CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DIFFERENTIAL OFFENDING RATES BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE MALE ADOLESCENTS

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CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DIFFERENTIAL OFFENDING RATES BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE MALE ADOLESCENTS

by

William Joseph Thornton

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office of The University of Southern Mississippi in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DIFFERENTIAL OFFENDING RATES BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE MALE ADOLESCENTS

by William Joseph Thornton

May 2007

Black adolescents are over represented at every juncture of the juvenile justice system. Black adolescents make up less than 20 percent of the total adolescent population in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1996) but constitute approximately 50% of all detained juvenile offenders (Snyder et al., 1999). This pattern suggests that a serious problem exists. This present study is an initial inquiry into what social forces might be at work in shaping Black youth to offend more frequently and more seriously than White youth.

Cadets in a Mississippi Youth Challenge Program completed self-report questionnaires that target four socially influenced intrapersonal characteristics (alienation, self-efficacy, anger, and aggression). This experimenter attempted to determine if differences existed between Black and White adolescents on any or any combination of these four variables. Differences between the two groups on alienation, self-efficacy, or anger might then be used to explain different levels and types of aggression employed if they exist and would contribute to our understanding of the overrepresentation of Black adolescents in the juvenile justice system.

Participants included 163 (64 Black, 99 White) adolescents aged 16-18 years old. Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) revealed no differences between the two
groups on alienation, self-efficacy, anger, or aggression. Extremely low Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients may in part explain the null results. All measures with the exception of the STAXI-2 resulted in reliability levels well below the acceptable level of .70 (as cited in Reyes et al., 2003). Sampling confounds such as motivation, possible learning disabilities, and/or pathology are discussed along with instrumentation deficiencies. Directions for future research are suggested.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to those precious people who often times are overlooked as crucial elements of our successes. Ferris and Vickie VanDien have been constant sources of encouragement, examples of integrity, and the epitomy of loving, caring, parental figures that never quit believing in me. They have seen me through many difficult times of my life and constantly reassured me that the latter part of my life would be so much better than the earlier. They have served as the personification of Christ in my life for examples to follow.

I would like to also thank those wonderful friends who have been unrelenting in understanding the importance of this project in my life. They have sacrificed time with me with the stipulation that I was being productive toward the completion of this goal.

Finally, I dedicate this project to the love of my life, Stephanie Webb. She has been a unyielding source of encouragement, energy, comfort, and understanding. Stephanie has set aside her personal desires and our joint goals in an attempt to be supportive of me attaining my goals. The gift God gave me in you exceeds all I could ask or hope for. I shall profess my unparalleled love for you until my very last breath.
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Special recognition is due to Colonel William Crowson, Ph.D. who agreed to allow me to collect this data and provided all the administrative assistance needed to coordinate the data collection process. Without Colonel Crowson's cooperation and commitment to this project, it could never have been completed.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Youth involved in the justice system are presenting our society with immense challenges relative to effective interventions and cost containment. As youth enter and progress through adolescence, a period occurs in which the likelihood of engaging in delinquent activity/criminal offending reaches a zenith (Moffitt, 1993). According to Moffitt, following this peak period of maladaptive behavior, most adolescents begin a predictable reduction in delinquent activities and again conform to more prosocial values. However, during their elevated criminogenic state, adolescents manifest delinquent patterns that vary substantially in constellation. Of the many possible manifestations, interpersonal aggression appears to be a primary concern for policy makers, law enforcement officials, and justice system officials alike. Therefore, understanding the underpinnings of aggression and developing interventions around those driving forces is paramount.

Unfortunately, youth who engage in aggression are a heterogeneous lot. For example, Bjorkqvist & Osterman (1999) found that males generally are more likely to resort to physical aggression whereas females are more likely to utilize verbal aggression and/or mental aggression. We also know that aggression can occur in the presence of an emotionally charged, retaliatory response (reactive aggression) or it can be utilized as a systematic and volitional means toward obtaining a desired outcome (proactive aggression). However, most research to date has studied aggression as a construct that manifests across cohorts in consistent fashions without regard to differential life experiences unique to different ethnic groups or considering how those experiences might
mold the manifestation of aggression within that ethnic group. To ignore such possible underpinnings seems naive in a society where Black American youth are grossly over represented in the juvenile justice system. Therefore, attempting to identify life differences between Black and White youth that might account for this overrepresentation is necessary and timely.

Given that life experiences of White and Black American youth differ relative to social status, access to material goods, education opportunities, and living conditions, it is likely that each group will perceive their place in society in different ways. As a result, each group will likely experience different levels of perceived Mastery (perceived ability to influence one's life outcomes; also referred to as perceived Self-Efficacy, Sherer et al., 1982), and Alienation (feeling rejected by the larger society). Either of these factors could reasonably contribute to greater levels of anger among the group who perceives the greatest levels of disadvantage relative to the larger society. As a result, any one or any combination of these factors might reasonably influence the amount and/or type of aggression employed be each group as a means of responding to perceived social injustices or as ways of attaining perceived social entitlements. Given that anger has been closely associated with reactive aggression, higher levels of reactive aggression should be found among the group with greater perceived social injustice. In addition, the group perceiving the greatest amounts of social injustice should also experience a diminished sense of self-efficacy and higher levels of perceived alienation.

There is very little opposition to the claim that antisocial behavior exacts a substantial cost upon society. Of critical importance to researchers and policy makers is the well-established data that suggests antisocial activity is not proportionately distributed.
across the general population. Rather, a disproportionate overrepresentation of Black offenders has been interpreted by some to mean that Black Americans have a greater propensity toward antisocial activity than do White Americans (see discussion in Flowers, 1988). However, a dearth of literature exists that might add to our understanding of the underpinnings driving such an ethnic disparity in criminal involvement. What is known is that the overrepresentation of Black Americans in the justice system is evidenced across youthful offenders and adult offenders alike.

The remainder of this manuscript will address the problem of criminality in the United States (first in general, then focus specifically on aggressive offending among adolescents). The foci will more specifically address the difference in criminality between Black and White Americans that has repeatedly been documented across multiple generations. The central thrust of the paper will identify and investigate life encounters unique to each group (Black and White Americans) that might contribute to the discrepant criminality patterns found among the two groups. The first section of this manuscript will provide an overview of criminal behavior in the United States. Such an overview will assist in highlighting the seriousness of criminality in general, concluding with offending data relative to adolescents.

Criminality in United States

Antisocial behavior is a categorical classification that spans a much broader array of activity than just those actions involving aggression or violence. Generally speaking, antisocial behavior might be conceptualized as any behavior that contradicts established laws or that is contrary to existing norms of one’s environment. Many crimes committed involve neither aggression nor violence. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (2002) reported
that over 7,200 current inmates had been convicted for property offenses and over 12,000 had been convicted for immigration offenses. According to data describing those in the custody of state correctional agencies, almost 500,000 prisoners were convicted for non-violent offenses (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999). Therefore, it is safe to say that our prisons are holding an extremely heterogeneous group of individuals. Clearly, stratifying incarcerated offenders by manifestations of violence results in two distinct subsamples, those who are violent offenders and those who are non-violent offenders. However, subsumed under each subsample (violent and non-violent) a heterogeneous group exists. Group heterogeneity has been evidenced in such domains as age, offence type, and characterological traits for example.

**Characteristics of Incarcerated Offenders**

Heterogeneity among prison inmates can be readily observed by reviewing offense type, age, ethnicity, and term of custody statistics. For example among federal prison inmates, 50% or more are incarcerated secondary to drug related charges with only 14% involving violence. However, among state prison systems, only 22% of inmates are incarcerated for drug charges but 47% are held for violent offenses.

