while homicide rates for African American youth are nine times higher than for white youth (Gibbs 1998). Although differences in arrest are partially an artifact of racially biased law enforcement (Walker, Spohn, and DeLone 2000), self-report studies also demonstrate racial differences (Tittle and Paternoster 2000). Data from the National Youth Survey indicate, for example, that the ra-

tio of black-to-white involvement in felony assault is 2.2 to 1, and the ratio for robbery is 3 to 1 (Elliott, Huizinga, and Menard 1989). Finally, controlling for socioeconomic status reduces but does not eliminate the relationship between race and violent crime (Hawkins 2003; Elliott et al. 1989).

These findings underscore the importance of research investigating the factors that place African American youths at risk for delinquency and crime, especially illegal acts involving violence. Recent evidence from four studies of African Americans indicates that part of the explanation may involve racial discrimination. In a cross-sectional study of black preadolescents and early adolescents living in a small Midwestern city, DuBois and associates (2002) found that perceived discrimination was associated with elevated stress and behavior problems, including aggression. Similarly, Simons and associates (2003) reported that perceived discrimination predicted increases in delinquency among a panel of several hundred African American children residing in Georgia and Iowa. Finally, using data from the Woodlawn project in Chicago, McCord and Ensminger (1997, 2002) found that self-reports of discrimination during childhood were related to adult arrests for violent crime.

Together, these studies provide rather strong evidence that perceived discrimination increases an individual's risk for aggression and violence. The present study extends this research by testing the hypothesis that supportive parenting practices buffer African American youth from these deleterious consequences of discrimination. Further, we investigate the mechanisms whereby supportive parenting exercises this protective function. Evidence from prior research (Simons et al. 2003) suggests that the impact of discrimination upon violent delinquency is mediated by anger and a hostile view of relationships. We posit that supportive parenting reduces the association between discrimination and violence through its effect on these two mediators. These hypotheses are developed in the following sections, and we then test them using two waves of data collected from a panel of 332 African American boys living in the Southeast and Midwest.

DISCRIMINATION AND RISK FOR VIOLENCE

Strain theories of delinquency view antisocial behavior as an adaptation to stressful cir-

cumstances. Consistent with this perspective, many studies have shown that exposure to stressful circumstances increases the probability that adolescents will engage in delinquent behavior (for a review, see Agnew 2005). Recently, criminologist Robert Agnew (2001) has attempted to specify the types of stresses and strains that are most likely to lead to delinquency. He argues that strain is most likely to result in delinquent behavior, especially violence, when it is seen as unjust, threatens important activities or identities, and leaves few options for coping other than delinquent behavior. Racial/ethnic discrimination might be seen as a stressor that meets these conditions. If Agnew is correct about the types of strain that lead to crime, racial/ethnic discrimination should predict increased involvement in violent delinquency.

As noted above, three recent studies of African American youth (DuBois et al. 2002; McCord and Ensminger 1997, 2002; Simons et al. 2003) support this hypothesis. These studies find that perceived discrimination is related to delinquency, even after controlling for a number of factors that have been shown to influence participation in antisocial behavior (e.g., family income, quality of parenting, affiliation with deviant peers). Further, although DuBois and associates employed cross-sectional data, the other two studies utilized a panel design. Longitudinal data provide important information regarding the causal priorities that underlie the relationship between discrimination and violent delinquency.

A correlation between these two variables does not tell us whether violent delinquency increases the chances of discrimination, or whether discrimination leads to violent delinquency. Labeling theorists argue that conventional members of society tend to mistrust, avoid, and discriminate against individuals with a criminal history (Paternoster and Iovanni 1989; Sampson and Laub 1997), whereas strain theorists contend that the stress produced by discrimination leads to violence. Although both positions seem plausible, recent analyses based upon longitudinal data favor the latter perspective. Over time, the effect of discrimination upon delinquency is significantly stronger than the effect of delinquency on discrimination (Simons et al. 2003). Thus, research to date supports strain theory's claim that exposure to discrimination increases the

probability that a child will engage in delinquent behavior.

Stressful circumstances lead to delinquency, according to Agnew (1992, 2001), because they generate negative affect that creates pressures to take action that may include aggression and violence. Consonant with this idea, several studies have reported that the association between stressful events and involvement in delinquency is mediated by emotional reactions such as frustration and anger (Aseltine, Gore, and Gordon 2000; Broidy 2001; Mazerolle and Piquero 1998; Piquero and Sealock 2000). Presumably, these negative affective states also account for the association between discrimination and violent delinquency.

One of the discrimination studies discussed earlier reported findings consistent with this assumption. Simons and associates (2003) found that negative emotions mediated much of the relationship between discrimination and delinquency. The remainder of the association was explained by adolescents' views of people and relationships. Those who had experienced a high level of discrimination tended to hold a cynical, hostile view of others, and this viewpoint increased their probability of engaging in delinquent behavior. This finding is consistent with Dodge's (1980, 1991) contention that persistent exposure to abusive interaction causes children to develop a hostile view of relationships, and that children who possess such a perspective tend to attribute malevolent motives to others and to assume that an aggressive, belligerent attitude is necessary to avoid exploitation (see also Dodge, Bates, and Pettit 1990).

Research has shown that this view of relationships is strongly held by both aggressive children and institutionalized delinquents (Dodge et al. 1990; Slaby and Guerra 1988). Research by Dodge and associates suggests that abusive parenting is one type of harsh treatment that leads to a hostile view of relationships (Dodge et al. 1990, 1995). The study by Simons and associates (2003) suggests that racial discrimination may also foster this attributional bias.

Given the high prevalence of prejudice and discrimination in this country, these findings provide reason for concern. It may be the case, however, that there are actions African American parents can take to reduce the prob-

ability that their children will respond to discrimination by engaging in antisocial behavior.

