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# Black feminist criminology in action: A study of racial discrimination, ethnic-racial socialization, and offending among African American females

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**Black feminist criminology in action: A study of racial discrimination, ethnic-racial socialization, and offending among African American females**

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Major: Sociology

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The student author and the program of study committee are solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

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**ABSTRACT**

Over the past decade, an increasing number of scholars have begun to explore the link between experiences of interpersonal racial discrimination and an increased risk of offending. The evidence shows that racial discrimination is a risk factor and that ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) provides resilience. However, much of the research on this phenomenon is largely focused on African American males. Drawing on Burt, Simons, and Gibbon's (2012) research, I investigate the ways in which interpersonal racial discrimination increases the risk of offending among African American females and whether familial ERS practices provide resilience to its criminogenic effects. Using panel data from the Family and Community Health Study (FACHS), a survey of African American families in Georgia and Iowa, I examine the relationship between experiences of racial discrimination and an increased likelihood of offending to explore if ethnic-racial socialization provides protective effects against the criminogenic nature of racial discrimination. Using negative binomial regression to analyze my data and a black feminist criminological lens, the results indicate that racial discrimination is linked to a higher likelihood of criminal offending for African American girls. However, little support is found that provides evidence of ethnic racial socialization's protective effects for African American girls.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Despite the structural and consequential aspects of race, little is known about racism's influence on social behaviors, including criminal behavior (Brown 2008). Scholars have long taken interest in explaining racial disparities in street crimes, however it was not until very recently that scholars have begun to explore the direct relationship between experiences of racial discrimination and offending. The lack of research in this area is surprising given that African Americans make up the majority of America's incarcerated population (NAACP 2015).

Sociological explanations of these disparities have taken many different approaches. African Americans' higher rates of offending have been previously explained by aspects unique to minority culture that encourage unconventional behavior, crime, and violence (Anderson 1999). Anderson's (1999) *Code of the Street* details urban street culture in which African American individuals learn the "rules" of the block through codes of differentiating what is seen as disrespectful and the appropriate measures to deal with disrespect. These arguments are also partially derived from essentialist and stereotypical assumptions of people of color in terms of them being considered aggressive, deviant, and fearful.

More recently, explanations have included structural constraints due to race such as institutional discrimination, yet the main mechanism driving these explanations reiterates cultural adaptations (Massey and Denton 1993). Structural explanations of racial disparities in crime rates often look to poverty, family structure, and gang life to explain these disparities (Bowker and Klein 1983; Sampson and Laub 1994).

The use of criminological strain theory and black feminist criminology, which combines feminist criminology and critical race theory, provides a new approach that highlights the salience of racial inequality and gender in micro-interactions. Utilizing this micro-level approach along with previous macro-level explanations of racial disparities provides a more holistic understanding of within-place and within-race differences in offending. The goal of my research is not to create this link, but advocate for the importance of incorporating both micro and macro level approaches in understanding racial and gender disparities in criminal offending. Much of the research to date has taken a micro-sociological approach that views the link between race and crime from a social psychological lens and has largely focused on males. Yet, males are not the only ones experiencing racial discrimination. Thus, there is a need to understand how these processes are occurring in relation to females.

This study seeks to overcome the serious shortcoming of prior research that has predominately focused on males alone, by exploring the criminogenic effects of racial discrimination among African American girls. This study will answer the following questions: does experiencing racial discrimination lead to an increased likelihood of offending for African American girls? Do resilience strategies such as ethnic racial socialization moderate or intervene in the criminogenic effects of experiences of racial discrimination? Does a criminogenic knowledge structure mediate the relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency? To understand how race and gender interact in the experiences of racial discrimination for African American girls Burt, Simons, and Gibbon's (2012) social psychological model will be applied.

The current study speaks to the necessity of understanding how race and gender interact in the experience of racial discrimination for African American girls. Given the recent events regarding race and race relations in the United States, particularly the controversy surrounding

the killing of black men and women by police, it is clear that racial discrimination is persistent and profoundly affects the life chances and everyday life situations of racially minoritized people (Essed 1991; Feagin 1991). This underscores the need for the extension of research in this area.

In summary, the current study aims to overcome the gaps in the literature in understanding the link between race and crime using a micro-level approach that integrates interdisciplinary theories to apply a social psychological model of racial discrimination, ethnic-racial socialization, and crime among African American girls. Utilizing this approach underscores a central tenet of critical race theory that racism is endemic and has real life consequences for African American girls.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

#### **Race, Discrimination, and Crime**

Sociologists and criminologists have long been interested in racial disparities in street crime. Although these differences are magnified by institutional racial biases within the criminal justice system, there is evidence that African Americans commit significantly more street crimes, relative to whites (Tonry 1995; Hawkins et al 2000). Early sociological explanations of racial disparities in offending pointed to deviant (black) subcultures that encouraged or tolerated crime and violence as the source of higher offending for African Americans (Curtis 1975). These theories tend to speak to essentialist understandings of race and look at peer associations as important to the criminality of Blacks. Many scholars rallied behind individual explanations of criminal offending because it absolved systems of power of responsibility for structural limitations placed upon African Americans. Although this “kinds of people” approach dominated race and crime scholarship for some time, it was later found to be inadequate because it neglected structural influences (Hawkins 1983). Seeing a need to address this shortcoming, this fueled the shift from micro-level explanations to macro-level approaches.

In the years following the demise of cultural deficit explanations, which roughly began in the early 1980s, scholars produced a mix of controversial research in the study of race and crime. With the help of the classic works of Blau and Blau (1982), Sampson (1987), Massey and Denton (1993), and Sampson and Wilson (1995) and other scholars, a resurgence of scholarly research on racial disparities and crime replaced cultural explanations with an emphasis on structural approaches. These studies sought to understand the relationship between race and

crime using a contextual lens. In particular, they focused on variations in crime rates across communities with different ethnic-racial breakdowns and levels of inequality. These “kinds of places” approaches emphasized racialized structural forces such as unemployment and housing discrimination (Burt, Simons, and Gibbons 2012). Another example that illustrates these structural explanations for racial disparities is the “War on Drugs” that was prevalent throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Alexander 2010). This “War on Drugs” disproportionately affected communities of color because of the focus on criminalizing the use and selling of crack cocaine. These structural constraints fuse together to create economically disadvantaged neighborhoods that are hyper segregated (Burt, Simons, and Gibbons 2012). This racial isolation thus creates space and opportunity for social disorder to fester and weaken crime control. A lack of crime control fuels the emergence of a deviant subculture that tolerates and/ or encourages criminal behavior resulting in African American neighborhoods with high crime rates (Anderson 1999). Structural explanations of racial disparities in crime have looked to racial segregation as a key factor in understanding differences in crime rates across racialized space (Anderson 1999).

Although macro-level approaches account for the shortcomings of micro-level perspectives, taken separately, neither provide a holistic understanding of racial disparities in crime. Thus, to date racial discrimination generally has not played a central role in explaining Black offending. However when it is incorporated, it is limited to its institutional form (Burt, Simons, and Gibbons 2012). A key factor in explaining the race-crime link in macro-level explanations that has been overlooked in the research is interpersonal racial discrimination which encompasses,” the blatant, subtle, and covert actions, verbal messages, and paraverbal signals that are supported by white racism and malign, mistreat, or otherwise harm members of racial minorities” (Burt, Simons, and Gibbons 2012; Essed 1991; Feagin 1991).

Experiencing interpersonal racial discrimination is not uncommon among African American adults (Landrine and Klonoff 1996) and youth alike (Sellers et al. 2006). Research has illustrated the damaging effects that interpersonal racial discrimination has on African Americans' physical and mental health leading to depression and even suicide. Experiencing interpersonal racial discrimination is stressful and can result in a myriad of negative externalizing behaviors and problems such as delinquency (Unnever et al. 2009), violence, conduct and behavioral problems. This body of work suggests that experiencing interpersonal racial discrimination is criminogenic, which would likely increase criminal offending through added stress and strain.

### **Racial Discrimination, Gender, and Crime**

There is a huge gap in criminology literature on women offenders compared to male offenders. Explanations of this gap in the literature most often point to the fact that males tend to commit more crimes than females (Broidy & Agnew 1997). Not only does this gap in the literature exist, research on women offenders is generally depicted in terms of their male counterparts. In addition, much of the research portrays homogenized experiences amongst women of various racial backgrounds (Stuart van Wormer & Bartollas 2007). Most commonly, white women and black males overshadow women of color offenders' experiences by contextualizing their experiences within their race or their gender. For example, crime is generalized in terms of blackness or in regards to woman-ness. In doing so, it does not account for how African Americans and women experience blackness and woman-ness differentially. This oversight implies that there is a singular Black or woman experience.