*Age groups account for a substantial disparity among offense rates.* Of all sentenced prisoners under state or federal jurisdictions, 771 per every 100,000 18-19 year-olds have been sentenced under either state or federal jurisdictions. That proportion increases to 1,886 of every 100,000 when considering 20-24 year-olds (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999). This suggests the rate of offending is in part a function of age. One factor that obscures research efforts directed toward crime prevention and adjudication is the distinction between adult offenders and juvenile offenders. Generally speaking, an
adult offender is one who is 18 years or older at the time of the offense. Juveniles are generally those under the age of 18. However, in special circumstances, most jurisdictions have adopted some means of adjudicating those less than 18 years old as if they were adults (Fagan & Deschenes, 1990; Feld, 1987, 1988; Hamparian, Estep, Muntean, Priestino, Swisher, Wallace, & White, 1982). Such a legislative action suggests that apparent differences exist that separate rehabilitation prognoses based upon seriousness of the crime committed. However, such a distinction ignores the possibility of multiple pathways yielding similar outcomes. For example, when considering ethnicity as a discriminating factor among inmates, if Black Americans develop their antisocial behavior differently than do White Americans, such information would be crucial when determining treatments or even dispositions of different offenders.

Youthful offending rates. The crime statistics regarding juvenile offenders provide an interesting picture of the overall criminality trends. Serious violent crimes committed by juveniles remained relatively stable between 1973 and 1989. The rate peaked in 1993 (at approximately 4.2 million offenses), then, in 1997, reached its lowest level (approximately 3 million offenses) since 1986 (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, p. 4). In 1997, it was estimated that approximately 105,790 juveniles were placed in custody for various offenses. In the same year, approximately 9,100 juveniles (under the age of 18) were being held as adults in local jails (Snyder, Sickmund, & Bilchik, 1999). As a result, we can conclude that delinquent offenders also yield diverse characterological and behavioral constellations that are implicated in treatment, prognosis, and judicial disposition of youthful offenders.
Delinquency Frequency Among General Population

Saner and Ellickson (1996), surveyed over 4,500 high school seniors from the general population in California and Oregon. Using data collected in 1990, they found that over one-half (53%) of adolescents surveyed from the general population had been involved in at least one type of violent behavior in the 12 months preceding the survey, and almost one-quarter had been involved in repeated hitting of family members or acquaintances. In addition, they found that one in four (23%) had been involved in at least one type of serious or predatory violence, including carrying a hidden weapon, gang fighting, using strong-arm tactics, or assault of another person.

Demographics Describing Delinquent Adolescents

In a recent study by Dembo et al. (1996), a review of over 2,000 juvenile delinquents processed for adjudication revealed some very strong relationships between demographic variables and delinquency. Dembo and colleagues found the mean age of offenders to be 15 years old; they were 54% Black American; 86% lived with only one, or neither of their biological parents; only 2% came from families where the parental figures were employed as professionals; and 10% of the sample lagged behind their cohorts by 4 or more grade levels in their academic abilities. However, no work was done to directly compare White and Black juveniles to determine ethnic/cultural factors that might account for such a large proportion of Black youth in their detained group.

Relevance of Ethnicity in Criminality

Data have consistently demonstrated that Black youth are overrepresented at every juncture in the Juvenile Justice System (Dembo et al., 1996; Snyder et al., 1999). Some research has attempted to illuminate the experiences unique to Black Americans...
(Boykin, 1983; Carmichael, 1990; Luckenbill & Doyle, 1989; Mizell, 1999; Sampson, 1987). However, very few studies have directly compared specific cultural/ethnic factors between White Americans and Black Americans that might further explain the disparity between White and Black offending. The present research will attempt to identify important constructs that differ between Black and White adolescents and then investigate the contribution those factors had toward aggressive tendencies between the groups.

Magnitude of Overrepresentation

Black Americans are clearly a minority group when comparing their numbers with those of White Americans (12% and 69% respectively; Yung & Hammond, 1997). Therefore, one might expect to find overall numbers of offenses committed by White Americans to exceed those of Black Americans. Moreover, assuming all things equal, one could also expect per capita rates of offending and prosecution to be comparable between Black and White Americans. However, such are not the case.

Ethnically differing patterns of general aggression. Comparing data gathered on Black and White offenders, aggression occurs at differential rates (Snyder et al., 1999). Although the driving force behind Black Americans being overrepresented in the justice system is not clear, some obvious differences between White Americans and Black Americans do emerge when reviewing the data on offense types, regional differences in ethnic composition of offenders, and differences in disposition of offenders that can be tied to ethnic ancestry. Studies have shown that in 7 states, minorities represent 75% or greater of all juveniles in residential custody. Moreover, Black Americans tend to be held in secure facilities more frequently than White Americans for person crimes, drug
charges, and violent crime index offenses. In contrast, White Americans are held more frequently for property crimes, and property index crimes (Snyder et al., 1999). Even more alarming is the difference in per capita rates of conviction that exist between Black Americans and White Americans. Nationally, data indicate that 204 for every 100,000 White Americans are placed into custody for some type of offense compared with 1,018 for every 100,000 Black Americans. That is a net difference of approximately five times greater custody rates for Black Americans compared with White Americans (Snyder et al., 1999). The differences can be even more disconcerting when regional differences are taken into account. For example, comparing the White versus Black per capita custody rates for Colorado (238/100,000 vs. 1,397/100,000), California (299/100,000 vs. 1,819/100,000), and Connecticut (160/100,000 vs. 2,225/100,000) we find that Black Americans are being held in custody as much as 5.7 times, 6 times, and 13.9 times (respectively) more often than White Americans (Snyder et al., 1999). Given that Black Americans only account for approximately 12% of the total population in the United States (Yung & Hammond, 1997), the disparity in offending and custody rates between Black Americans and White Americans is of crucial importance.

Black overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system. Given that youthful offenders processed through the juvenile justice system comprise a heterogeneous group, one alarming trend emerges from the statistical information available. Black juveniles are disproportionately overrepresented at every step involved in the arrest, adjudication, and detention processes. In 1997, Black youth represented 15% of all youth ages 10-17 years old in the United States (Snyder et al., 1999). Another account suggests that in 1990, Black youth represented approximately 12% of all youth in the United States, whereas
White youth represented 69% of all United States children (Yung & Hammond, 1997). Given these figures, assuming no external factors were unduly influencing the demographic makeup of those youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system, one would expect to find a population of juvenile offenders that closely approximates the proportions of ethnic distribution found in the general population. However, that is not the case.

According to Snyder and colleagues (1999), Black juvenile offenders (in 1990 and 1997) represented 52% of all cases waived over to criminal court. Moreover, Black youth represented 46% of all juveniles held in custody, 36% of all cases resulting in residential custody, and 37% of those delinquency cases that were actually adjudicated. Finally, Black offenders accounted for 49% of all violent crime index arrests and 26% of all juveniles arrested during the associated time period. These differences do not appear to be minimal. Rather, an extremely robust disparity appears to exist in the proportions of Black and White youth who are processed through the juvenile justice system.

This next section will address the construct of delinquency. This section will build a foundational understanding of well-established heterogeneity among different types of delinquent behavior and the youth behavioral constellations engaging in those behaviors. It will begin to lay a groundwork that shows how ethnicity has been grossly neglected in most areas of delinquency research, yet it has an extremely salient influence on the formulation of behavioral constellations.
Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency is a legal term that in the broadest sense refers to acts contrary to prevailing penal codes, and that are committed by minors (Bartollas, 1993). Delinquency can manifest in numerous forms. In a technical sense, some youth might be adjudicated delinquent simply as a result of being a specific age when they engage in certain acts (referred to as status offenses). For example, if a youth left his/her house without parental permission, that youth could be adjudicated delinquent for the offense of running away. However, if that same person were 18-years-old or older, there is no penal code to forbid going out without permission in most situations. Status offenses are annoying, however, the more severe forms of delinquency are most troubling to society. Among those offenses of such import to all facets of society (parents, policy makers, and mental health professionals), interpersonal aggression is of crucial importance.