THE MODERATING EFFECT OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOR

Unlike majority-population white parents, African American parents face the challenge of preparing their children to live in a society where they are frequently devalued (Demo and Hughes 1990; Thornton et al. 1990). Thus, racial socialization is a common component of African American mothers' and fathers' parenting practices (Hughes and Chen 1997). Broadly defined, racial socialization consists of messages that parents send their children regarding racial identity and status (Thornton et al. 1990; Stevenson 1997). Research indicates that there is considerable variation in the types of messages that African American parents send their children regarding race (Hughes and Chen 1997; Peters 1985). Stevenson (1997; Stevenson et al. 1997) has presented preliminary evidence suggesting that the most effective approach to racial socialization involves teaching children about the realities of racial oppression while emphasizing the possibility of achieving success in the face of these obstacles. Unfortunately, our data set does not include measures of parental racial socialization (although such measures will be included in the next wave of data collection). However, the data set does contain assessments of several more general dimensions of parental behavior, and we believe that those relating to parental support may moderate some of the deleterious effects of discrimination.

Although there is evidence that the meaning and effect of some parenting practices (e.g., spanking) may vary by cultural group (Deater-Deckard and Dodge, 1997; McLoyd et al. 2000; Simons et al. 2002), this does not appear to be the case for supportive parenting. Supportive parents are warm and nurturing, help their children solve problems, provide reasons for their decisions, and avoid harsh and rejecting parenting practices. Past research has demonstrated that being the recipient of such parenting behaviors is beneficial to children regardless of ethnicity or social circumstances (Brody et al. 2002; Simons, Simons, and Wallace 2004). Along with the other positive consequences of such parenting, we expect that it reduces the probability that discrimination will lead to violent delinquency. Further, we expect that supportive parenting exerts this effect because of

its impact upon the anger and hostile view of relationships that link discrimination to violence.

There are two ways in which supportive parents might exercise such an influence. First, parents' supportive involvement might serve to soothe children's anger and provide loving, respectful models of relationships. This would have the effect of diminishing the extent to which experiences of discrimination affect children's emotional state or foster a distorted view of relationships. Second, parental support may reduce the probability that anger or a hostile view of relationships, once developed, will result in violence. Stated differently, discrimination may foster anger and a hostile view of others, but the supportive involvement of the parent might reduce the chances of children acting upon these feelings and cognitions by engaging in violent behavior. We expect that supportive parenting moderates the impact of discrimination on violent delinquency in both of these ways.

In summary, we intend to test the following hypotheses. First, we expect that various dimensions of supportive parenting (viz., warmth/affection, problem solving, reasoning, and avoidance of hostility/rejection), as well as a composite measure of supportive parenting, will operate as buffers in the relationship between discrimination and violent delinquency. Second, we posit that supportive parenting produces this effect in two ways: (1) by reducing the probability that discrimination will result in anger and a hostile view of relationships, and (2) by diminishing the risk that anger or a hostile view of relationships will result in violent delinquency.

We test these hypotheses using two waves of data from 332 boys in the Family and Community Health Study (FACHS). Our analyses only focus on boys, as the girls in the FACHS sample did not report enough involvement in violent delinquency to permit analysis. While violent delinquency for boys approached a normal distribution after logarithmic transformation, the distribution for girls remained seriously skewed, regardless of the transformation employed, given the small number of girls who reported having engaged in violence. This finding is consistent with the results of prior studies showing that physical violence is largely a male phenomenon (Geen 1998). The aggression of girls tends to be more indirect, often involving activities designed to

damage the victim's peer relationships (e.g., verbal attack, spreading rumors, giving the silent treatment; Geen 1998). Unfortunately, the data used in the present study do not include measures of indirect aggression.

METHODS

Sample

We tested our hypotheses using two waves of data from FACHS, a multisite investigation of neighborhood and family effects on health and development. The FACHS sample consists of several hundred African American families living in Georgia and Iowa. Most research on the effects of neighborhood characteristics and other contextual factors on African American parents and children has centered on families living in the impoverished inner core of large metropolitan areas. This focus does not acknowledge the diversity of African American families and the variety of communities in which they live. FACHS was designed to identify neighborhood and family processes that contribute to school-age African American children's development in families living in a wide variety of community settings outside the inner-city core. Each family included a child who was in fifth grade at the time of recruitment. Interviews were conducted with the target child and his or her primary caregiver (for more information on sampling procedures, see Simons et al. 2005).

Families were recruited from neighborhoods that varied on demographic characteristics, specifically racial composition (percent African American) and economic level (percent of families with children living below the poverty line). Block groups were used to identify neighborhoods. Using 1990 census data, block groups were identified in both Iowa and Georgia in which the percent of African American families was high enough to make recruitment economically practical (10% or higher), and in which the percent of families with children living below the poverty line ranged from 10 to 100 percent. Using this criterion, 259 block groups were identified (115 in Georgia and 144 in Iowa). The study families were recruited from these block groups.

Block groups in Georgia came from locations such as south Atlanta, the Stone Mountain area, Athens, and several small towns and cities in the north-central portion of the state. In Iowa, all of the block groups that met the study criteria were located in two com-

munities: Waterloo/Cedar Falls, with a metropolitan population of approximately 120,000, and the Des Moines metropolitan area, with a population of approximately 350,000. In both Georgia and Iowa, families were randomly selected from rosters and contacted to determine their interest in participating in the project. The response rate for the contacted families was 84 percent.

To evaluate the variability and representativeness of the neighborhoods included in our sample, we compared census tracts included in the FACHS sample with those in Georgia and Iowa that were not included. No significant differences were found in Iowa. For Georgia, average and median family incomes were somewhat lower among the tracts in the study than in those excluded. Further analysis showed this to be a result of the study sample having a slight underrepresentation of high-income census tracts.