Most commonly research explores the pathways to offending for women such as sexual and physical abuse and drugs, but does not necessarily take a nuanced approach to understand if there are particularities in the pathways related to race. This leaves a gap in understanding the intersection of race and gender in the lived experiences of African American women much like Crenshaw (1991) illustrates. This is surprising considering that women of color comprise more than half of the female incarcerated population in the United States and that black women commit more street crimes than their white counterparts (Department of Health and Human Sciences 2004; Laub & McDermott 1985).

With a few exceptions, criminological research did not begin to seriously seek to understand the experiences of Black females until the mid-1980s. This is reflective of how Black female offenders have been overshadowed in criminological literature by both Black men and white women causing Rice (1990) to refer to them as the “other dark figure of crime.” This underscores why intersectionality is so important in understanding the unique experiences of Black women who simultaneously experiences both racism and sexism. Their experiences cannot be explained looking solely at gender or race. This speaks to the need for a black feminist criminology (BFC). Black feminist criminology is important because it expands feminist criminology by being firmly rooted in black feminist theory and critical race feminist theory in order to understand the complexities of Black girls’ lived experience (Potter 2006). Although not substantial in number, recently the work of Black feminists and critical race theorists have sought to highlight the unique positionality of African American women and how their race, gender, and class intersect and influence their offending behaviors (Crenshaw 1991).

### **Ethnic-racial Socialization as a Resilience Factor**

Given the pervasiveness of racism in everyday life, youth of color who are not aware of its nature at a young age are often unprepared to experiencing the negative effects of racial discrimination. In order to alleviate some of this burden, scholars have begun to focus on adaptive practices that provide resilience to racial discrimination. One practice that has been identified as a protective factor against racial discrimination is ethnic racial socialization,” a class of protective practices utilized to promote minority children’s pride and esteem in their racial group and to provide children with competencies to deal with systemic racism” (Hughes 2003; Stevenson et. al 2003). Ethnic racial socialization is said to provide a deeper knowledge of how and why systemic racism exists and how to respond to it, providing youth with protection from covert and overt racism (Stevenson et al 2003). Thus, African American youth have been socialized to have a keen awareness of racism and their unique cultural heritage in the United States that prepares them for future racial struggles.

An increasing body of literature posits ethnic racial socialization as an important protective factor for Black families. Particularly, there are two forms of ERS, cultural socialization and preparation for bias that have been identified as vital to African American’s resistance and resilience to racial discrimination (Stevenson et al. 2003). Stevenson et al. (2003) define these forms of ERS as,” proactive and protective messages and interactions that arise in family conversations about race” (p. 46). Burt, Simons, and Gibbons (2012) found support for the protective nature of preparation for bias and cultural socialization against the criminogenic nature of racial discrimination in a sample of Black male youth. The current study seeks to expand upon their findings by examining whether the same relationship exists amongst a sample of African American girls.

### **Cultural socialization**

This form of ethnic racial socialization includes practices that emphasize acceptance and pride in one's racial or ethnic heritage through cultural customs (Hughes et al. 2006). Cultural socialization includes African American parents instilling pride in their children related to their culture because of its historical roots in Africa, empowering nature, and emphasis on a collective identity. These practices include familial discussions about important history and accomplishments of prominent individuals in one's racial group (i.e. Martin Luther King, the Civil Rights Movement, etc.) celebrating cultural holidays (i.e. Kwanzaa), and engaging in storytelling (i.e. passing down stories, experiences, and histories). Cultural socialization serves as a caregiving strategy that encourages inclusion, well-being, and acceptance among racially minoritized youth in a racist society resulting in increased self-esteem (Billingsley 1992; Harris-Britt et al 2007) and overall psychological well being (Caldwell et al. 2002), as well as a decrease in externalizing behaviors (Stevenson et al 2003) and internalizing problems (Bynum, Burt, and Best 2007). Building on the findings of Burt and colleagues (2012), the current study will explore cultural socialization's relationship to offending.

### **Preparation for Bias**

The second form of ethnic racial socialization mentioned is preparation for bias. This form of ERS is a critical component of African American parenting that teaches children about racism and how to deal with its various manifestations (Hughes et al. 2006). Preparation for bias, much like it sounds, consists of families warning African American youth about racial discrimination and equipping them with tools and coping strategies to deal with and overcome

racial barriers (Hughes et al. 2006). Thus, Black children learn to not only be able to recognize racism, but also how to resist it. This has been shown to be crucial to the success to Black youth.

Although there is less research related specifically to preparation for bias, studies suggest that it may provide resilience by reducing some of the harmful consequences of discrimination (Stevenson et al 2003). Preparation for bias alleviates some of the feelings associated with being ill-prepared and caught off guard in situations of racial discrimination. Thus, in order to prepare youth for bias, African American parents and family members have discussions sharing their own personal stories with experiencing racial discrimination in order to provide the youth with a toolkit of coping strategies. This communication fosters a sense of community and collective identity amongst African American youth.

Although small in number, research on African American adolescents' coping provides support for preparation for bias and a direct increase in using adaptive coping strategies such as social support and problem solving (Scott 2004). Relatedly, preparation for bias also indirectly corresponds to adaptive coping strategies through strengthening the youth's perceived control over their experiences (Scott 2004). Thus, it is believed that preparation for bias will provide protective effects against discrimination, particularly for girls who have more preparation, thus weakening the link between discrimination and offending (Burt et al 2012). However, due to gendered differences, norms, and behaviors, there is reason to believe that ethnic racial socialization may be gendered.

### **Ethnic Racial Socialization and Gender**

The practices of ethnic racial socialization may be gendered for several reasons. First, because racism is gendered, caregivers are likely to socialize their female and male children

differently. In other words, given the complex nature of African American girl's experiences of both racism and sexism, caregivers will provide them with coping strategies specific to this intersection. An African American parent may give their daughter tips on how to resist harmful messages about Black women, whereas they may teach their sons how to act in the event that they are pulled over by the police. This speaks to the nuance that is involved in ERS across content and gender. Thus, different forms of ethnic racial socialization and messages are likely to produce different protective effects.

Another reason that ethnic racial socialization may be gendered is because gendered norms are likely to influence the extent to which it is protective. In other words, males and females may utilize the lessons they learn in ways that reflect gendered norms (Stevenson 1994). Thus, females may be more likely to seek social support in order to deal with the emotional aspects of racial discrimination, whereas males may be more likely to seek social support in order to come up with an action plan to deal with discriminatory lessons (Brown et al 2010).

Lastly, ethnic racial socialization may be gendered because gender provides a vital source of understanding variability in coping with strain or stressful events (Clark et al 1999). Research has found that African American females find seeking social support and religion as more important coping strategies than males (Swim et al 2003). Differences in gender roles and masculinity makes aggressive responses to racial discrimination more acceptable for males than females (Broidy and Agnew 1997).

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

The current study draws from a variety of theoretical perspectives to get a holistic understanding of the criminogenic effects of racial discrimination. Using an interdisciplinary



theoretical approach allows for supplemental explanations to overcome shortcomings in a particular area. Because there have been shortcomings in sociological explanations of racial disparities in criminal offending, drawing on critical race theory in the field of legal studies and education, as well as black feminist theory in Women and Gender Studies, can overcome some gaps in sociological explanations.

Drawing from critical race theory, this study illustrates a central tenet of critical race theory that states that racism is aberrant and is engrained in our everyday lives (Delgado 1995). Although race is socially constructed, racism and racial discrimination has real consequences for minoritized populations. This is evidenced by Bonilla-Silva's (1997) argument for thinking of racism in structural interpretations in order to truly understand the pervasiveness of racism in our society. In his work, Bonilla-Silva makes a case for an alternative framework of a structural theory of racism that is based upon the notion of racialized social systems. This is especially important because, "for black women, structural indicators emerge as the important predictors of criminal involvement" (Hill and Crawford 1990 p. 601). This illustrates a key difference in offending between black women and white women among whom social psychological theories such as bonding, maturation, and attitudes find significant effects (Hill and Crawford 1990). Critical race theory helps illustrate how structural barriers related to racial discrimination influence micro level interactions in the lived experience of Black women.

Another aspect of critical race theory and central to feminist scholarship is intersectionality. Intersectionality, coined by Kimberle' Crenshaw (1989), is an analytical and theoretical tool used to understand the experiencing of multiple oppressions that Black women endure. Black women are subjected to discrimination based on their race and their gender; therefore they simultaneously experience both racism and sexism. King (1988) refers to this

concept as multiple jeopardy and multiple consciousnesses to explain the complexities of Black women's social identity. Intersectionality also speaks to ideas of power and oppression within interconnected social structures and systems that position black women at a disadvantage. Intersectionality is a critical tool in understanding women of color offenders' social experiences as well as institutionally by understanding the interconnection of systems of power that influence micro, meso, and macro levels underscoring black feminist criminology (BFC).