Developmental Trajectories of Delinquent Behavior

One issue that has plagued criminality researchers for ages is identification of reliable trajectories describing the development of aggression. Although researchers have reported pathways to delinquency, clearly, no single, consistent etiology exists for the onset of delinquency. Various pathways have been postulated as well as studied empirically (Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998; Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1998; Sankey & Huon, 1999). Researchers are faced with even greater difficulties when attempting to categorize human aggression, which is a specific form of delinquency. As a result, much research has focused on identifying varying taxa of delinquency and their possible etiologies.
Dual taxonomy. To explain patterns of antisocial behavior among adolescents, Moffitt (1993) proposed a dual taxonomy theory. She suggested that delinquency manifests in many different forms. Moreover, she suggested that two distinct subtypes of delinquency might be identified based on the onset period of the associated antisocial patterns. Moffitt's conception of Conduct Disordered youth categorizes the two variants into adolescent-onset (A-O) and life-course-persistent (L-C-P) antisocial patterns. The A-O group is thought to represent a more normative pattern of antisocial behaviors that follow a predictable pattern of remission by late teens or early 20s. The L-C-P group is thought to represent those most likely to become the career criminals. Their antisocial constellations appear early in life and seldom remit throughout their lifetime. Moffitt's (1993) model has earned great credence in the research community and is frequently cited in literature addressing adolescent offenders. However, one shortcoming is that the model ignores cultural experiences that might differentially affect onset age of delinquency among various ethnic groups. Furthermore, it is entirely possible that such cultural experiences differentially contribute to the onset of delinquency patterns (including age of onset) when comparing White with Black youth.

Life course persistent offenders become the career criminals. According to Moffitt's (1993), dual taxonomy theory of CD, it is the L-C-P variant that manifests as the career criminal. In this variant, the “topography of their behavior may change with changing opportunities, but the underlying disposition persists throughout the life course” (p. 678). DSM-IV has embraced a similar distinction. In the criteria for CD, two variants are provided “childhood (early) onset” and “adolescent (late) onset".
Most youthful offender research attempts to dichotomize criminal activity into the Adolescent-Onset (A-O) type or the Life-Course-Persistent (L-C-P) type. The differential trajectories postulated to account for both the L-C-P type and the A-O type of antisocial behavior may also have implications for the motivations guiding the behaviors of the two groups. The A-O group might be motivated to embrace antisocial characteristics and behaviors (although for a determinate period) simply as a way of testing norms. The L-C-P group may be motivated to espouse antisocial ways as a result of an underlying, characterological abnormality characterized by an unremitting, egocentric, focus on self-gratification without any concern for others.

*Antisocial activity may result in Conduct Disorder diagnoses.* Many youth who resort to delinquent activity obtain a diagnosis of Conduct Disorder (CD). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR; 2000) provides two subtypes of CD that mirror the dual taxonomy proposed by Moffitt (1993). According to Moffitt (1993), a constellation of behaviors and characterological traits becomes a taxon when that descriptive pattern results in implications for etiology, likely course, prognosis, and treatment of the disorder. Therefore, according to the dual taxonomy theory, adolescent offenders can and do manifest constitutional differences by which at least two groups can be discriminated.

*Delinquency Clearly has Various Underpinnings*

Estimates of CD prevalence vary. Conservative estimates suggest that approximately 6% - 9% of elementary school aged boys meet the criteria for a diagnosis of CD (Costello, 1989). In the DSM-IV, it has been suggested that CD prevalence has increased over the last several years to as high as 16% of the male adolescent population.
Unfortunately, these data did not address participant ethnicity and the unique life experiences each group encounters as factors that might be influencing the respective levels of delinquency found among various ethnic groups.

In an attempt to categorize different variants of CD based upon severity and prognoses, Moffitt (1993) emphasized the importance of determining age of first arrest. When evaluating antisocial patterns, she stated that early first arrests are the best predictor of an enduring pattern of criminal recidivism. She went on to cite other research that found a remarkable continuity between incorrigible and aggressive behavior at age 3 and later childhood Conduct Disorder followed by police arrest in the early teen years (White, Moffitt, Earls, Robins, & Silva, 1990). What is ignored in Moffitt’s work is the possibility of ethnically driven subtypes of adolescent offending. Data consistently show that minority youth (germane to this research are Black Youth specifically) offend earlier in life than do White youth. However, if Black offenders develop antisocial patterns as an adaptive response to racism (for example), and since racism is viewed as a chronic, lifelong encounter, it is likely that many Black delinquents could be misdiagnosed with the L-C-P variant of Conduct Disorder. Rather than manifesting as a developmental anomaly, socially derived adaptations may better explain the earlier onset of delinquent patterns among many Black American youth.

The importance of accurately identifying the underpinnings of adolescent antisocial behavior cannot be stressed enough. Without understanding one’s developmental trajectory that culminated in delinquent behavior, we may attribute such actions among Black Americans to immutable developmental anomalies such as Conduct Disorder far too often. Such misattributions would likely follow the mislabeled person
and result in harsher treatments, longer sentences, and fewer opportunities for rehabilitative efforts in the future.

*Diagnostic deference to environmental influence.* The DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) recognized the potential influence one's environment can exert upon the manifestation of delinquent behaviors. An exclusion from diagnostic criteria is provided if the behaviors in question are environmentally adaptive. As such, a precedent has been established for determining whether one's delinquency can be explained as an adaptation to her/his environment. If so, the diagnosis likely will not fit the constellation of behaviors. To that end, it is imperative to determine if any environmental adaptations might add to our understanding of the overrepresentation of Black youth in the Justice System. Given the disproportionate representation of Black Americans in the Juvenile Justice system, the possibility of ethnically shaped, behavioral and interpersonal interaction styles should be an integral component of such scientific inquiry.

*Ethnicity neglected in developing literature on criminality.* According to Harer and Steffensmeier (1996), the field of Criminology is vehemently against the pursuit of cultural influences as possible explanations for ethnic disparity observed in violent behaviors. They stated that such a line of inquiry has traditionally been avoided because of an unexplained, implied taboo. However, it would be negligent to ignore such blatant discrepancies in offense rates such as those found when comparing Black Americans with White Americans. Such a line of inquiry might ultimately transcend barriers of political correctness and ignite a paradigm shift toward recognition that opportunities and obstacles are differentially distributed between the two groups and that such an inequitable distribution may actually result in higher offending rates among Black
Americans. Politicians and policy makers would likely eschew such issues for fear of constituent polarization, hence, diminished likelihood for reelection. This taboo appears to have hindered developing literature addressing developmental trajectories and remediation of adolescent aggressiveness.

Although much work has been conducted to discriminate different subtypes of antisocial activity (both with youthful offenders and adult offenders) and the various disorders associated with such actions, the developing literature has consistently neglected ethnicity as an explanatory variable. Kosson, Smith, and Newman (1990) cited multiple studies that used prisoners to study different factors relative to criminogenic patterns (e.g., delay of gratification, Blanchard, Bassett, & Koshland, 1977; information-processing deficits, Painting, 1961; and proneness for violence, Fagan & Lira, 1980). They noted that in each of those studies, both White and Black prisoners were included as study participants. However, Kosson et al. (1990) pointed out that even though ethnically diverse participants were utilized in those studies, Group X Ethnicity interactions were not considered as possible explanatory variables. The developing literature on adolescent antisocial activities has similarly neglected ethnicity as a cultural variable that might discriminate differences in offense rates and types between Black and White adolescents (Graham & Hudley, 1994; Levenson, Kiehl, & Fitzpatrick, 1995; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998; and Saner & Ellickson, 1996).