Two waves of data were collected from the Georgia and Iowa families using identical research procedures. The first wave was collected in 1998 and the second in 2000. At wave 1, the participants were 867 African American children (400 boys and 467 girls; 462 in Iowa and 405 in Georgia) and their primary caregivers. The children were 10 to 12 years old (mean of 10.5 years) at wave 1 of data collection. Seven hundred thirty-eight of the children (361 boys and 418 girls) and their caregivers were interviewed again at wave 2. This was a response rate of 86 percent. Analyses indicate that the families who did not participate at wave 2 did not differ significantly from those who did with regard to caregiver income and education or child's age, gender, school performance, or delinquency.

Complete data for the measures used in this paper were available for 332 boys and their primary caregivers. A primary caregiver was defined as a person living in the same household as the target child and who was responsible for a majority of the child's care. Most (84%) of the primary caregivers were the target child's biological mother (6% were the child's father; 6% were the child's grandmother). The primary caregivers' mean age was 37.1 years and ranged from 23 to 80 years. Education ranged from less than high school (19%) to advanced graduate degrees (3%). The mode and median was a high school degree (41%). Ninety-two percent of the primary caregivers identified themselves as African American. Seventy-one

percent of them were employed full or part time, 15 percent were unemployed, 6 percent were disabled, and 5 percent were full-time homemakers. Median family income was \$26,227, and the average number of children was 3.42. There was no significant difference in income or education of the primary caregiver between the Iowa and Georgia subsamples.

Measures

Our analyses utilized measures of violent delinquency, discrimination, caretaker behavior, anger, and hostile view of relationships assessed at both waves 1 and 2. Child reports were used to construct our measures of discrimination, violence, anger, and hostile view of relationships. In an effort to reduce the problem of shared methods bias, caregiver and child reports were used to form our assessments of supportive parenting and parental control. Two of the four subscales comprising the supportive parenting measure, however, are based solely on child reports because caregivers did not report on these behaviors.

Violent delinquency. This construct was measured using child self-reports on eight items from the conduct disorder section of the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children, Version 4 (DISC-IV; American Psychiatric Association, 1994). The items asked about bullying, initiating fights, being physically cruel to people, using a weapon, being physically cruel to animals, stealing with confrontation, setting fires, and destroying property. At wave 1, the respondents indicated whether they had ever engaged in each behavior; at wave 2 they reported whether they had done so during the preceding year. Coefficient alpha for the instrument was approximately .70 at both waves. Given the skew and the non-negative, integer nature of this count measure, we used negative binomial regression models in all analyses predicting violent delinquency.

Discrimination. The target children completed 13 items from the Schedule of Racist Events (Landrine and Klonoff 1996). This instrument has strong psychometric properties and has been used extensively in studies of African Americans of all ages, including teens (Klonoff and Landrine 1999). The items assess the frequency (1 = never, 4 = several times) with which various discriminatory events have been experienced. For example, the scale asks, "How often has someone yelled a racial slur or racial insult at you just because you are African

American?"; "How often have the police hassled you just because you are African American?"; and "How often has someone threatened you physically just because you are African American?" Other items focused on disrespectful treatment by sales clerks, false accusations by authority figures, and exclusion from social activities because of being African American. Coefficient alpha for the scale was above .82 at both waves.

The Iowa children reported more discrimination than those living in Georgia. The mean scores on the Schedule of Racist Events were 22.8 and 19.7 for Iowa and Georgia, respectively. The *t*-test for equality of means showed this difference to be significant at the .01 level. Most of the Iowa children resided in largely white communities, whereas many of the Georgia families lived in largely black communities. This difference in exposure to white people probably accounts for the regional difference in perceived discrimination. It should be noted, however, that neither controlling for the proportion of black residents in each of the block group areas nor including a dummy variable for state in our study had an effect on the results presented below.

The regional difference in perceived discrimination indicates that ethnic/racial discrimination is more prevalent in some communities than others. If this is true, children living in the same neighborhood should report similar levels of discrimination, and there should be a correlation between child and caretaker reports of discrimination within the same community. Recently, Simons and associates (2002) reported that these associations were evident in the present sample, a finding that supports the validity of our discrimination measure.

Supportive parenting. Various parenting scales were summed to form a composite measure of supportive parenting. The target children in the study reported on the extent to which their primary caregiver displays warmth and affection and engages in harsh disciplinary practices. Both caregivers and children completed scales designed to assess the extent to which the caregiver provides reasons for rules and decisions and engages in problem solving with their child. The items for the various scales were adapted from instruments developed for the Iowa Youth and Families Project (IYFP) (Conger et al. 1992; Conger and Elder 1994). These measures have been shown to

have high validity and reliability. For example, analyses from IYFP have shown that parent reports on these instruments correlate with child reports and with observer ratings (Conger et al. 1992; Simons et al. 1996), and they predict various dimensions of child behavior across a several-year period (Simons et al. 1998, 2001). Focus group feedback prior to data collection indicated that these items are meaningful to African American parents and capture what they consider to be the important dimensions of effective parenting, and research found an association between these parenting measures and both delinquency (Simons et al. 2003) and depression (Simons et al. 2002).

The target children used eight items to report on their parent's warmth/affection (e.g., "How often during the past 12 months did your mom tell you she loves you?"; "How often during the past 12 months did your mom let you know she understands the way you feel about things?") The scale had an alpha of .90. Coefficient alpha was .75 for the 14 items used to assess harsh parenting (e.g., "How often does your mother insult or swear at you?"; "How often does your mother slap or hit you?"). The response format for this scale, as well as the others described below, ranged from 1 (never) to 4 (always).