BFC is the primary theoretical lens that will inform my analysis because as mentioned previously, it expands the foundations of feminist criminology (Britton 2000) by its roots in black feminist theory (Hill Collins 2002) and critical race feminist theory (Wing 2002). BFC allows for an understanding that connects structural, cultural, and familial influences on black women's experiences. This study primarily uses a black feminist criminological lens in order to understand the relationship between experiencing racial discrimination, delinquency, and ethnic racial socialization. In order to understand why this lens will critically inform my analysis, I will provide an overview of feminist criminology, black feminist theory, and critical race theory.

Feminist criminology emerged as an outgrowth of the second wave of feminism in the 1970s leading to the founding of the Women and Crime Division of the American Society of Criminology in 1982 (Rafter 2000). 20<sup>th</sup> century feminist criminology was necessary in order to challenge the androcentric nature of theories of deviance, crime, and social control (Chesney-Lind 2006). Feminist criminology addresses the repeated exclusion and misrepresentation of women in criminological theorizing and research (Belknap 2001).

The largest contribution of feminist criminology is its influence on public policy (i.e. domestic violence legislation) because of its emphasis on gender, crime and justice. Its ability to name the types and dimensions of female victimization has been key in understanding women's

varied experiences with and within the justice system (Chesney-Lind 2006). In the 1980s and 1990s, feminist criminology shifted from focusing on victimization to criminalizing girls and women. Research began to challenge mainstream (androcentric) theorizing by attending to girls and women's participation in gangs, recognizing their sexual and physical victimization as a pathway to crime, and understanding the unique ways that race and gender intersect to create unique pathways to crime for female offenders (Arnold 1995; Chesney-Lind and Hagedorn 1999; Richie 1996). The emphasis in understanding the nuance of women's lived experience and its relation to crime underscore the need for research to attend to their unique experiences and address patriarchal structures.

Feminist criminology interrogates patriarchy within criminology research and theories, as well as within the justice system (Chesney-Lind 2006). To clarify, patriarchy is a system in which men exert power and control over women. Patriarchy creates a gendered hierarchy where everything that is considered masculine is more highly valued than what is deemed feminine. Thus, patriarchy uses a variety of social control policies and practices in order to maintain male power to ensure that women stay subordinate to men. However, patriarchy does not exist alone. Most commonly patriarchy intersects with other systems that reinforce oppression on the basis of race and class. Thus, there is an increased emphasis on intersectionality in research in order to understand the complexities of women's experiences (Crenshaw 1991).

Black feminist theory was first introduced to, "empower African American women in the context of social injustice sustained by intersecting oppressions" (Hill Collins 2002 p. 25-26). Black feminist theory is the ideologies of black feminism that attend to and center the lived experiences, knowledge, and unique positioning of African American women (Collins 2002). Black feminist theory at its core understands the nuance and variability in Black women's

experiences based upon intersectionality. It highlights that blackness is experienced differently depending upon your social identities. It prides itself on centralizing intersectionality in order to fully express the complexities of Black women. Black feminist theory is informing this research by its concentration on intersectionality and the consequences of having social identities that are at the intersection of race and gender. This theoretical framework argues for the need to attend to Black females and their experiences with racial discrimination. Black feminist theory allows for an understanding of how this positionality leads to differential social and institutional experiences with crime and the criminal justice system.

Critical race theory (CRT) emerged in the 1970s in response to the halt in progress following the Civil Rights movement. Legal scholars, lawyers, and activists created the theory to help explain and resist more subtle forms of racism that became popular in the post-Civil Rights era. Therefore, CRT was created as a theory that is interested in, "studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado and Stefancic 2012 p. 3). Because of this focus, critical race theory draws on a variety of disciplines and movements such as critical legal studies and radical feminism in order to examine the relationship of power and racism.

Critical race theory has several tenets or themes that highlight the nuance of race and racism in America. The first tenet of CRT is that race is a social construction produced through social thought and relations. Omi and Winant (2014) and Lopez (1997) discuss how over the course of history race has been defined differently in order to meet the needs of White interests. Therefore, at different moments in history, certain groups that were considered racially minoritized such as the Irish "became" white and certain groups that we consider people of color now such as South Asians were considered White. Thus, race has been modified and constructed to serve the purposes of Whites. Racism has then been used as a tool in order to maintain power.

This tenet addresses the structural aspects of racism and how it impacts the lived realities of people of color. The ability to define who is considered white speaks to another central tenet of CRT: racism is endemic. The second tenet of CRT asserts that racism is so engrained into our everyday lives that it is ordinary and endemic (Delgado 1995). This tenet speaks to how racism can be difficult to address because it is so ordinary, particularly when considering the range of racist acts and behavior from overt to colorblind. This study draws heavily upon this tenet because it illustrates the necessity for racial discrimination to be considered a potential risk factor for delinquency in the lives of African Americans. Although both tenets speak to the structural aspects and consequences of racism, these macro level forces influence the micro level by manifesting into internalized understandings of racial stratification. Thus, structural influences are reinforced through everyday racist interactions and vice versa.

Intersectionality is also a central tenet of CRT because theorists are interested in, "examining the interplay of power and authority within minority communities and movements" (Delgado and Stefancic 2012 p.57). In critical race theory, intersectionality is understood as examination of, "race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation, and how their combination plays out in various settings" (Delgado and Stefancic 2012 p. 57). These combinations or intersections provide individuals with multiple consciousness because they experience the world in multiple ways depending upon the context. Intersectionality then becomes a critique of essentialist understandings of race or gender. Essentialist explanations of race or gender refer back to the notions of black women's experiences being homogenized and overshadowed by white women and black men. Although there are several tenets to CRT, some of which have been debated, the tenets outlined in this section provide key insight to the current study.

Another theoretical underpinning of this study draws on general strain theory, a social psychological adaptation of classic strain theory. When applied to crime, general strain theory asserts that crime is a way of coping with distress produced by negative social interactions also known as strain (Agnew 2005). Distress and negative emotionality may cause individuals to 1) achieve positive goals and feelings through illegitimate means; 2) seek revenge on the source of strain or substitute their negative emotions through attack or escape; and 3) manage or avoid their distress through other behaviors (Agnew 2005). However, tests of general strain theory have often failed to consider negative emotions and legitimate coping strategies as intervening mechanism in the relationship between strain and crime (Broidy 2001). Broidy (2001) found that strain, negative emotions, and legitimate coping strategies are all related, yet the nature of this link varies based upon the type of strain and negative affect experienced by individuals and sex differences. This is important in understanding the relationship between racial discrimination, ethnic racial socialization, and delinquency for Black girls. Thus, the argument is that experiencing racial discrimination causes distress and negative emotions, which in turn increases the likelihood of offending for the victim. However, ERS may provide resilience in gendered ways that moderates the relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency.

Lastly, this study draws on Burt, Simons, and Gibbon's social psychological model that asserts that general strain theory proposes that negative emotions play a mediating role in the strain-offending link. In their model, they utilize depression as a potential mediator that can lead to crime by increasing impatience and irritability as well as reducing self-regulation and inhibitions (Berkowitz 1989). Disengagement from conventional norms is utilized as a mediating mechanism because experiencing discrimination could cause youths to have perceptions of the conventional system and those involved as being unjust. This leads the individual to remove their

obligation to the system and provides them with a justification for acts of deviance (Cloward and Ohlin 1960). Perceptions of an unjust system and its representatives thus foster negative cognitive frames about relationships causing youth to question the motives of those whom they interact with. Therefore, a hostile view of relationships is utilized as the last mediating mechanism because those with a hostile view of relationships may be susceptible to threat and believe that they must use coercive strategies to obtain what they deserve and to punish their wrongdoers.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Summary and Hypotheses

Using a recently developed social psychological model of crime, I examine the effects of interpersonal racial discrimination on offending risk among a sample of African American females. I explore whether the relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency is indirect through the criminogenic knowledge structure i.e. a hostile view of relationships and a disengagement from conventional norms. In addition, I examine the protective effects of ethnic racial socialization as a resilience strategy to deal with racial discrimination. Drawing from Simons and Burt's social psychological theory, my first hypothesis is that experiences of racial discrimination will increase female delinquency.

**H1: Experiencing racial discrimination will increase the likelihood of delinquency and criminal offending for African American girls.**

Simons and Burt's theory suggests that discrimination fosters hostile views of relationships, disengagement from social norms and discounting the future, which together form a latent criminogenic knowledge structure (CKS) that increases the likelihood of offending. Their research assesses whether a hostile view of relationships and disengagement from conventional norms serves a mediating function in the relationship of racial discrimination and delinquency. In their analysis, they found evidence that the negative effects of racial discrimination cause youth to have an increasingly hostile view of relationships and no longer feel the need to adhere to conventional norms resulting in an increased likelihood of offending. Thus, my second hypothesis is consistent with Burt and colleagues' findings.