In this upcoming section, aggression will be introduced as a construct in general. Variants of aggression will be operationalized. In addition, theories of aggression etiology will be addressed, as will be diverse manifestations of aggression. The relationship between anger and aggression will be introduced as well.
Aggression

The most apparent form of damage incurred by antisocial activity is seen in violent/aggressive offenses. Loeber and Hay (1997) defined aggression as any act that results in bodily or mental harm to others. Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1998) distinguished violence from aggression by stating that the harm inflicted through aggression was of a less serious nature than harm dispensed through violence. In fact, according to Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, it was the seriousness of the harm that discriminated aggression from violence. However, such a definition seems somewhat incomplete. Baron and Richardson (1994) suggested that interpersonal human aggression might be conceptualized as any form of behavior that occurs with the intention of harming or injuring others who have the desire to avoid such treatment. This definition is not limited to acts of physical aggression. Rather, it encompasses any action (including verbal aggression and property deprivation) that might be directed towards another individual. However, the definition provided by Baron and Richardson excludes acts that might result without the component of intent. Therefore, for behaviors to be considered aggressive/violent, the act must include volition on the part of the aggressor. While aggression as a researched construct has been given much attention, no work has directly compared Black and White ethnic experiences (and associated developmental trajectories) that could explain aggressive manifestations among the two groups. If for example a Black male develops aggressiveness through a pathway involving a low sense of personal self-efficacy, and a White male is aggressive as an outcome of perceived entitlement stemming from racist majority status, these two individuals will likely necessitate different interventions and perhaps different adjudicated dispositions.
Ethnicity is an essential avenue of inquiry when investigating adolescent aggression since Black adolescents encounter many hardships that most White adolescents do not. These hardships might mediate or moderate the amount of aggression and/or other forms of delinquent activity present among Black or White adolescent Americans. Therefore, any research directed at disentangling the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the juvenile justice system seems timely and of great social import.

**Reactive and Proactive Aggression**

Aggression as a construct can be further divided into subtypes. Crick and Dodge (1996) argued that human aggression is an encompassing construct comprised of two substrates, reactive and proactive aggression. Accordingly, they link reactive aggression to the frustration model (promoted by Berkowitz, 1993) suggesting that it may be characterized as an angry, defensive response to an experienced frustration or a perceived provocation, whereas proactive aggression is better viewed as a deliberate behavior driven by the external reinforcers that result from its implementation. In essence, proactive aggression is the type associated with acquisition of material gains or achievement of desired goals.

*Reactive aggression.* Among children (see Dodge & Crick, 1990 for a review) reactive aggression is believed to result when a peer’s behavior is perceived as being intentionally harmful. In such a case, aggression may serve as a retaliation or defense against the offending peer. Reactive aggression is therefore associated with involvement of an emotionally reactive underpinning.

*Proactive aggression.* Proactive aggression is viewed as a variant that is distinctly different from reactive aggression. Proactive aggression is generally conceptualized as a
goal directed strategy void of an emotional underpinning. Although emotional escalation might co-occur with proactive aggression, it is viewed as a response rather than a driving force. In essence, aggressive children seem to have achieved a sense of mastery for utilizing aggression as a means toward a goal. A similar trajectory could be used to explain the overrepresentation of Black Americans in the juvenile justice system. If Black youth achieve reinforcing outcomes for environmentally necessitated delinquent acts, they would be very likely to repeat such behaviors. They also would develop a sense of mastery in those strategies over a course of repeated, similar behaviors. Therefore, although youthful aggression studies such as those conducted by Crick and Dodge (e.g., 1996) are essential, to neglect ethnicity as an integral component of such investigation would be a critical mistake given the overrepresentation of minorities in the juvenile justice system. For example, if Black Americans are consistently exposed to environments that foster aggressive responding (i.e., high density urban environments, high frequency peer associations with others who espouse aggressive responding, and greater restrictions being placed on goal attainment) and White Americans are relatively insulated from high exposure to such environments, it seems likely that Black Americans would experience greater levels of chronic anger and an associated increase in reactive aggression.

Provocation. Provocation and motivation have also been implicated in the elicitation of varying levels of aggression. Given that racism is thought to result in Black Americans being more likely to interpret actions as threatening than are White Americans, those Black Americans who more frequently perceive actions as aggressive and threatening will likely be provoked to aggression more easily than would be White
Americans. Provocation is often followed by a physiological reaction (arousal) within the provoked person. Given the implied intention of harm often associated with provocation, anger is a frequently occurring emotion in such situations. As such, reactive aggression is a variant of aggression highly associated with provocation. Chermack, Berman, and Taylor (1997) recently demonstrated that under high levels of provocation, justice, social control, and conformity were the main motives for aggressing among experimental subjects. Other studies have shown that as provocation increases, so does the aggressive response intensity among experimental participants (see Cherek, Steinberg, & Manno, 1985; Chermack et al., 1997; Giancola & Chermack, 1998; Giancola & Zeichner, 1995a; Lau, Pihl, & Peterson, 1995).

Theories of Aggression

Interpersonal aggression has gained a substantial amount of attention by researchers and policy makers alike. Aggression research has followed numerous avenues of inquiry. Various avenues of aggression research have sought to identify innate (biological) factors, social factors, environmental factors, and psychological factors (among others) that might explain onset and maintenance of interpersonal aggression. In order to shed light on the genesis of delinquency, Farrington (1978) identified a host of familial the strength of each factor's relationship with delinquent activity. Farrington, in order to add to our understanding of delinquency (which includes interpersonal aggression) among adolescents, then developed a list of factors that are common among those who engage in delinquent activity.

Common risk factors. Farrington (1978) identified criminogenic persons as coming from homes where parents are punitive and rejecting. These parents tended to
exhibit erratic behaviors and have an abundance of conflict between them. According to Moffitt (1993) antisocial persons received very little parental supervision as children and no close attachments had formed.

Saner and Ellickson (1996) added to Farrington's list of risk factors that were significantly associated with increased aggressiveness. They found that adolescents who came from broken homes, whose families were in a relatively low income status, had lower educational achievements or occupational statuses, and those who were highly mobile (having moved multiple times), were significantly more likely to manifest violent behavior than those who were not subjected to such factors. They also looked at negative life events such as family disruption through parental separation, divorce, or death. Saner and Ellickson found that none of the negative life event variables had an impact on relational violence (violence against a relative), while two factors (divorce and death) significantly impacted predatory violence. Their results indicated that those studied harbored unresolved anger and refrained from striking out at those they were close with (family members) but they might have expressed their anger in the form of attacks on others. However the data of Saner and Ellickson (1996) also indicated that parental job loss was associated with each of the three types of violence (any violence, persistent hitting, and predatory violence) they studied.

Saner and Ellickson (1996) also found that gender and deviant behaviors such as using and selling drugs, involvement in nonviolent felonies, and participation in other forms of delinquency were strong predictors of antisocial behavior among adolescents. They added that low academic orientation, deficient parental affection and/or supervision, and perceptions of parents' substance use also showed strong links to manifestation of
violent behavior among adolescents. It appears that the greater the number of risk factors present, the more likely adolescents will be to manifest criminal behaviors. Black Americans are likely to encounter substantially greater numbers of risk factors such as those discussed by Saner and Ellickson (1996) as a result of the long history of inequitable resource distribution that exists between Black Americans and White Americans.

Reinforcing value of employing aggression. One postulated pathway to aggression is founded upon the principles of behaviorism (i.e., mere exposure to a criminogenic environment might have initiated or perpetuated a delinquent lifestyle by the reinforcing properties it provides). For example, antisocial persons usually learn that aggressive behavior will often cause others to yield and cede whatever is desired by the antisocial. Patterson, Reid, and Dishion (1998) postulated that antisocial boys usually learned early that their coercive behaviors (e.g., crying, hitting) alleviated the coercive behavior of others and may even result in direct reinforcements at times. From the antisocial person’s perspective, such a behavioral pattern is rewarding and effective. Behavioral theory would suggest that these recurring reinforcements make this behavioral pattern highly resistant to change. Although these data suggest a common trajectory toward criminality (coercive family environments where aggression is adaptive), many from similar backgrounds follow prosocial developmental pathways. Therefore, we must strive to uncover factors or combinations of factors that might effectively discriminate those who will embrace crime from those who will not.