As noted, both child and caregiver reports were used to generate the reasoning and problem-solving scales. The instruments used for the primary caregivers were reworded for the children. For each of these measures, the caregiver and child reports were first converted to z-scores and then summed to form a composite measure. Five items were used to assess the extent to which caregivers provide reasons or explanations for the decisions that they make regarding their children (e.g., "How often do you explain to your child the reasons for your decisions?"; "When your child doesn't know why you make certain rules, how often do you explain the reason?"). Coefficient alpha for the reasons scale was .78 for parents and .80 for the children. Four questions asked about problem solving (e.g., "When you and your child have a problem, how often can the two of you figure out how to deal with it?"). Coefficient alpha for this scale was .73 for caregivers and .60 for children.

Finally, a composite measure of supportive parenting was calculated in three steps. First, we recoded the harsh parenting measure so that higher scores indicated the absence of harsh

parenting. We then standardized each of the parenting scales. These standardized measures of warmth/affection, reasons, problem solving, and eschewing harsh parenting were then summed to form a supportive parenting scale. Cronbach's alpha for this composite measure was .73.

Anger. Our measure of anger was constructed with four items from the DISC-IV. The items focus on how often the respondent loses his or her temper, feels grouchy or annoyed, gets mad, or feels unfairly treated. The response format for the items ranged from 0 (less than once per week) to 3 (nearly every day). Coefficient alpha was approximately .65 at both waves.

Hostile view of relationships. According to Dodge (1980, 1986), hostile views of relationships are biased perspectives that lead children to attribute malevolent motives to others and to assume that an aggressive, belligerent attitude is necessary to avoid exploitation. A nine-item scale was developed for the present study to assess this construct. The items focus on the extent to which respondents believe that people are untrustworthy and exploitive (e.g., "You have often been lied to"; "When people are friendly, they usually want something from you") and that aggressive actions are therefore necessary and legitimate in order to defend oneself (e.g., "People will take advantage of you if you don't let them know how tough you are"; "Sometimes you need to threaten people in order to get them to treat you fairly"). Response format for these items ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Coefficient alpha for the hostile views of relationships scale was above .70 at both waves.¹

Control variables. Several variables were included as controls. First, we included a measure of parental control. Although this dimension of parenting was not expected to moderate the association between discrimination and violent delinquency, it was likely to be related to delinquency and was therefore included as a control. The caregiver and child used 13 items to report on parental control (e.g., "How often do you know who your child is with when he/she is away from home?"; "Once you have decided on a type of discipline, how often can your child get out of it?"). Coefficient alpha was approximately .80 for both caregivers and children. Parent and child reports were summed to form a composite measure of this construct.

Primary caregivers and secondary caregivers (where appropriate) reported the amount of money that they had earned during the previous year from employment, child support, government payments, and so forth. We summed these measures to generate a measure of household income.²

Finally, we included a measure of community crime, as this variable was likely to be related to both discrimination and violent delinquency. Target children completed a six-item community crime scale, and primary caregivers completed a four-item scale adapted from instruments developed for the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN; see Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997). The scale asked the child and primary caregiver to report how often (1 = never, 3 = often) various criminal acts occur within their community. The instrument included behaviors such as fighting with weapons, robbery, and gang violence. Coefficient alpha for the wave 2 scale was .71 for children and .88 for caregivers. These two scales were first standardized, in order to give the scales equal weight, and then summed to form a composite measure of community crime.

RESULTS

The majority of target boys reported that they had experienced racial discrimination. For example, 67 percent reported that someone had insulted them because they were African American, and 46 percent indicated that they had experienced racial slurs. Forty-three percent stated that they had been suspected of doing something wrong because they were African American. Thirty-three percent reported that they had been excluded from an activi-

ty, and 18 percent indicated that they had been threatened with physical harm because they were African American. Many of the respondents reported that their friends and family had been victims of racial discrimination. Fifty-four percent reported that close friends had been treated unfairly because they were African American, and 48 percent reported that family members had received such treatment.

At wave 2, more than half of the boys reported that during the preceding year they had engaged in at least one act of violence. The most frequently reported behavior was fighting. For example, 39 percent had been in a fight, and 11 percent had hurt someone badly in a fight. Ten percent had bullied someone smaller, 5 percent had destroyed the property of others, 4 percent had been physically cruel to animals, 3 percent had used a weapon against someone, 2 percent had been physically cruel to people, and 1 percent had stolen with confrontation. Because of such behavior, 44 percent had been suspended from school, and 11 percent had been in trouble with the police.

Table 1 presents the correlation matrix for the study variables. As expected, Table 1 shows that discrimination is positively associated with violent delinquency, whereas supportive parenting and parental control are inversely related with this variable. Anger and hostile view exhibit moderate correlations with violent delinquency, discrimination, and each other. Community crime is significantly correlated with violent delinquency as well as with one of the parenting measures; we therefore consider it in subsequent multivariate analyses. In contrast, household income is not significantly associated with any of the theo-

TABLE 1. Correlation Matrix for Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Violent delinquency _{T2}	—								
2. Violent delinquency _{T1}	.25**	—							
3. Household income _{T2}	-.06	.04	—						
4. Community crime _{T2}	.10*	.10	-.16**	—					
5. Discrimination _{T2}	.32**	.25**	.01	.16**	—				
6. Parental control _{T2}	-.13*	-.07	-.07	-.13*	-.04	—			
7. Supportive parenting _{T2}	-.28**	-.18**	.07	.04	-.13*	.05	—		
8. Anger _{T2}	.48**	.14**	.10	.02	.23**	-.22**	.06	—	
9. Hostile view _{T2}	.18**	.11*	.02	.09	.32**	-.19**	.14**	.15**	—
Mean	1.92	1.55	29,017	-.13	7.75	-.13	.02	4.08	-.33
Standard deviation	2.65	2.62	21,775	1.52	7.34	1.60	3.31	3.37	2.87

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed tests)

Note: $n = 332$.

retical variables, so we do not include it in our subsequent analyses.