**H2: A hostile view of relationships and disengagement from conventional norms are mediating mechanisms that foster an increased likelihood of offending for African American girls.**

Burt et al. (2012) found evidence that ethnic racial socialization provides some protective effects for African American boys when they experience racial discrimination. In their analysis they found that although cultural socialization had no significant effect on the criminogenic effects of racial discrimination, preparation for bias did. Specifically, they found that preparation for bias moderates the effect of discrimination on offending. Therefore, consistent with prior research, I predict that preparation for bias will buffer the effects of racial discrimination, either by decreasing the relationship between discrimination and the criminogenic knowledge structure and/or by decreasing the effects of the criminogenic knowledge structure on offending.

**H3: Preparation for bias will moderate the effects of racial discrimination on offending for African American girls.**

My hypotheses thus far have been consistent with prior research, however since my sample consists of African American girls whereas prior research has attended to males, I have reason to believe that gender may and likely will have some effect on my results. As the literature implies, there is evidence that supports gendered effects of ethnic racial socialization and racial discrimination. Therefore, I hypothesize that adding gender will likely complicate the relationship between racial discrimination, criminogenic knowledge structure, ERS, and delinquency. Specifically, gender may change the ways in which ethnic racial socialization provides resilience to African American girls when experiencing racial discrimination.

#### **H4: Gender will weaken the protective effects of ethnic racial socialization on offending for African American girls.**

My hypotheses are tested using data from the first four waves of the FACHS. Although all four waves are used, most measures are constructed using data from Waves 3 and 4 of the data. Measures were either averaged across both waves in order to maintain consistency and reliability or data was used from Wave 4 because it is the most recent account. In this section I will provide information on the dataset and the study sample, how the independent and dependent variables were constructed and measured, and the analytical strategy used to address this phenomenon.

### **Data and Sample**

#### **Sampling**

The Family and Community Health Study (FACHS) is a multisite, longitudinal study that investigates how family and community processes affect child development in almost 900 African American families living in Iowa and Georgia (Gibbons et al. 2004; Simons et al. 2002). The FACHS was designed to examine the role that a strong family plays in protecting children from risks related to living in a deprived community; or conversely whether living in a strong community can protect children from the negative effects of experiencing family problems. The FACHS is unique in that it is the largest in-depth panel study of African Americans in the United States.

1990 Census data was used to identify block group areas (BGAs) in Iowa and Georgia where the percent of African American families was high enough (10 percent or higher) to make recruitment economically practical. Areas where the percent of families with children living

below the poverty line varied significantly were also considered for BGAs. The families in the study lived in communities that varied on demographic characteristics including racial composition and economic level. The participants came from rural, urban and suburban areas well as from low, middle and upper classes in terms of socioeconomic status. Data was collected using identical research procedures in both Iowa and Georgia. Compensation for participation was given to both caregivers and youth during all four waves of the study. In Waves 1 and 2, caregivers received \$100 and youth received \$70 of compensation. In Waves 3 and 4, both caregivers and youth received \$125.

### **Sample**

The initial sample at Wave 1 of the FACHS consisted of 897 African American families with 475 living in Iowa and 422 living in Georgia. In order to be considered for the study, each family had to include a 5<sup>th</sup> grade target youth at Wave 1. Of the target youth, fifty-four percent were female. Eighty four percent of primary caregivers were the target youth's biological mother, of whom 37 percent were married. The average income across the four waves of data collected was \$32, 259. Generally, the sample is representative of the African American populations of the communities in which they were recruited (Cutrona et al. 2000).

The families in the study come from a wide range of community settings with differing racial compositions. Criteria developed from the 2000 Census categorized the families' residential settings as urban (n=163), suburban (n=594), and rural (n=163).

Of the initial 897 families that participated in Wave 1, 87 percent (779) remained in the sample at Wave 2, 86 percent (767) participated in Wave 3, and 80 percent (714) were in Wave 4. Data for the four waves was collected beginning in 1997-1998, followed by 2001, 2004, and

2007. The target youth in the sample were aged 10 to 12 years, 12 to 14 years, 15 to 17 years, and 17 to 20 years old respectively in Waves 1 through 4.

The data spans across adolescence, a time in which both offending and ERS practices apex (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983; Hughes et al. 2006). Most commonly, adolescence is when youth experiment with deviant behavior before aging out of delinquency in early adulthood. The primary study sample is comprised of 367 females who were interviewed at Wave 4. Of the sample, 31 respondents were not surveyed at Wave 2, therefore for these respondents Wave 1 scores are used to account for missing data in the lagged measures at this wave.

## **Measures**

### **Delinquency**

The primary dependent variable was measured at Wave 4 using youth self-reports. The respondents were asked if they had committed various criminal acts over the past 12 months and in their lifetimes. This variable measures the number of different delinquent acts (out of 17) that the female respondents committed in their lifetime such as marijuana use (33%), shoplifting (17%), vandalism (4%), aggravated assault (8%), breaking and entering (1%), starting a physical fight (28%), and assault with a weapon (3%) (Percentages are rounded). These statistics show that delinquency is not particular to males. Instead, even though the percentages may be lower than for their male counterparts, these numbers speak to the range in delinquent acts committed by African American girls. These items were extracted from the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children, Version 4 and vary in seriousness (DISC-IV; American Psychiatric Association 1994). However the model proposes that the effect of discrimination is general across offenses (Burt, Simons, and Gibbons 2012). At wave 4, the delinquency measure recorded 505

observations with respondents committing 4.14 delinquent acts on average. Scores ranged from 0 to 44 with a standard deviation of 5.54.

### **Racial Discrimination**

The youth's experiences with racial discrimination were measured at Wave 4 using a revised version of the Schedule of Racist Events (SRE; Landrine & Klonoff 1996). The SRE was originally designed for adult respondents, therefore the FACHS researchers created a revised version that was relevant for youth in late childhood through adolescence. Revisions consisted of simplifying the language and removing items dealing with discrimination in the workplace by replacing it with discriminatory behaviors in the community. The revised SRE instrument assessed the frequency of events occurring in the past year, ranging from never (1) to frequently (4) in which the respondent experienced specific discriminatory behaviors based on his/her race or ethnicity. Of the original 13 items, 10 were utilized in this study. This measurement includes physical threats, racially based insults and slurs, false accusations from law enforcement officials, and disrespectful treatment of others ( $\alpha=.90$ ). Table 1 displays the discrimination items as well as their prevalence in Wave 4 of the study. There were 696 observations recorded at wave 4. The mean number of ratings was 21.35 with a standard deviation of 7.29. Scores ranged from 12 to 45.

**Table 1: Youth Experiences with Discrimination at Wave 4**

Discrimination Items	Never (%)	1-2 (%)	A Few Times (%)	Frequently (%)
How often has a store-owner...treated you in a disrespectful way...?	38	38	20	4
How often have the police hassled you...?	68	20	7	4
How often has someone suspected you of doing something wrong...?	49	30	17	4
How often has someone ignored your excluded you from some activity...?	66	25	7	1
How often has someone yelled a racial slur or racial insult at you...?	46	37	15	2
How often has someone threatened to harm you physically...?	88	11	1	0
How often have you encountered people who are surprised that you did something really well...?	41	32	20	6
How often have you been treated unfairly...?	42	41	14	3
How often have you encountered people who didn't expect you to do well...?	37	34	22	6
How often has someone discouraged you from trying to achieve an important goal...?	66	23	9	2

Note: At the beginning of the discrimination instrument, respondents were presented with the following statement: "Racial discrimination occurs when someone is treated in a negative or unfair way just because of their race or ethnic background. I want to ask you some questions about whether you have experienced racial discrimination. For each statement, please tell me if this situation has happened to you never, once or twice, a few times or several times."

Ellipses refer to "because of your race or ethnic background."

### **Ethnic-racial Socialization**

Items from the two ethnic racial socialization subscales currently used demonstrate high reliability and validity and were derived from instruments used by Hughes and colleagues

(Hughes and Chen 1997). Content for these measures was originally derived from African American parents' participation in focus group interviews where they described events and stories that they had experienced relating to race and racial discrimination (Hughes and Dumont 1993). The items spanned a range of familial communications and behaviors with children related to the issue of race or ethnicity. The youth indicated the number of times that adults in their family engaged in a specific behavior during the past 12 months for each item. The ethnic racial socialization instrument was first introduced in Wave 3, where respondents answered the questions in Table 2. To create the measures (cultural socialization and preparation for bias) used in this study, a cumulative measure of ethnic racial socialization was constructed by combining (averaging) the scales from waves 3 and 4.