Subculture of violence. Luckenbill and Doyle (1989) reported that certain groups of people have disproportionate amounts of criminal violence. They cited others (e.g.,
Curtis, and Nettler) who found that urban and southern residents, males, Black Americans, lower income earners, and young adults, all have higher rates of violence than their respective counterparts. Nisbett (1993) also promoted a model that suggested Southerners were conditioned to utilize violence as a primary conflict resolution tactic. Nisbett suggested that this reliance upon physical aggression is an important conflict resolution tactic, developed as a social/environmental, evolutionary adaptation that developed when Southerners were heavily reliant upon cattle ranching for their livelihood. The theory posits that ranchers were financially vulnerable to rustlers. A cattle rustler could ruin a rancher financially with one big theft of cattle. Therefore, cattle ranchers (and associated persons) had to use whatever means necessary to protect their stock. As a result, reliance upon violence to settle matters of protection as well as pride and humiliation developed. Through discrimination and racism, Black Americans have historically been deprived of resource allocations relative to resources available to White Americans. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect a typical Black American to perceive any loss of resources as a catastrophic loss relative to how a typical White American would perceive the same loss. To that end, according to Nisbett’s (1993) model, Black Americans would more readily resort to violence as a learned tactic for resolving conflicts.

**Biology.** Theories of antisocial traits have included biological components. This biologic substrate can be tied to heredity, underdevelopment as a result of inadequate stimulation, neonatal and prenatal malnourishment, and other methods of genesis (Millon & Davis, 1996; Slutske et al., 1997). MAO neurotransmitter levels have even been implicated in the development of antisocial patterns (see Brunner, 1996). However,
biological research addressing aggression generally ignores chronic social experiences as contributing factors.

*Peer relationships affect aggression.* Perceptions of high levels of drug/alcohol use by close friends and/or parents as well as perceptions of weak parental support and affection have been implicated in increasing aggression among adolescents (Saner & Ellickson, 1996). Ironically, one's level of peer support was inversely related to the likelihood of refraining from the use of violent behavior. That is, the less peer support one reported, the more likely that person was to refrain from the use of aggression. Saner and Ellickson suggested that this may be accounted for by a tendency for increased peer connections coming at the cost of decreased parental connections, increased substance use, more deviant and rebellious activity and lower academic expectations. In addition, this may add support to a social/environmental explanation of aggression which would suggest that the more one associates with those who endorse the use of aggression the more likely that person is to employ aggression as a viable conflict resolution strategy. While the data collected by Saner and Ellickson was impressive with a sample size exceeding 4,000 participants, they failed to consider ethnic differences and how ethnically sensitive factors might explain any differences that might have existed.

*Angry arousal and aggression.* Many violent crimes occur among unrelated, lower class males, with emphasis on Black males (Bernard, 1990). Some research suggests that cognitions are a central component to the explanation of anger and aggression (Novaco, 1994). However, it is important to separate anger from aggression. Anger generally refers to an affective state, whereas aggression generally describes an action taken. Although the two can easily co-occur, they are by definition mutually

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exclusive. However, where anger is concerned, blameworthiness is said to be an
important component of situational arousal (Bernard, 1990). Blameworthiness may result
from a perceived intent to harm (physically, emotionally, or socially), or from reckless or
negligent actions by the target of one’s anger (Daly & Wilson, 1988). Bernard (1990)
suggested that aggression likely occurs in the form of instrumental aggression in the
majority of instances. However, it may be that instrumental aggressors are fewer in
numbers than reactive aggressors. It is also likely that instrumental aggressors account for
greater numbers of aggressive incidents than do reactive aggressors.

Zillman (1979) suggested that when arousal toward anger is initiated, rumination
upon the provocative incident likely results in further escalation of the angered state.
Accordingly, a decision must be made to retaliate or not. It is important to note that
events provoking a state of anger need not be of enormous magnitude. Rather, once a
person’s anger arousal system is activated, it has the potential of becoming a self-
perpetuating, ever-escalating, angered state. Even trivial events have the potential of
provoking someone to levels of anger sufficient to result in the manifestation of extreme
interpersonal aggression if the angered person perceives the action to be blameworthy
(Bernard, 1990).

Some researchers view aggression as an adaptive response such that it is capable
of reducing angry arousal. Myers (1999) reported that arousal can be reduced through
aggression if that aggression is directed toward the perceived provocateur, if retaliation
seems justified, and if the intended target is not intimidating. However, research has also
demonstrated that arousal can also be diminished by aggression toward a target that is
unrelated to the provocation if the aggressor attributes the target as being blameworthy or
responsible. Moreover, Bernard (1990) suggests that displacement of aggression from the actual provocateur to a replacement target might result if the true source of provocation is not visible (hence transferring aggression toward a more visible target), or if the actual source of arousal is perceived as being invulnerable to such aggression (which results in the aggressor finding a more vulnerable substitute). Such might be the case for Black American adolescents more so than White American adolescents. If a person perceives an institutional injustice (e.g., racism or discrimination) toward her/himself or toward her/his group of identification, that same person might be likely to respond aggressively toward others as a means of reducing her/his aroused anger.

_Arousal toward aggression is a self-perpetuating cycle._ Ursin (1978), as well as Lazarus (1985), concluded that those who live in a chronically aroused state experience a diminished capacity to cope with arousal and thereby manifest even higher yet levels of arousal. A system characterized by a self-perpetuating relationship appears to exist between arousal and diminished coping ability. As arousal increases, ability to cope decreases, hence arousal increases even more. According to Averill (1982) those who are aroused have a lowered threshold for perceived injustices or injuries from others toward them. This is consistent with the idea of spillover effects of emotional arousal. Schachter and Singer (1962) found that physiological arousal resulting from one event could intensify the emotional experience of a successive, perhaps unrelated, event. Through attribution errors and/or defects in information processing, arousal can be misinterpreted resulting in the physiological response frequently being mislabeled as anger. In turn, the anger can result in aggression. Spielberger (1988) has measured the emotional experience of anger using the STAXI and the STAXI-2 (Spielberger, 1999) and was able to quantify
differences between chronic and acute anger experience and expression. To that end, one would expect those who exist in a chronically aroused state will be more likely to exhibit greater rates of reactive aggression than would less aroused persons.

*Environmental impoverishments influence aggression.* Aggression may result from various underpinnings. One form of aggression might be emotional reactivity. However, it is also possible that one’s environment may influence development in such a way that aggression becomes a highly immutable, characterological form of interacting. Millon and Davis (1996) provided a cogent argument for the deleterious effects one’s environment might have on their personality trait development. According to their bio-psycho-social model, the environment of the early developing human has the potential to facilitate or hinder the biological (brain chemistry) makeup of the organism. In essence, this model purports that an environment deficient of early stimulation may result in permanent deficiencies in areas such as emotionality, activity level, prosocial behavior, curiosity, and learning ability. In adulthood, these same persons experienced difficulties manipulating their environments, discriminating or abstracting essentials, devising strategies, and coping with stress (Beach & Jaynes, 1954; Killackey, 1990; Newton & Levine, 1968; Scott, 1968). However, in each of these studies, ethnicity was ignored as an explanatory variable or as a domain that might differentially impact White and Black persons. According to the Millon and Davis model, it is entirely likely that Black Americans develop different personality patterns (e.g., more aggressiveness) than do White Americans in response to the environmental factors relative to each group individually.
According to Luckenbill and Doyle (1989), environments high in aggression usually sanction the use of force in situations when fundamental properties of the self are attacked. In essence, in highly aggressive environments, an action/situation that would result in a person losing his/her respect among peers, sense of dignity, or status would warrant aggressive responding. Therefore, if Black Americans and White Americans differ with respect to those components that comprise one’s “self”, it is likely that both groups will differ in the actual provocations that result in violent responses. Pitt-Rivers (1966) adds that violence is most likely to result when persons of perceived equal status are in conflict such that one equal is threatening the other’s identity.

Differential levels of social structuring appear to act in some way to deter violent exchanges. It may provide some sort of justification for not responding violently, or it may simply be that a lack of contact minimizes opportunities. Regardless, with violence manifesting predominantly among those who view themselves as equals, it is not surprising that many urban areas account for much of the violence in society. Since many inner-city neighborhoods are comprised of persons in similar SES, educational attainment, and perceptions of social disadvantage, it stands to reason that such communities would also manifest higher levels of violence between those perceived as equals. In fact, research has shown that inner city Black Americans do hold more favorable attitudes toward the use of violence for settling disputes (Anderson, 1994).