Before discussing the results of our multivariate analyses, several features of our analyses should be noted. Given that violent delinquency is a count variable with the concomitant skewed distribution and overdispersion, we use negative binomial regression to predict this outcome. In addition, we capitalize on our longitudinal data in two ways. First, we estimate autoregressive models to capture the longitudinal link between the constructs and attenuate the risk of endogenous bias. That is, for each outcome we estimate the change from wave 1 to wave 2 by controlling for the youths' wave 1 score on the outcome being examined. Second, we estimate each equation in two forms. In the first, we use wave 2 measures of our theoretical constructs. We take this approach because we expect the impact of discrimination and parenting on child adjustment to be concurrent. It is recent exposure to discrimination and supportive parenting, rather than experiences that occurred two years earlier, that we expect to influence the child's current involvement in violent delinquency. Our second approach involves the use of change scores. Increases in discrimination and increases in supportive parenting are substituted for the time 2 assessments of these variables.³ Thus, in addition to investigating the concurrent impact of discrimination and supportive parenting, we examined the impact of increases in these variables between waves. The change scores were computed by the simple

arithmetic process of subtracting the wave 1 scores from their wave 2 counterparts.⁴

All of the independent variables were standardized prior to entering them into the models. Therefore, we present the unstandardized betas, which can be interpreted as influence of a standard deviation increase in the predictor. Finally, preliminary analyses revealed that neither household income nor community crime were significantly associated with the various child adjustment outcomes we examine. Thus, we reestimated the models without these measures. Likelihood-ratio tests indicated that excluding household income and community crime did not deteriorate the model fit. Thus, in the interest of parsimony, we dropped these inconsequential variables and present the reduced model. On the other hand, parental control is incorporated in all of the models. Although the effect of parental control fails to achieve statistical significance in most of the models, including this variable makes a significant incremental contribution to the explained variance.

The Moderating Effects of Supportive Parenting

Table 2 displays the results of a series of negative binomial regressions assessing the change in violent delinquency. The first two models display the effects of discrimination and supportive involvement on the change in violent delinquency, holding parental control constant. (Models 3 and 4 in this table will be discussed in the next section.) These models show that discrimination, whether one uses the

TABLE 2. Violent Delinquency_{T2} Regressed on Violent Delinquency_{T1}, Discrimination, Supportive Parenting, Anger, and Hostile View

Independent Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	b	%Δ ^a	b	%Δ ^a	b	%Δ ^a	b	%Δ ^a
Violent delinquency _{T1}	.05	5.4	.13***	14.3	.05	4.8	.11***	11.1
Discrimination _{T2}	.37**	44.2			.24**	27.1		
Supportive parenting _{T2}	-.30*	-25.8			-.17*	-15.4		
Parental control _{T2}	-.13	-12.3	-.14	-12.7	-.11	-10.6	-.14*	-12.5
Anger _{T2}					.56***	75.4	.46***	58.8
Hostile view _{T2}					.04	4.3	.15*	15.7
Increase discrimination _{T2-T1}			.19*	20.4			.05	4.8
Increase supportive parenting _{T2-T1}			-.30***	-25.6			-.27**	-23.6
Constant	.46***		.35***		.31***		.19**	
LR test of α = 0	280.60		251.58		159.47		189.82	

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Note: $n = 332$.

^a The value reported in this column is the percent change in the expected count of violent delinquency for a unit increase in the independent variable.

time 2 assessment (model 1) or change from wave 1 to wave 2 (model 2), predicts increased involvement in violent delinquency. A (standardized) unit increase in discrimination augments the expected count of violent delinquency by more than 44 percent and 20 percent for the two models, respectively. The same pattern is evident for supportive parenting, where the predicted change in violent delinquency is roughly -26 percent for both models 1 and 2. Conversely, supportive parenting has a significant inverse relationship with violent delinquency, with a standardized unit increase in supportive parenting decreasing the expected count of violent delinquency by more than 25 percent, net of other factors ($p < .001$).

The first two models in Table 3 display the moderating effects of supportive parenting on the association between discrimination and violent delinquency. (The remaining models in this table will be discussed in the next section.) The interaction term incorporated in these models was formed, following Aiken and West (1991), by mean centering each of the variables, multiplying them together, and then standardizing the product term. Model 1 of Table 3 adds the interaction term between supportive parenting (T2) and discrimination (T2), and model 2 includes the interaction between the increase in supportive parenting and the increase in discrimination. The interaction terms in both models are statistically significant and in the predicted direction (negative), thereby indicating that supportive parenting buffers the

effect of discrimination on violence. The interaction in model 1 reveals that a standardized unit increase in supportive parenting is associated with a 14 percent decrease in the expected count of violent delinquency, whereas the interaction between the change measures in model 2 shows that a standard deviation increase in the change in supportive parenting decreases violent delinquency by approximately 11 percent. Further, in both models the addition of the interaction term produced a small but statistically significant improvement in model fit.

We graphed these interaction terms to facilitate interpretation of their effect. Figure 1 depicts the interaction between supportive parenting and discrimination from model 1 of Table 3. Consistent with the hypothesis that supportive parenting buffers the impact of discrimination on violent delinquency, it shows that the effect of discrimination on violence is less for boys with high supportive parenting. Although not shown due to space constraints, the graph of the interaction from model 2 showed a similar pattern.⁵

The Mediating Effects of Anger and Hostile View of Relationships

Having found confirmation for our hypothesis that supportive parenting diminishes the association between discrimination and violent delinquency, the next step was to test our hypotheses regarding the mechanisms by which this moderation was accomplished. We posited

TABLE 3. Regressions Examining the Interaction of Discrimination with Supportive Parenting