*Cultural socialization* was constructed using the youth's responses to five questions about the frequency of adults in their family participating in activities or communications that emphasized African American culture and history or promoted black pride. The cultural socialization items garnered 675 observations with a mean number of 23.23. The scores on these items ranged from 10 to 50 with a standard deviation of 7.60. *Preparation for bias* was measured by surveying the youth's responses to six questions that evaluated messages youth received concerning prejudice and discrimination. These questions sought to survey and reflect the focus group discussions that African American parents had previously in the study regarding their experiences. The items included explicit verbal and unintentional communications regarding racial barriers such as the treatment of African Americans on television and discussions surrounding discrimination. The preparation for bias items recorded 675 observations with a mean of 35.99. The scores ranged from 17 to 80, with a standard deviation of 11.78. Table 2 presents the frequency of ethnic-racial socialization items averaged over waves 3 and 4.

**Table 2: Frequency of Ethnic-Racial Socialization Practices at Waves 3 & 4**

<i>Racial Socialization Items</i>	Never (%)	1 to 2 (%)	3 to 5 (%)	6 to 10 (%)	11+ (%)
celebrated cultural holidays	30	36	17	9	8
talked about important people or events	17	35	23	12	13
visited places reflecting racial heritage	32	36	16	10	7
encouraged to read books about heritage	21	31	21	13	15
encouraged to learn about history or traditions	13	39	22	12	14
<i>Preparation for Bias Items</i>					
felt that race might limit you	26	30	21	9	13
felt that race might treat you badly or unfairly	22	30	22	12	14
felt that you had to be better than others	47	25	13	8	6
talked about discrimination or prejudice	16	32	21	14	17
complained about poor treatment on television	23	33	25	10	10
talked to others about discrimination in your presence	34	34	20	5	7

Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. All preparation for bias items included the statement “because of your race”



### **Criminogenic Knowledge Structure**

Simons's and Burt's (2011) criminogenic knowledge structure was constructed using three self-reported scales: immediate gratification, hostile view of relationships, and disengagement from conventional norms. This study will utilize two of the three, hostile view of relationships and disengagement from conventional norms, to examine their relationship to racial discrimination and an increased likelihood of offending.

*Hostile View of Relationships* was constructed of 9 items that assessed the extent to which respondents have a pessimistic and distrusting view of others. The respondents were asked how much do they agree (1- mostly true, 2- mostly false) with the following statements: "Some people go out of their way to keep you from getting ahead", "Many people try to push you around", "People often try to take advantage of you", "People often use you instead of treating you like a person", "You would be more successful if people did not make things difficult for you", "Your "friends" have often betrayed you", "You have often been lied to". "When people are friendly, they usually want something", and "Some people oppose you for no good reason." These questions attempt to understand the respondents' distrusting views of relationships, but also to see the extent to which respondents use a tough posture for self-protection. The measure was administered at waves 1, 2, and 4, recording 661 observations. The mean score was 32.14 with a standard deviation of 4.43. Scores ranged from 21 to 43.

The *disengagement from conventional norms* measure was constructed by asking the respondents 7 questions related to how wrong they considered the enactment of various deviant and criminal behaviors. The deviant and criminal behaviors included asking the

respondents how wrong did they think it was for someone their age to...damage or destroy property that did not belong to them, hit someone with intentions on hurting them, use and sell marijuana or other illegal drugs, cheat on a test, and shoplift. Responses to these items were from (1) not at all wrong to (4) very wrong. This measure recorded 675 observations with a mean number of 42.74. Scores ranged from 17 to 79 with a standard deviation of 5.94.

### **Analytical Strategy**

The analysis occurred in a series of steps. I first tested racial discrimination's effects on crime directly for females. Second, I tested the indirect relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency through a hostile view of relationships and disengagement from conventional norms. Third, I tested the extent to which ethnic racial socialization provided resilience to the criminogenic effects of racial discrimination in a sequence of models. Specifically, I tested the extent to which cultural socialization and preparation for bias moderate the criminogenic effects of racial discrimination on delinquency separately and collectively. Lastly, I ran models to test if there were sex differences between females and males and compared the results by testing if the criminogenic knowledge structure mediates the relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency.

Considering the measure of delinquency is representative of frequency in the engagement of acts, models that predicted delinquency are assessed using negative binomial regression. Negative binomial regression is an alternative probability model that is used when data consists of counts (DeLisi 2003). When there is far more dispersion than can be accounted for in Poisson regression models, negative binomial regression serves as an alternative (Gardner, Mulvey, and Shaw 1995). Thus, negative binomial regression is used to

estimate counts of more frequent events by providing a better account for probability distribution of individual responses (DeLisi 2003; Gardner, Mulvey, and Shaw 1995). Goodness of fit statistics or the  $\chi^2$  value for all models were significant (Likelihood ratio test  $\alpha = 0$ ) demonstrating that negative binomial regression was the appropriate analysis to use. These models were estimated using Stata 12 (StatCorp 2012).

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Summary of Findings

Descriptive statistics for each variable are displayed in Table 3. The zero-order correlation matrix for the study variables is represented in Table 4. Overall, for females, racial discrimination is significantly associated with delinquency, as reflected in Model 1. Racial discrimination was also positively associated with the two criminogenic knowledge structures measures separately and together as indicated in Models 2, 3, and 4. Figure 1 shows the mediating relationship between racial discrimination, the criminogenic knowledge structure, and delinquency. Models 5 and 6 illustrate the effect of ethnic racial socialization practices on the criminogenic effects of racial discrimination showing that ERS practices do not moderate the effects of racial discrimination on delinquency individually or collectively. Figure 2 displays the moderating relationship between racial discrimination, ethnic racial socialization, and delinquency. Table 5 displays the results from negative binomial regression models predicting delinquency for models 1-9. Lastly, sex differences were examined in models 10-14. These models show that racial discrimination has a larger effect on males' delinquency than females, but a hostile view of relationships is more associated with females than males. Figure 3 illustrates gendered effects on the mediation model. Table 6 illustrates the results of gendered effects on the mediation model for models 10-13. Table 7 illustrates the results from model 14, the full model of gendered effects on predicting delinquency.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviations	Min	Max
Delinquency <sub>w4</sub>	505	4.14	5.54	0	44
Racial Discrimination <sub>w4</sub>	696	21.35	7.29	12	45
Hostile Views of Relationships <sub>w4</sub>	661	32.14	4.43	21	43
Disengagement from Conventional Norms <sub>w4</sub>	675	42.74	5.94	17	79
Cultural Socialization <sub>w3+w4</sub>	675	23.23	7.60	10	50
Preparation for bias <sub>w3+w4</sub>	675	35.99	11.78	17	80

**Table 4: Zero-Order Correlation Matrix**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) Delinquency	_____						
(2) Racial Discrimination	0.330	_____					
(3) Cultural Socialization	0.018	0.156	_____				
(4) Preparation for Bias	0.037	0.390	0.5926	_____			
(5) Hostile View of Relationships	-0.146	-0.124	-0.0709	-0.171	_____		
(6) Disengagement from Conventional Norms	-0.216	-0.079	0.221	0.053	0.048	_____	
(7) Gender	-0.1030	-0.0523	0.006	-0.0901	0.0901	0.090	_____

**Table 5: Negative Binomial Regression Models Predicting Delinquency**

Models	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Variables	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
(2) Racial Discrimination	.042 3.08***	0.060 5.85***	0.070 7.02***	0.071 6.90***	0.053 3.56***	0.071 6.40***	0.056 3.66***	.055 3.51***	0.056 3.76***
(3) Hostile Views of Relationships		-0.036 -2.29**		-0.032 -2.03**				-0.043 -2.02**	-0.427 -2.09**
(4) Disengagement from Conventional Norms			-0.047 -4.76***	-0.047 -4.72***					-0.615 -3.17***
(5) Cultural Socialization					-0.015 -1.29		-0.006 -0.40	-0.003 -0.17	0.004 0.22
(6) Preparation for bias						-0.010 -1.73	-0.009 -0.88	-0.010 -1.13	-0.012 -1.17