Anderson (1994) found that social status is elevated through physical displays. In such situations, violence is employed as a defensive tactic to protect one’s identity and to deter others from even thinking about aggressing against oneself (and therefore testing one’s manhood) (Harer & Steffensmeier, 1996). Finally, Gorn (1985), as well as Pitt-
Rivers (1966), postulated that public exchanges where one’s honor is publicly challenged (either in actual or perceived fashion) in many cultures require a violent display to restore one’s honor in the presence of his/her peers. Given that Black Americans are historically isolated from financial means comparable to those of White Americans, Black Americans are more likely to be relegated to residing in environments where aggressive conflict resolution tactics are endorsed as viable strategies and may even be expected.

*Structural positioning and aggression.* The theory of Structural Positioning has also been advanced to explain aggressive manifestations among members of low SES and especially among Black Americans. According to Luckenbill and Doyle (1989), structural treatments in research generally posit that one’s relative sense of deprivation can manifest as aggression. Harer and Steffensmeier (1996) added that the structural model (deprivation model) posits that aggression is a response to ethnic discrimination and SES conditions such as poverty or inequality such that the more one perceives her/himself to hold a lower structural position (i.e., be more deprived than others), the more likely they are to aggress. They suggested that resentment and hostility are likely to result in aggression among those who experience the greatest relative deprivation. Conversely, cultural treatments view one’s extensive association with a culture of violence as a structural position that establishes and maintains a disposition for aggression (Luckenbill & Doyle, 1989). They promote a view that asserts most violence (including murder) is an end product of a systematic exchange of escalating interactions, with each step directed at restoration of identity, pride, or dignity/respect.

*Low social position and anger arousal.* Low social position also increases one’s global level of arousal (Bernard, 1990). Therefore, it seems likely that those who are of
low social class will encounter higher levels of, and more pervasive arousal. As a result, those of low social status are likely to experience more global arousal and consequently more chronic anger. Following a similar line of reasoning, one could argue that those who experience more pervasive and more extreme levels of anger will also be more likely to overtly manifest anger in forms that include aggressive actions (verbal or physical). Since Black Americans continue to occupy a higher proportion of low status positions (compared to White Americans), it is likely that as a group, they would more often manifest aggressive actions. However, according to this view, it is important to clarify that such manifestations of aggression need not be limited to the higher status groups as targets. In fact, it seems entirely feasible that one would aggress toward those targets that are easily accessible. This can be supported by the statistics that most Black victims of aggressive actions report having been victimized by a Black aggressor (Sampson, 1987).

Special Group of Youth Considered “At-risk” of Aggression

Youth who encounter risk factors such as those discussed by Saner and Ellickson (1996) can be considered “at-risk” of manifesting maladaptive outcomes such as interpersonal aggression. As the number of risk factors an adolescent encounters rises, that adolescent’s overall level of risk for aggressing increases. Large concentrations of “at-risk” kids can be found in programs such as “Youth Challenge Programs.” Youth Challenge programs provide an alternative to adolescent high school dropout. Besides having dropped out of High School, many cadets in “Youth Challenge” programs lag behind their age appropriate cohorts academically. These two factors place cadets at an elevated risk of aggressive responding.

Studying Aggression Among Non-incarcerated Youth
An important distinction made in the Saner and Ellickson (1996) study was that most research on adolescent aggression is conducted by focusing on youth in the criminal justice systems. This type of research excludes the majority of the adolescent population from data analyses and likely underestimates the true magnitude of the problem. As a result, data are likely skewed. A more effective method of assessing the actual prevalence of aggressive tendencies would be to assess samples from the general population that would include those who are at risk of becoming part of the criminal justice system in the future but have not yet done so. By utilizing a broader, more heterogeneous group such as "at-risk" youth, any statistical differences should be more generalizable to the general population.

Previous studies have often utilized incarcerated persons to investigate what discriminates high frequency offenders from low frequency offenders (Campagna & Harter, 1975; Cornell, Warren, Haw, Stafford, Oram, & Pine, 1996; Heilbrun, 1982). This information was then used to make inferences about non-offenders. Although this investigative strategy has resulted in discoveries of great scientific import, it limits generalization of the results to those in custody. Therefore, when studying differential rates of aggression that exist between White and Black Americans, it seems most ecologically valid to use youth who are not presently incarcerated.

The central thesis of this present research addresses the idea that ethnic affiliation can influence the amount and type of aggression manifested. To that end, the upcoming sections will address the relevance of studying aggression within the context of two distinct ethnic groups. Foci will include social experiences unique to both White and Black Americans. Furthermore, overt and latent effects of those experiences will be
discussed to lend credence to the idea that differing social experiences related to ethnic affiliation may have an influence on the amount and types of aggression among American adolescents. Finally, these outcomes will be tied to the idea that Black Americans being overrepresented in the juvenile justice system might be explained (at least in part) by the unique life experiences (and associated, seemingly adaptive responses) they encounter relative to their White counterparts.

Importance of Studying Black/White Patterns of Aggression

Given that substantial differences in aggressiveness related arrests and retentions have been consistently documented between Black and White Americans, remediating maladaptive aggression among each group will likely necessitate different interventions. Social factors acting upon each group differ in the associated outcomes in many ways. Therefore, it is entirely possible to affect the overall amounts of aggression in society by understanding how varying social factors might contribute to violent outcomes. However, without considering cultural influences, it is likely that many youth may be diagnosed as conduct disordered when in fact, the delinquent activity among some Black Americans may be an artifact of social positioning where opportunities for achievement or material gain have been foreclosed, very little hope for improvement exists, and a persistent pattern of retaliatory aggression exists as an expression of being victimized through racism and oppression.

Alternative explanations for Black aggression. Although one might argue that Black adolescents are inherently more prone to criminal activity, such an explanation would be naïve and would ignore many alternative explanations. What may be more accurate is a hypothesis that external forces act upon Black American youth in more
aversive ways than White American youth and result in elevated rates of delinquent activity among Black youth compared to White youth. Since these external forces are experienced early and remain chronic for many Black American youth, these same youth might develop delinquent patterns more frequently and earlier in life than White American youth. Over time, these patterns become firmly entrenched in the Black youth’s behavioral repertoire yielding an appearance of inherent and immutable antisocial tendencies among a higher proportion of Black youth than White youth.

It is reasonable to conclude that different constellations of aggression would necessitate different treatments. The idea of employing a shotgun type treatment to address problem behaviors among adolescents will likely result in poorly allocated resources. Saner and Ellickson (1996) suggested that programs aimed at multiple problem areas have little effect. Because antisocial behavior is extremely stable across time and situations, for some yet not for others, suggests that a fundamental difference exists among those offenders of the different subtypes (Moffitt, 1993). However, cultural influences and one’s reactions to the associated life experiences based upon one’s ethnic group might also account for differences in offending in a fundamental fashion.

Value of Studying Ethnic Influences on Aggression

Although ethnicity has emerged as a variable in diverse areas of inquiry, very little research has used it as an explanatory variable to address differential offending and/or custody rates between White Americans and Black Americans. Harer and Steffensmeier (1996) stated that studies employing ethnicity as a factor that might explain differential rates of violence are extremely scarce. This is disheartening since fundamental differences have been shown to exist between the two groups and many of
those differences have been tied to the differential experiences each group encounters across the life span.

Researchers have made varying suppositions in attempts to shed light on the disproportionate number of Black Americans in the justice system. Unfortunately, little research has been conducted to directly compare criminality relevant outcome differences between Black and White Americans related to social experiences of each group. Writers have suggested that the overrepresentation of Black Americans in the justice system may be a result of one, or any combination of, socially constructed, dynamic relationships associated with ethnically unique life encounters. Views posited to explain the overrepresentation of Black Americans in the justice system have included differences in attributions of social events (Graham & Hudley, 1994), ethnic specific levels of status differentially attributed to the use of violence for Black Americans and White Americans (Harer & Steffensmeier, 1996), discrimination within the justice system against Black Americans resulting in over reporting and lower tolerance for offenses committed by Black Americans (Harer & Steffensmeier, 1996), and neurochemical differences (Ellis, 1991). Such reports suggest that multiple factors may be individually or collectively influencing the disproportionate distribution of Black Americans in the justice system.