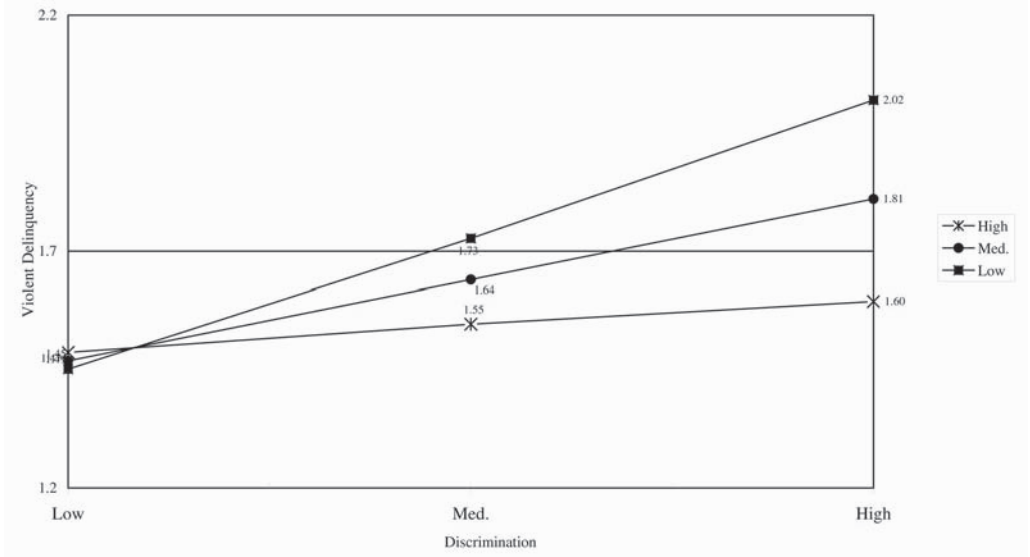
<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Violent Delinquency_{T2}</i>		<i>Anger_{T2}</i>		<i>Hostile View_{T2}</i>	
	<i>Model 1^a</i>	<i>Model 2^a</i>	<i>Model 3^b</i>	<i>Model 4^b</i>	<i>Model 5^b</i>	<i>Model 6^b</i>
<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Violent delinquency _{T1}	.05	.13***				
Anger _{T1}			.08	.18**		
Hostile view _{T1}					.26***	.32***
Discrimination _{T2}	.36***		.19***		.30***	
Supportive parenting _{T2}	-.29***		-.22***		-.14*	
Parental control _{T2}	-.04	-.13	.10	.13†	.02	.06
Discrimination × supportive parenting _{T2}	-.12*		-.09**		-.08*	
Increase discrimination _{T2-T1}		.18*		.14**		.11*
Increase supportive parenting _{T2-T1}		-.26**		-.17**		-.09†
Increase discrimination × increase supportive parenting _{T2-T1}		-.10*		-.11*		-.07†
Constant	.48***	.34***	3.89***	3.43***	.32***	.29**
LR test of $\alpha = 0$	280.60	288.16	Adj. R ² .16	.09	.20	.15

† $p < .07$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Note: n = 332.

^a These results are based on negative binomial regressions of violent delinquency on the predictors.

^b These results are based on ordinary least squares regressions.

FIGURE 1. The Association between Discrimination and Violent Delinquency among Boys Who Are High, Medium, and Low in Supportive Parenting

that supportive parenting achieved its effect through its impact on the mediators of the association between discrimination and violent delinquency: anger and hostile view of relationships.

To establish a mediating effect, we first estimated the effect of discrimination on change in anger and hostile view. The results of these analyses (not shown)⁶ revealed that discrimination, whether operationalized as discrimination (T2) or the change in discrimination, predicts increases in both anger and hostile view of relationships. The effect of the two discrimination measures on anger is .22 and .12, respectively, and their impact on hostile view of relationships is .27 and .12, respectively. Parenthetically, supportive parenting is associated with decreased anger and hostile view of relationships.

Having established that discrimination increases anger and a hostile view of relationships, we added anger and hostile view of relationships to the models predicting violent delinquency in order to gauge whether discrimination increases violent delinquency in part by augmenting negative emotions and attitudes. The negative binomial regressions presented in models 3 and 4 of Table 2 indicate that much of the effect of discrimination on violent delinquency is indirect through anger and hostile view of relationships. Comparing the coefficient for discrimination from model 3

with the coefficient from model 1, we can see that adding anger and hostile view of relationships reduces the effect of discrimination (T2) by roughly 36 percent (from $b = .373$ to $b = .239$). The mediation effect is even stronger in model 4. Anger and hostile view of relationships attenuate the impact of the increase in discrimination on the change in violence by more than 75 percent (from $b = .194$ to $b = .048$) and renders the coefficient between the two insignificant.

It should be noted that we investigated the extent to which other negative emotions, such as depression and anxiety, mediate the impact of discrimination on violence. Simons and associates (2003), for example, found that depression mediated a small portion of the association between discrimination and general delinquency. In our analyses, however, anger was the only emotion with a mediational effect. Thus, while depression may mediate part of the effect of discrimination on general delinquency, anger appears to be the negative emotion that links discrimination to violent delinquency.

After establishing that anger and a hostile view of relationships mediate the effect of discrimination on violent delinquency, the next step was to examine the extent to which supportive parenting achieves its moderating effect through its influence on these mediational processes. First, we tested the hypothesis that

supportive parenting reduces the probability that discrimination will result in either anger or a hostile view of relationships. The results of these analyses are presented in models 3 through 6 of Table 3. Models 3 and 4 show that the interaction between discrimination and supportive parenting is negative and significant, regardless of whether one uses time 2 measures of the variables or change scores to form the interaction terms. The same is true regarding hostile view of relationships, as shown in models 5 and 6. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that supportive parenting decreases the chances that discrimination will foster increased anger or a more hostile view of relationships. Although not shown in the interest of parsimony, graphs of these interactions corroborated this interpretation.