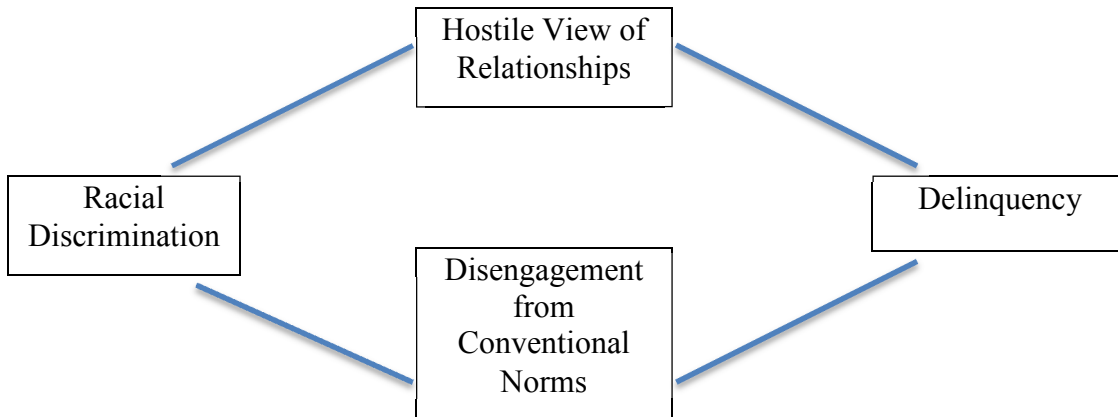
**Note:** All models included illustrate the relationship to delinquency at wave 4. The first set of numbers refers to the coefficients for each variable. The second set of numbers refers to the z-score. p<0.05\*\*, p<0.01\*\*\*

## Racial Discrimination and Delinquency

Model 1: Racial Discrimination <sub>(w4)</sub> and Delinquency <sub>(w4)</sub>

Model 1 assessed the direct relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency at wave 4. Goodness of fit statistics indicates that negative binomial regression was the appropriate analysis to examine this relationship (Likelihood-ratio test of  $\alpha = 0$ ;  $\chi^2 = 763.82$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ; LR  $\chi^2 = 8.82$   $p < 0.0030$ ). The chi-square value indicates that there is a relationship between the two variables. Consistent with expectations, the results show that experiences of racial discrimination have a significant positive relationship with delinquency based upon the z-score of 3.08 and  $p < 0.002$ . The model provides support for H1, which predicted a significant association between racial discrimination and criminal offending for Black girls.

**Figure 1: Mediation Model**



## Racial Discrimination and the Criminogenic Knowledge Structure

Model 2: Racial Discrimination <sub>(w4)</sub>, Hostile View of Relationships <sub>(w1+2)</sub>, Delinquency <sub>(w4)</sub>;

Model 3: Racial Discrimination <sub>(w4)</sub>, Disengagement from Conventional Norms <sub>(w3+4)</sub>,

Delinquency <sub>(w4)</sub>



Model 4: Racial Discrimination  $(w_4)$ , Hostile View of Relationships  $(w_{1+2})$ , Disengagement from Conventional Norms  $(w_{3+4})$ , Delinquency  $(w_4)$

Models 2, 3, and 4 assessed if a hostile view of relationships and a disengagement from conventional norms are mediating the relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency. Model 2 calculated the relationship between racial discrimination, a hostile view of relationships, and delinquency. Negative binomial regression was the appropriate analysis to conduct given the Likelihood ratio  $\chi^2$ -test of  $\alpha=0$ ,  $\chi^2=1365.34$  and  $p<0.0001$ . The results indicate that a hostile view of relationships has a suppressor effect on the relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency (LR  $\chi^2 = 42.78$ ,  $p<0.00001$ ). In other words, as scores of a hostile view of relationship increases ( $z = -2.29$ ,  $p<0.022$ ), the level of delinquency increases ( $z = 5.85$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The more likely African American girls are to have a cynical view of relationships, the greater the likelihood that they will engage in criminal behavior.

Model 3 explored the relationship between racial discrimination, a disengagement of conventional norms, and delinquency. Models 2 and 3 were conducted separately in order to determine if one measure was mediating more than the other. The results of model 3 indicate that a disengagement from conventional norms also suppresses the relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency (LR  $\chi^2 = 60.59$ ,  $p<0.00001$ ). Items in the disengagement from conventional norms measure were measured from not at all wrong (1) to very wrong (4). Thus, as disengagement in conventional norms shows a “lower” score (respondents see actions as not at all wrong), the criminogenic effects of racial discrimination will increase. This is evidenced by racial discrimination having a z-score of 7.02 and p-value

of  $<0.000$  and disengagement from conventional norms having a z score of  $-4.76$  and p-value of  $<0.000$ . The likelihood ratio test of  $\alpha=0$ ,  $\chi^2=1380.00$ , and  $p<0.001$  indicate that negative binomial regression was the appropriate analysis method.

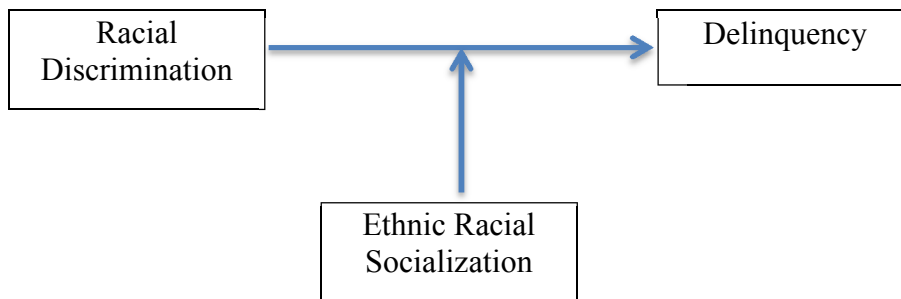
Model 4 explored the relationship between the criminogenic knowledge structure measures, racial discrimination and delinquency. In the model where both measures are present there is still evidence of a positive and significant relationship between racial discrimination ( $z=6.90$ ,  $p<0.000$ ; LR  $\chi^2=65.01$ ,  $p<0.00001$ ) and delinquency. In the combined model, a disengagement from conventional norms shows an inverse significant relationship with racial discrimination and delinquency. Because the items were reversed coded with the responses illustrating higher deviant values as 1, the relationship appears to be “negative” (disengagement from conventional norms: z-score =  $-4.72$ ,  $p<0.000$ ). However, this reveals that the more that African American girls adhere to unconventional norms; it suppresses the effects of racial discrimination on offending causing it to increase.

On the other hand, in the combined model, a hostile view of relationships provides a suppressor effect between racial discrimination and delinquency ( $\alpha=0$ ,  $\chi^2=1224.26$ ;  $p<0.0001$ ). A hostile view of relationships z-score decreases to  $-2.03$  and the p-value decreases to  $0.042$  in this model. This difference may suggest that although both measures are significantly suppressing the relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency, disengagement from conventional norms may have a greater effect on this relationship. Unsurprisingly, adhering to deviant subcultures would more than likely increase offending (Anderson 1999).

Taken together, models 2, 3, and 4 provide support for my second hypothesis. In separate models and combined, a hostile view of relationships and a disengagement from

conventional norms both suggest that they are suppressing relationship between discrimination and delinquency. These findings are consistent with prior research conducted with Black males (Burt et al. 2012).

**Figure 2: Moderation Model for Ethnic Racial Socialization**



### **Racial Discrimination and Ethnic Racial Socialization**

Model 5: Racial Discrimination  $(w_4)$  X Cultural Socialization  $(w_{3+4})$  X Delinquency  $(w_4)$

Model 6: Racial Discrimination  $(w_4)$ , Preparation for Bias  $(w_{3+4})$ , and Delinquency  $(w_4)$

Model 7: Racial Discrimination  $(w_4)$ , Cultural Socialization  $(w_{3+4})$ , Preparation for Bias  $(w)$ , and Delinquency  $(w_4)$

Models 5, 6, and 7 explore the relationship between racial discrimination, ethnic racial socialization, and delinquency. Model 5 ( $x^2 = 15.25$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) shows that there is a weak and insignificant negative relationship between cultural socialization ( $z = -0.65$ ,  $p < 0.515$ ) and delinquency and between racial discrimination and delinquency ( $z = 1.96$ ;  $p < 0.050$ ) ( $\alpha = 0$ ,  $x^2 = 1639.53$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). Separately, the moderation interaction was significant ( $z = 3.74$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). However when accounting for racial discrimination, the moderation effects were no longer significant ( $z = 0.15$ ,  $p < 0.879$ ). Providing evidence that cultural socialization does not provide protective effects against the criminogenic effects of

racial discrimination. Model 6 examines the relationship between discrimination, preparation for bias and delinquency. The analysis shows that preparation for bias also has an insignificant negative relationship ( $z = -1.73$ ,  $p < 0.084$ ;  $\chi^2 = 42.27$ ,  $p < 0.00001$ ) with the criminogenic effects of racial discrimination ( $z = 6.40$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). When testing to see if ethnic racial socialization moderates the relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency, the model shows that the racial discrimination is still significant ( $z = 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.050$ ) and the moderation effect is insignificant ( $z = 0.15$ ,  $p < 0.879$ ). In other words, although research has spoken to the usefulness of ERS practices in helping African American youth cope, this study does not find support. ERS practices may have some protective effects in buffering the relationship between racial discrimination and delinquency, however it is insignificant. This is similar to Burt et al's (2012) findings that cultural socialization did not compensate for all of the negative effects of discrimination in order to impact delinquency, however they propose that it does weaken some of the effects of a disengagement from conventional norms on the criminogenic effects of discrimination. In contrast to my findings, they did find support for preparation for bias as a buffer to the effects of racial discrimination on offending. The insignificant relationship that I found, may speak to gender effects. This argument will be discussed further in a later section.