Researchers have directly compared males with females and found distinct differences in the rate and types of aggression between the two groups. Bjorkqvist and Osterman (1999) found that females were more likely to engage in indirect aggression (including psychological aggression). However, they found that boys were more likely than girls to resort to physical aggression. These differences could easily be explained by the socialization differences that exist between males and females in American society.
Likewise, ethnicity (and the associated socialization experiences) likely affect behavioral outcomes differentially for Black Americans and White Americans.

Given the enormity of the literature base addressing delinquent activity, one factor that has been grossly neglected has been the influence of culture or ethnicity upon differential rates of offending or upon the specific types of aggression common to different ethnic groups. Snyder and colleagues (1999) highlighted descriptive patterns of offense rates and types based on age, sex, as well as other demographic variables. However, very little work has been done to qualify or quantify whether experiences specific to different ethnic/cultural groups can be tied to differential rates of offending. This work is essential if we are to expand our understanding, and work toward ameliorating the overrepresentation of Black American youth in the justice system.

*World view differences between Black and White Americans*

White Americans and Black Americans are said to espouse some cultural values that distinguish one group from the other. According to Boykin (1983), Black Americans develop a sense of self that includes differing amounts of three socially derived components: the Afro-cultural realm, the Anglo-cultural realm, and finally the Minority realm. Boykin (1983) suggested that the Afro-cultural realm is comprised in part of Black characteristics such as a focus on spirituality, affective disinhibition, and communalism. Jagers and Mock (1995) defined communalism as an emphasis on social connectedness, responsibility, and interdependence among group members. This Afro-cultural realm is said to differ from the Anglo-cultural realm that represents those values of White middle class America.
According to Jagers (1996), an Anglocultural worldview is characterized by emphases on material well-being, interpersonal competition, an effort/optimism perspective, and a person/object relations view. Jagers went on to explain that this worldview portrays the self as self-contained, self-interested beings, and as persons who compete to maximize material attainments. In addition, Jagers believes that consumption patterns are indicative of social status and that others are seen as objects to be manipulated and exploited for self-gain.

Finally, according to Jagers (1996) the Minority realm is characterized by attitudes and strategies thought to aid in coping with White domination. These include the process of assimilation and a sense of marginalization (alienation). Ogbu (1985) as well as Oliver (1989) have tied marginalization to problem behaviors among low income, inner-city Black American children. It has been documented that Black Americans differ from White Americans across many dimensions that may be tied more to the life experiences of each group than to inherent components of one's cultural background. Accordingly, maladaptive behaviors such as aggression have a high likelihood of following different developmental trajectories when comparing White adolescents with Black adolescents.

Previously Identified Differences Between Black and White Americans

Although skin color is an obvious difference between Black and White Americans, other differences result from the way each group experiences their world and the historical antecedents that shaped life for members of each group. The central thesis of this research is that these differences may in part account for resulting levels of
aggression that can help explain why there is such a disproportionate number of Black Americans in the juvenile justice system.

*Learned coping strategies and ethnically diverse aggression.* Black American and White American adolescents are thought to differ in both qualitative and quantitative manners. For example, Chapman and Mullis (2000) investigated coping strategy differences between Black and White adolescents. They concluded that Black American adolescents tended to: use diversions, exercise self-reliance, call upon spiritual support, mobilize the support of close friends, engage in demanding activities, and participate in relaxation more frequently than did White American adolescents. These findings suggest that Black American and White American youth utilize fundamentally different methods for coping with life encounters.

Chapman and Mullis (2000) compared levels of self-esteem between Black and White Americans. They found that overall, Black and White Americans experience similar levels of self-esteem. This was important given that Black Americans have historically been socially alienated from the larger White society. Analyses suggested that specific coping strategies among Black Americans and adaptations to the social climate have helped them maintain high levels of self-esteem even though they have been faced with discrimination and racism. However, some research suggested that although self-esteem levels between Whites and Blacks may be comparable due to coping strategies, levels of self-efficacy differ substantially. Moos (1990) found that a positive relation exists between problem-focused coping and elevated levels of self-esteem compared to emotion-focused (i.e., verbal responses to discrimination) methods of coping. These
solution-focused strategies include aggression as a means of solving threats against one’s physical, psychological, or social well-being.

It would seem reasonable to assume that goal directed, delinquent behavior, might actually be experientially conceived as a means of proactive attempts to control one’s own environment. Accordingly, one might argue that aggressive delinquents who act in antisocial ways might report higher levels of self-esteem than do those who refrain from such activity. As a result, Black Americans are more likely to utilize aggression as an adaptation to their environment. In such a case, marginalization/alienation could have arguably resulted in Black American adolescents developing a means of adapting to such marginalization albeit in antisocial means. Furthermore, Chapman and Mullis (2000) suggested that avoidance (as a coping style) is more related to White Americans, whereas ventilating is more related to Black Americans. They also suggested that White adolescent males experience lower levels of social support than do Black adolescent males.

Ethnic Indicators of Differential Aggressiveness

Much data has been gathered indicating that differential levels of aggression exist between White Americans and Black Americans. Data has been compiled by documenting arrest rates, conviction rates, and treatment outcomes (to name a few methods). Data has also been gathered directly by researchers interested in criminality. One trend that has clearly emerged has been that Black Americans are more frequently arrested and charged with offenses involving aggression than are White Americans.

*Aggression Among Young Black American Males*
According to data taken from the U.S. Department of Justice, approximately 80% of the crimes committed against Black Americans who are between the ages of 12 and 19 years old are attributed to teenaged Black American perpetrators. In addition, of those offenses, 90% of the perpetrators and victims alike are males. Accordingly, Black American males have had one of the highest homicide rates in the United States for the past 100 years (1991). In sociology literature, a phenomenon of Black on Black violence has been documented for many years. King (1997) suggests that the “Black experience” (referring to Black Americans living in the United States) is a unique constellation of obstacles that must be negotiated throughout the life of a Black American. King attributes many of the difficulties encountered by the typical Black American to past and present institutional racism and poverty as well as being an artifact of the chattel slavery encountered by the ancestors of Black Americans.

*Values of Aggression Among Black American Adolescents.*

Wilson (1987) stated that an entire generation of Black American males has been raised with deficient marketable skills and are resultantly unemployed for the most part. Carmichael (1990) suggested that Black adolescents have experienced a paradigm shift toward a lifestyle where peer respect and social status are measured by one’s criminal ability to earn money. As many younger Black Americans witness and/or experience the rapid accumulation of financial rewards and elevated social status through antisocial means, a self-perpetuating cycle of delinquent activity is formed. These antisocial activities (violence, coercion) are rewarded with tangible gains (i.e., social status), thus increasing the likelihood that such behaviors will be repeated. Carmichael hypothesized that delinquents would adopt an antisocial lifestyle that replaces conventional goals with
deviant values and goals as a means of attaining socially valued commodities. This dynamic of learning efficacious behaviors that have been modeled by others has been repeatedly demonstrated in the work of Bandura (1973) and has subsequently come to be known as Social Learning Theory. Merton (1968) stated that inadequate access to socially valued goals through legitimate means will likely result in adaptations by those who have been deprived of those goal opportunities. In essence, those who have been denied socially acceptable access to coveted resources will likely develop illegitimate means of attaining societal goals. In the United States, many of those coveted goals can be summarized into perceived power over one's environment, attainment of wealth, and autonomy.