Finally, Table 4 tests the hypothesis that supportive parenting reduces the probability that anger and a hostile view of relationships will lead to violent delinquency. The main effects for increases in anger and hostile view are positive and significant, with standardized unit increases in these two variables augmenting the expected count of violent delinquency by roughly 75 percent and 4 percent, respectively, in model 1, and 65 percent and 12 percent in model 2. Importantly, given the hypothesis being tested, both in model 1, which uses time 2 measures of the predictors, and in model 2, which utilizes change scores, the interaction terms formed by multiplying anger and hostile view of relationships by supportive parenting are negative and significant. In model 1, the positive slope between anger and violent delinquency is diminished by roughly 11 percent for each standard deviation increase in supportive parenting. Analogously, the slope for hostile view is reduced by almost 14 percent for each standardized unit increase in supportive parenting. Comparable moderator effects are evident for model 2.

Together, the findings from Tables 3 and 4 suggest that there are two avenues whereby supportive parenting reduces the probability that discrimination will lead to violence. First, it decreases the chances that discrimination will lead to anger and a hostile view of relationships; second, it lowers the risk that anger or a hostile view of relationships, when they develop, will result in violence.

DISCUSSION

Past research, whether based on self-report data or official statistics, indicates that the incidence of criminal behavior is much higher among African American males than among European American males. The difference is especially pronounced with regard to violent crime. Contemporary theories of delinquency posit a set of conditions (e.g., ineffective parenting, lack of self-control, weak social bonds, limited economic opportunity, violent subculture) that serve to increase the probability of criminal involvement regardless of race or ethnicity. Recently, however, some developmental psychologists have warned against the dangers of a "one model fits all" approach to studying children of color (Garcia-Coll et al. 1996; Hughes et al. 1993; McLoyd 1990; Spencer 1990). They stress the importance of considering factors unique to the everyday lives of the cultural group that is the focus of study. This includes events that pose threats to adjustment such as racism, discrimination, and prejudice.

To the extent that criminological theory has considered racial/ethnic discrimination, the focus has been upon access to educational and occupational opportunity. Racial/ethnic discrimination is seen as limiting educational and occupational prospects, which, in turn, increases temptation to use illegal avenues to achieve economic success. This perspective is an example of a "one model fits all" explanation, as blocked opportunities are assumed to cause crime among all groups. African Americans engage in more crime, according to this viewpoint, because they experience higher levels of blocked opportunities. While research has provided a modicum of support for this perspective (Anderson 1990; Sullivan 1989; Sampson and Lauritsen 1994; Walker et al. 2000), some researchers have begun to investigate a different model of the effects of discrimination.

Using a social psychological rather than a structural perspective, they have examined the possibility that racial/ethnic discrimination fosters negative emotions and attitudes that directly increase a child's propensity for delinquent behavior. Consistent with this idea, a rather strong association has been found between perceived discrimination and engaging in delinquent behavior (DuBois et al. 2002; McCord and Ensminger 1997, 2002; Simons et al. 2003). Further, the evidence suggests that the causal priority underlying this relationship

TABLE 4. Negative Binomial Regressions Examining the Moderating Effect of Supportive Parenting on the Relationship between Negative Emotions and Violent Delinquency

<i>Independent Variables</i>	Model 1		Model 2	
	b	% Δ^a	b	% Δ^a
Violent delinquency _{T1}	.12	12.7	.47***	60.4
Discrimination _{T2}	.24**	27.1		
Supportive parenting _{T2}	-.16*	-15.1		
Parental control _{T2}	-.11**	-10.6	-.14*	-13.1
Anger _{T2}	.55***	74.5		
Hostile view _{T2}	.04	4.1		
Anger \times supportive parenting _{T2}	-.12*	-11.4		
Hostile view \times supportive parenting _{T2}	-.15*	-13.7		
Increase discrimination _{T2-T1}			.05	4.8
Increase supportive parenting _{T2-T1}			-.26**	-22.8
Increase anger _{T2-T1}			.50***	64.6
Increase hostile view _{T2-T1}			.12*	12.1
Increase anger \times increase supportive parenting _{T2-T1}			-.14***	12.8
Increase hostile view \times increase supportive parenting _{T2-T1}			-.15*	-14.2
LR test of $\alpha = 0$			149.94***	111.62***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Note: $n = 332$.

^a The value reported in this column is the percent change in the expected count of violent delinquency for a unit increase in the predictor.

is from discrimination to delinquency, rather than the reverse (Simons et al. 2003). Our findings provide further support for this idea, as either exposure to high levels of discrimination or experiencing an increase in discrimination predict an escalation in violent delinquency. Further, consistent with the findings reported by Simons et al. (2003), we found that feelings of anger and development of a hostile view of relationships mediated much of the association between discrimination and violence.

Such findings naturally lead to the question: Are there things that caretakers might do to lower the chances that children of color will respond to discrimination with violence? The present study was primarily concerned with testing the idea that parental support (viz., displaying warmth and affection, providing reasons for decisions, helping solve problems, and avoiding hostility and rejection) might lower the chances that children of color will respond to discrimination with violence. Our results indicated that this indeed is the case. Our analyses consistently showed that parental support moderates the association between discrimination and violent delinquency.

Further, our findings suggest that supportive parenting achieves its protective effect in two ways. First, it decreases the chances that discrimination will lead to either anger or a hostile view of relationships. We expect that this phenomenon occurs because warm and sup-

portive parents are able to soothe the feelings of frustration and anger produced by racist treatment, whereas the love and respect provided by such parents provides a model of relationships that may counter the cynical view fostered by acts of discrimination.