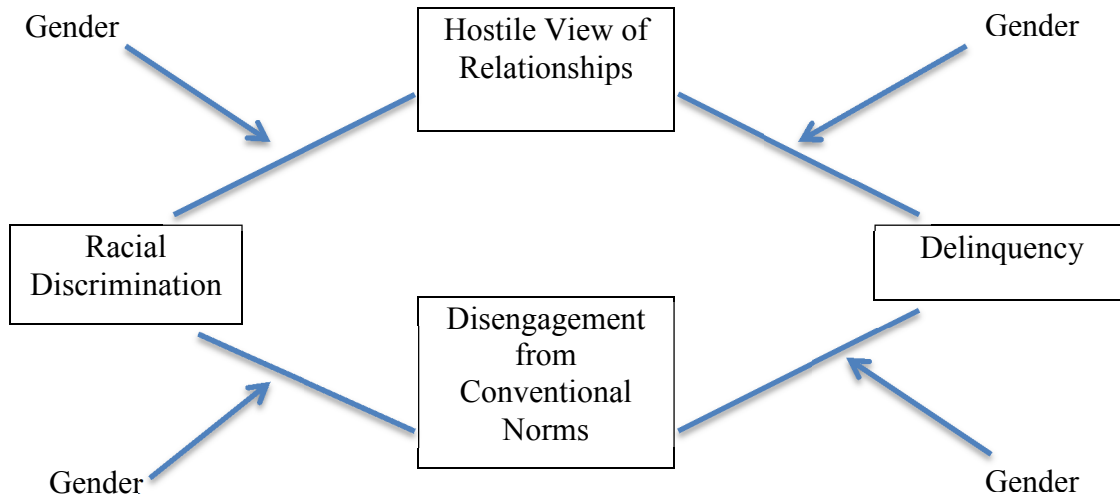
### **Racial Discrimination, CKS, Ethnic Racial Socialization, and Delinquency**

Model 8: Racial Discrimination <sub>(w4)</sub>, Cultural Socialization <sub>(w3+4)</sub>, Preparation for Bias <sub>(w3+4)</sub>, Hostile View of Relationships <sub>(w1+2)</sub>, and Delinquency <sub>(w4)</sub>

Model 9: Racial Discrimination <sub>(w4)</sub>, Cultural Socialization <sub>(w3+4)</sub>, Preparation for Bias <sub>(w3+4)</sub>, Hostile View of Relationships <sub>(w1+2)</sub>, Disengagement from Conventional Norms <sub>(w3+4)</sub>, and Delinquency <sub>(w4)</sub>

In model 8, the relationship between racial discrimination, cultural socialization, preparation for bias, a hostile view of relationships and delinquency is explored. The only two significant interactions within the model are racial discrimination ( $z=3.51$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) and a hostile view of relationships ( $z=-2.02$ ;  $p<0.044$ ). As revealed previously, the ERS practices did not have a significant effect on racial discrimination and delinquency. Therefore, although I did not find support for my third hypothesis, this may speak to support for my fourth hypothesis relating to gendered effects.

Model 9 represents the relationship between all of the independent and dependent variables. In this full model, there is a strong positive relationship between racial discrimination ( $z=3.76$ ;  $p<0.000$ ), a hostile view of relationships ( $z=-2.09$ ;  $p<0.036$ ; items are reverse coded), and a disengagement from conventional norms ( $z=-3.17$ ;  $p<0.001$ ; the lower the score the higher the adherence to deviant values). This illustrates that the nature of the criminogenic knowledge structure has more of a direct impact on offending than ERS practices provide protective effects. The criminogenic knowledge structure serves as an mediating mechanism between racial discrimination and delinquency, however ethnic racial socialization does not buffer this relationship. This is somewhat surprising given that Burt et al. (2012) found support for ERS' protective effects in their sample of African American males.

**Figure 3: Moderation Models for Sex Differences****Differences Related to Sex/Gender**

Up until now, I have solely attended to African American females' and the effects of racial discrimination and ethnic racial socialization. However, in order to speak to the necessity of this research, I will compare their experiences with those of African American males. I have mentioned previously that Burt and colleagues (2012) have found some evidence that ERS provides protective effects for Black males, however I did not find such support. The models presented above were reproduced using mediation techniques in order to compare the different sample. For this analysis, I observed gender differences in the types and amounts of racial discrimination and ethnic racial socialization as well as used mediation techniques to test how gender impacts the relationship between racial discrimination, the criminogenic knowledge structure and delinquency (Models 10-14).

First I will focus on differences in discrimination. Although both male and females reported experiencing racial discrimination, males tended to report a stronger and higher incidence of racial discrimination ( $z= 5.21$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) than females ( $z=3.08$ ;  $p<0.002$ ). This

shows that males reported experiencing more instances of racial discrimination than girls, consistent with Unnever and Gabbidon (2011)'s research. There were also differences in the ways that they experienced racial discrimination. Girls reported more instances of being disrespected by police, whereas males reported significantly higher incidences of police encounters and discouragement from goal achievement (data not shown).

Second, I will investigate differences in ERS practices. There was not a significant difference between females and males in regards to ERS practices. Both samples reported similar experiences with ERS practice. However, when discussing preparation for bias, there were two key differences. Females tended to report more instances where family members discussed discrimination or prejudices, whereas males reported more instances of being told that they must be better than others. Potential explanations for this difference will be addressed in the discussion section.

A comparison of models 2-9 for females and males shows some similar, but also stark differences. As mentioned previously, racial discrimination had a stronger positive relationship with delinquency for males than for females. One key difference is the effect that a hostile view of relationships has on females and males. In model 8, specifically, a hostile view of relationships has a positive significant relationship ( $z=-2.02$ ;  $p<0.044$ ), whereas for males the relationship was also positive, but insignificant ( $z=-1.33$ ,  $p<0.183$ ). The full model (model 9) highlights key gender differences in the relationship between racial discrimination, ethnic racial socialization, the criminogenic knowledge structure, and delinquency. Model 9 provides evidence of a significant and positive relationship between racial discrimination ( $z=5.72$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) and disengagement from conventional norms ( $z=-3.74$ ;  $p<0.000$ ; items are reverse coded) for males. It also suggests that cultural socialization although weak, may

provide protective effects for males ( $z=1.75$ ;  $p<0.081$ ). However, the same cannot be said for females. In model 9, neither ERS practice has a significant relationship to racial discrimination and delinquency. For females, there is a significant positive relationship between racial discrimination ( $z=3.76$ ;  $p<0.000$ ), a hostile view of relationships ( $z=-2.09$ ;  $p<0.036$ ) and a disengagement from conventional norms ( $z=-3.17$ ;  $p<0.001$ ).

Model 10 examined gender's effect on the relationship between racial discrimination and a hostile view of relationships (racial discrimination X gender X hostile view of relationships). The model shows that the relationship between a hostile view of relationships and racial discrimination significantly favors females ( $z=-2.27$ ;  $p<0.023$ ) in that females are more likely to experience racial discrimination and it lead to a more cynical view of relationships than males. Model 11 examined gender effects on the relationship between racial discrimination and disengagement from conventional norms finding a significant relationship that favored males ( $z=2.03$ ;  $p<0.043$ ). Thus, males are more likely to experience racial discrimination and it lead to an increased disengagement from conventional norms. Model 12 examined the relationship between a hostile view of relationships and delinquency based upon gender. The results indicate a significant positive relationship that favors females ( $z=-2.33$ ;  $p<0.020$ ). Females are more likely to have a hostile view of relationships that increases the likelihood of criminal offending than males. Model 13 examines the gender effects on the relationship between a disengagement from conventional norms and delinquency. The model shows a positive and significant ( $z=-2.97$ ;  $p<0.003$ ) relationship for females. Indicating that when African American females disengage from conventional norms, the likelihood of criminal offending increases. Model 14 examines the relationship of gender on the complete mediation model. The findings suggest that there is a significant



positive relationship ( $z=4.03$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) between racial discrimination and delinquency that favors males. This illustrates that racial discrimination has a larger effect upon delinquency for males than it does for females. There is also a significant positive relationship ( $z=-2.20$ ;  $p<0.028$ ) between disengagement from conventional norms and delinquency that favors females rather than males. Although males are more likely to disengage from conventional norms when they experience racial discrimination, as illustrated in model 11, when females disengage from conventional norms it has a larger effect upon delinquency than for males.