Although our results indicate that supportive parenting lessens the chance that discrimination will cause a child to develop anger or a hostile view of relationships, discrimination continued to have a main effect on these two outcomes even after taking supportive parenting into account. Thus, while supportive parenting may reduce feelings of anger and commitment to a hostile view of relationships, African American children are still at risk for experiencing these developmental outcomes to some degree. This fact underscores the importance of the second avenue whereby our findings suggest that supportive parenting moderates the relationships between discrimination and violence. We found that supportive parenting reduces the probability that anger or a hostile view of relationships will result in violent behavior. It is not clear how supportive parenting accomplishes this reduction, but we expect that supportive parents, through their explanations, reasoning, and problem solving, help their children to identify constructive avenues for venting their anger and frustration and to see the self-destructive consequences of expressing their anger through violence and anti-

social behavior. Similarly, while the parent may concede to the child that some individuals are untrustworthy and have bad intentions, the parent may also help the child to see that there are constructive ways of circumventing the dangers posed by such persons and that aggression is rarely the answer to such problems. In order to test these ideas, we need data on the racial socialization provided by parents. This information will be obtained in the next wave of data collection.

We believe it is important to recognize that parental behavior does not occur in a vacuum. Research indicates that the stress associated with economic hardship (Conger et al. 1992) or with being a single parent (Simons et al. 1996) increases the chances of irritable, explosive parenting. Exposure to discrimination may well be another stressor that has a disruptive effect on parenting. Thus, while our findings underscore the importance of supportive parenting, the pressures and strains inherent in the everyday lives of many African American parents reduce the probability that such parenting will occur.

Although the current study has several strengths, it also suffers from several limitations. Two weaknesses in particular need to be mentioned. First, it could be argued that our measure of discrimination only assessed perceptions of discrimination and that these perceptions may be a reflection of the child's temperament or emotional state rather than of reality. For example, angry and aggressive children, or those with a hostile view of relationships, may be predisposed to interpret an aversive action by another as motivated by racism.

While we cannot rule out this possibility, recent research indicates that people's perceptions of personal and group discrimination are generally quite accurate (Taylor, Wright, and Porter 1994). Indeed, the evidence suggests that individuals of color are most apt to make attributions of racism when the stimulus is unambiguous (Ruggiero and Taylor 1995). Thus, while people's perceptions of events are sometimes tainted by their attitudes or emotions, assessments of discrimination, in large measure, appear to be valid reports of racist incidents.

A final limitation of our study is that we did not have measures of the lessons that parents teach their children regarding racism and discrimination. Future studies need to go beyond the investigation of parenting practices that are common to all families and investigate the specific strategies that parents of color employ to

prepare their children to cope with an occasionally racist environment. African American children vary in terms of what their parents teach them about such topics as white people, tactics for addressing discrimination, and the probability of success in a racist society (Hughes and Chen 1999; Stevenson 1997). Presumably, some messages increase a child's resolve and positive striving in the face of discrimination, whereas other communications enhance the probability that discrimination will lead to anger, cynicism, and violence. As we have already noted, we are obtaining information regarding racial socialization as part of the current wave of data collection for our project. Using these data, we will be able to investigate the extent to which various racial socialization practices moderate the association between discrimination and violence.

NOTES

1. We were concerned that our measures of hostile view of relationships, discrimination, and anger might not be distinct. However, a factor analysis of the items for the scales resulted in a clustering of the items for each of the scales. In addition, there was only a modest zero-order correlation between the scales (see Table 1). All of this suggests that the measures are distinct.
2. Due primarily to refusals to report wages, 13 percent of the sample had missing values for household income. Using the expectation-maximization procedure, the following variables were utilized (if available) to impute missing values: wages of all household members, unmet material needs, inability to "make ends meet," financial cutbacks/adjustments, education level, negative financial life events, household size, and dual earner household status.
3. This method of utilizing change scores was used because incorporating both time 1 and time 2 measures leads to unacceptable levels of multicollinearity in our estimates. Several variance inflation factors (VIFs) rose above 3.0 when utilizing both time 1 and time 2 estimates. In contrast, for all of the models presented, not one of the VIFs was greater than 2.0.
4. The correlation between the time 1 and time 2 measures of discrimination was .44 ($p < .001$), and the stability correlation between the measures of supportive parenting was .38 ($p < .001$).

5. It should be noted that we also ran these models with supportive parenting broken into its component parts. The results indicated that all four components—warmth, reasoning, problem solving, and hostility (reverse coded)—significantly reduced the effect of discrimination on violent delinquency.
6. These results are available upon request.

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Ronald L. Simons is Distinguished Research Professor in the Department of Sociology and research fellow in the Institute for Behavioral Research at the University of Georgia. His research focuses on the manner in which community factors, family interaction, and peer processes combine to influence psychological adjustment and antisocial behavior across the life course.

Leslie Gordon Simons is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Child and Family Development at the University of Georgia. Her research investigates the effects of family structure, parenting practices, community processes, and religion on adolescent outcomes such as conduct problems, risky sex, and depression.

Callie Harbin Burt is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Georgia. Her research interests include criminological theory, research methodologies, and links between family and community processes and crime.

Holli Drummond is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Western Kentucky University. Her research focuses on explaining variation in the social psychological processes leading to delinquency and how these processes are shaped by family, peers, school, and community.

Eric A. Stewart is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri, St. Louis. He is also a member of the National Consortium on Violence Research. His research interests include crime over the life course; the effect of neighborhood, school, and family processes on adolescent development; and testing criminological theories.

Gene H. Brody is Regents Professor in the Department of Child and Family Development and Director of the Center for Family Research at the University of Georgia. His research is concerned with the impact of family and community processes on the development of externalizing and internalizing problems in children and adolescents.

Frederick X. Gibbons is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at Iowa State University. His primary research focus is on the application of social psychology theory and principles to health behavior.

Carolyn Cutrona is a Professor in the Department of Psychology and Director of the Institute for Social and Behavioral Research at Iowa State University. Her research examines neighborhood characteristics, stressful life events, and personal characteristics as predictors of mental health and relationship outcomes.