These results indicate support for my fourth hypothesis, that there are significant gender effects that complicate the relationship between racial discrimination, ERS, CKS, and delinquency. Namely, the effects of racial discrimination on delinquency, the role of disengagement from conventional norms are largely explained by gender differences. These findings will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

**Table 6: Negative Binomial Regression for Gendered Effects (Mediation model)**

Models	10	11	12	13
RD X Gender X HVR	-0.001 -2.27**			
RD X Gender X DCN		0.001 2.03**		
HVR X Gender X Delinquency			-0.010 0.020**	
DCN X Gender X Delinquency				-0.010 -2.97**

p < 0.05\*\*; p < 0.01\*\*\*

First row of numbers refers to the coefficient. Second row of numbers refers to the z-score.

RD= Racial Discrimination

HVR= Hostile View of Relationships

DCN= Disengagement from Conventional Norms

**Table 7: Full Negative Binomial Regression Model for Gendered Effects in Predicting Delinquency**

Variables	Metric regression coefficient	z-score
Gender X RD	0.062	4.03***
Gender X HVR	-0.009	-0.52
Gender X DCN	-0.031	-2.20**
Gender X ERS	-0.002	-0.18

p < 0.05\*\*; p < 0.01\*\*\*

RD= Racial Discrimination

HVR= Hostile View of Relationships

DCN= Disengagement from Conventional Norms

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **SUMMARY**

Experiencing racial discrimination is nothing new to African Americans. Because racism is endemic and so engrained in the fabric of American society, it is important to investigate the real life consequences of racial discrimination in the lives of African Americans (Delgado 1995). Until recently, social science and criminological theorizing and research have neglected to understand the effects that racial discrimination has on criminal behavior (Brown 2008; Unnever et al 2009). However, within the last decade or so, studies have begun to recognize the criminogenic effects of interpersonal racial discrimination (Burt et al. 2012). After providing support for the criminogenic effects of racial discrimination, research has turned its attention to understanding the mechanism by which this phenomenon occurs and whether there are factors that provide resilience (Burt et al 2012).

The current study is important for several reasons. First, consistent with feminist scholarship and research, this study challenges the androcentric nature of criminological theorizing and research by attending to African American girls' experiences with racial discrimination, ERS, and the criminogenic knowledge structure (Chesney-Lind 2006). No longer treating black girls as the "other dark figure of crime" as Rice (1990) calls them. This study adds to literature that is primarily focused on males by speaking to the importance of recognizing the unique experiences that Black girls face due to intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989).

The contribution to the literature provided here is the use of racial discrimination as a specific risk factor for offending and how discrimination increases the likelihood of offending for African American girls. Burt et al. (2012) provide the foundation of this study as they used a social schematic theory with a sample of Black males. This study draws upon their findings and is particularly interested in the effects of the criminogenic knowledge structure and ethnic racial socialization on offending.

Drawing from existing research, evidence was found that interpersonal racial discrimination is criminogenic because it significantly increases the likelihood of offending among Black girls. Much of the effects of discrimination on offending however were done through the criminogenic knowledge structure, which for the purposes of this study consisted of a hostile view of relationships and a disengagement from conventional norms. This strengthens the argument that not only is racial discrimination criminogenic for males; it is also a risk factor for females. This is important especially because it may be used to explain the “cradle to prison” pipeline in which poor and children of color are criminalized from birth (Edelman 2007). Future research may benefit from including measures related to racial discrimination in schooling to explain how black girls are being disproportionately expelled and disciplined than both their black male and white female counterparts as a part of the cradle to prison pipeline (Crenshaw 2015; Morris 2016).

Ethnic racial socialization practices were examined to see if they provide protective effects against the criminogenic nature of racial discrimination. Contrary to prior research, I did not find evidence that ethnic racial socialization significantly provided African American girls with resilience. I had anticipated that preparation for bias would likely provide protective effects against racial discrimination and its influence on delinquency. Surprisingly,

neither preparation for bias nor cultural socialization was significantly protective although research has stated that both practices are crucial for the success of African American youth. ERS practices are said to provide them with adaptive and coping strategies to deal with racism in America (Hughes et al. 2006; Stevenson 1997).

Lastly, the current study compared these findings across gender and found notable differences. Overall, African American males tended to report more experiences with racial discrimination than females. This is not surprising given that a number of studies have shown that males are more frequent targets of racial discrimination (Sellers and Shelton 2003). This could be explained within a socio-historical context of black males being considered a greater threat to white patriarchy. Given recent race related events such as the killing of unarmed Black men by police (i.e. the creation of the Black Lives Matter movement) and the political climate, we may see a change in this trend in the near future. Another explanation of this discrepancy may speak to intersections of African American girls' identities. Black girls have a "double jeopardy" in that they experience both racism and sexism simultaneously. Because their gender is racialized, they may see instances of racism as acts of sexism instead. This may explain why the ethnic racial socialization practices were not significantly protective for African American girls. This highlights the necessity for a black feminist criminological theoretical framework that understands how structural aspects of racism and sexism influence micro-level interactions in the lived experience of African American girls which in turn impacts their likelihood of offending.

Gender differences in ethnic racial socialization showed evidence that supported that preparation for bias provided a protective effect for African American males, however the same could not be said for African American females. Neither ethnic racial socialization

practice provided protective effects against racial discrimination. A potential explanation for this disparity is that because Black males, have gender privilege, it is more easily identifiable to see acts of racism. Since black women do not have this same privilege, the types of conversation surrounding preparation for bias may not have been sufficient to provide Black girls with resilience strategies. Relatedly, I would make the argument that in order for preparation for bias to be useful to Black girls, it must also incorporate conversations about race and gender in order to get at the complexities of Black women's lived experience. Although African American parents are well aware of the gendered nature of racism, it seems that this may not be evident in the questions asked in preparation for bias measure (Ward 1996).

Other potential explanation for gender differences may point to how Black men and Black women are differentially stratified and viewed within American society. There are historical roots that speak to the conceptualization of the "criminal black man" and the "other dark figure of crime" evidenced through key aspects of critical race theory (Delgado 1995). This hierarchy illustrates why it is important for black feminist theory to be utilized within criminological research and theorizing to challenge patriarchal notions of criminality. These differences also speak to how African Americans experience blackness differently based upon their gender, class, sexual orientation, and other social identities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study have made important contributions to the literature in our understanding of the criminogenic effects of racial discrimination on females as well as using a black feminist criminological lens. Yet, this does not mean that it is without limitations.

One limitation is related to the sample itself. Because the sample was comprised of families living in Georgia and Iowa during the first wave of the study, these findings potentially may not be generalizable to areas outside of the Midwest and South. Geographical location may have some bearing upon the results. Future research should replicate this study in order to improve reliability, generalizability, and validity.

Another limitation is the measure of racial discrimination. First, the measure relied upon self-reports and asked about perceived racial discrimination. Although other studies have found self-reports relatively reliable, this may alter the findings slightly. Second, it is important to note that the measure only asked about overt acts of racism. As research has proven, racism takes on a variety of forms. The specific questions asked ignore the daily microaggressions (subtle acts of racism) that African Americans experience. These microaggressions may often be hard to recognize until after the situation at hand and may even go unnoticed. The measure also excludes what Bonilla-Silva (2010) calls colorblind racism. This is a form of racism that ignores the real consequences of race and racism by pretending to “not see color”. Different frames of colorblind racism speak to ideas that we are in a post-racial society with the election of President Obama, that people naturally associate with people that look like them, and that reify racist essentialist assumptions of people of color (Bonilla-Silva 2010). Although there has been resurgence in this new form of racism, it is important to note that given the target populations were 18-20 years old at wave 4, they may not have the ability to recognize these more subtle forms of racism.

Despite these limitations, future research may want to examine the relationship between racial discrimination, ethnic racial socialization, and the criminogenic knowledge structure with particular types of crimes. This may account for some gender differences in the research

as well. Another future direction would be to examine these processes with other ethnic racial groups to see if these results hold across races.

In conclusion, not only does this study support the need for more exploration of racial discrimination as a risk factor to delinquency, it also sheds light on the experiences of African American girls who have been traditionally overshadowed in theory and research. My hope is that future research will attend to these two phenomena in order to meet the needs of our ever-changing population composition nationally and within the justice system as well as the political climate. This study underscores the realities of race and gender in society, but advocate for a more nuanced understanding of these identities as it relates to crime and those who are at the intersections: Black women.



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