Elliott (1962) concluded that middle-class delinquents and lower-class delinquents alike perceived their life chances as being more limited than did non-delinquent youths. This is important in that one's perceived access to life opportunities might be more predictive of delinquency than is one's SES. To that end, it is likely that Black adolescents (as a result of institutionalized discrimination and ongoing racism) might perceive themselves as having fewer life chances than do White adolescents. This perception of diminished life chances would likely manifest as lower self-efficacy and higher alienation scores.

Carmichael (1990) surveyed Black delinquents being held in custody to determine the levels of status/respect they attributed to "traditional" occupations as well as the status/respect they attributed to different categories of criminal offenders. They reported that among Black delinquents in custody, both traditional occupations and criminal offenders garnered differential levels of respect. Ministers, lawyers, and judges were
attributed the highest levels of respect among traditional occupations. Drug dealers, those
convicted for assault/battery, and those who committed homicide warranted the highest
levels of respect among the criminal offenders. In decreasing order of respect, the
minister, lawyer, and judge were ranked above drug dealers, assault/battery offenders,
and killers. Carmichael commented that the most respected offenses are those that
involve the use of “guile, retaliation, and violence against other males” (p. 72). However,
this study did not include a control group. Therefore, it is unclear if delinquents differ
from non-delinquents in this regard. Moreover, no comparison was made between Black
Americans and White Americans relative to how each group values/respects different
occupations or the use of aggression to control one’s destiny.

Carmichael went on to make an association between regular school attendance
and increased opportunities to connect with others who endorse prosocial values and with
adult role models who promote the importance of academic achievement. However,
according to the mastery theory as advanced by Mizell (1999), it is likely that those with
a low sense of mastery/self-efficacy over academic achievement will likely distance
themselves from their areas of weakness. Accordingly, these same individuals will likely
seek opportunities to unite with others who provide an environment in which a sense of
mastery might be achieved. In many cases, such associations are found among peer
groups who employ antisocial means of attaining power, wealth, and respect.

Socially Derived Inequities May Influence Ethnic Overrepresentation

Evidence suggests that the overrepresentation of Black Americans in custody may
be partly due to social and economic inequities experienced by Black Americans, relative
to White Americans (Farrington, 1987). Sampson (1987) posited that disproportionately
high joblessness rates among Black males are a result of both racism and discrimination. As a result, the same group (Black males) will likely experience a diminished sense of self-efficacy for achieving societally valued status (often measured in material well-being) in prosocial ways. As a result, reliance upon antisocial means (frequently aggression) becomes a viable alternative. Sampson speculated that involvement in criminality might be a maladaptive (albeit effective) response that provides a mechanism for attaining material well-being, and consequently, elevated status. Aggression is likely one strategy employed to ensure success in the pursuit of material well-being. In addition, Hacker (1988), and Dugger (1988), suggested that the disproportionate amount of Black Americans in custody might be attributable to discrimination in the justice system. Such a view has been supported by data showing that Black Americans often receive longer sentences and harsher treatment by justice officials than do White Americans for similar offenses.

Among those youthful offenders held in custody, great disparity was evidenced between the representative proportions of Black Americans compared with White Americans. It is estimated that across all facilities, Black youth accounted for 40% of those held in custody whereas White youth comprised only 37% (Snyder et al., 1999). Although these figures appear to be a relatively equitable distribution of incarcerated youth based on ethnicity, these figures actually indicate a disproportionate representation of Black American youth being incarcerated in comparison with White American Youth. Given that the population of the United States is comprised of approximately 69% White youth (between the ages of 12 and 18 years old) and 15% Black youth, one would expect a similar distribution to exist within the justice system if all external factors were equal.
Racism and prejudice have been hypothesized as having deleterious effects on the victims of such social maladies. This next section will discuss behavioral and emotional outcomes associated with racism. In addition, attention will be paid to the ideas promoted by Bernard (1990, marginalization/alienation), Mizell (1999, mastery/self-efficacy), and will also address factors such as anger driven aggression, and alienation, both of which are germane to this present research.

Adaptations and Outcomes Related to Discrimination/Racism

Black Americans have a long history of life experiences that include inequitable hardships and obstacles to attaining social and material well-being relative to White Americans. As a result, Black Americans have had to adapt to the social climate and find ways of flourishing in light of their minority status and the associated hurdles. Resulting from these adaptations, some outcomes may be implicated in the disproportionate rate of judicial processing that involves aggression.

Mistrust for White Americans May Perpetuate Overrepresentation

Gregory (1996), as well as Smith (1981) stated that slavery and racism are important antecedents to the realities of Black American life today. Paniagua (1998) suggests that with a history of being victimized through racism and slavery, one developmental outcome has been for Black Americans to develop a general sense of distrust for those with different skin color and/or values. Paniagua (1998) cites other researchers who refer to such a pervasive distrust of ethnically dissimilar persons by Black Americans as having a culturally based, healthy paranoia phenomenon (e.g., Ho as well as Smith). Guidelines for therapy involving an Anglo therapist and an Black American client suggest that the client will likely (at least initially) view the therapist as
some sort of alien who is incapable of understanding the problems experienced by a Black American (Paniagua, 1998). Such ethnically driven, behavioral and characterological manifestations hold implications for the disparity between Black Americans and White Americans with regard to offense rates, offense types, and the likelihood of being detained throughout the judicial process. For example, outward manifestations resulting from a general mistrust of social and legal systems dominated by White Americans (a historical survival tactic) may influence the way Black youth are perceived by those they encounter in the justice system. Moreover, Paniagua (1998) states that Black Americans generally attribute emotional problems to environmental factors. This tends to suggest an external locus of control for many Black Americans.

Marginalization/Alienation

Black Americans often occupy positions of being alienated marginalized relative to the larger White American population. Specifically, as a group, Black Americans are often excluded from benefits of social interactions that the majority population enjoys. This exclusion may occur in actuality or it may be a more discreet, obscure dynamic experience of minority life. Regardless, alienation/marginalization results in substantial and tangible hardships that can likely influence the amount of anger one experiences and the amount of associated aggression one manifests.

Marginalized Black Americans. According to data taken from the U.S. Bureau of Census (1996), the distribution of wealth differs substantially between Black Americans as a group, and White Americans. The median income for Black American families was $24,698 compared to $40,884 for White American families. Moreover, the incomes of Black Americans compared with White Americans that fell below the poverty level were
30.6% and 11.7% respectively. This additional financial hardship may result in fundamental sociocultural differences in internal states such as feelings of alienation and anger, as well as in behavioral manifestations such as aggression that differ in incidence rate between Black and White Americans.

According to social bonding theory, it is the attachment one has to one’s family, school, and other meaningful social groups that protects a young person from manifesting deviant (antisocial) behaviors. Further, according to Hawkins and Weis (1985), inadequate bonds with such institutions result in elevated risk for the development of antisocial behavior. Given that Black Americans have significantly higher institutional distrust than do White Americans, those same youth would also be at elevated risks of engaging in antisocial behaviors associated with deficient institutional attachment according to the Social Bonding Theory.

Alienation increases aggression. Isolation is also an important factor in the development of chronic anger. Bernard (1990) suggests that the perception of social isolation in and of itself can increase arousal and, therefore angry aggression might be exacerbated by one’s feelings of being alienated (socially isolated from the larger community). Such an argument might be made for explaining some school shootings. If a person is feeling isolated from the milieu and is also perceiving separation from her/his peers, that person will likely experience increased arousal, more angry aggression, and might strike out at the targets who are most vulnerable.

Given that Black Americans have historically endured alienation as a result of discrimination, it seems likely that as a group, Black American adolescents would perceive themselves as being isolated (alienated) from the mainstream population to a
greater extent than would White American adolescents. As such, if chronic arousal is experienced among Black Americans at disproportionate rates compared with White Americans, it may be that the alienation is a related factor that can account for at least a modicum of the angry aggression manifested by that group. Therefore, investigating the potentially discrepant levels of alienation experienced between Black and White adolescents would prove to be a valuable avenue of inquiry when attempting to understand the differential levels of offending observed between White and Black adolescents. Measures such as the Dean Alienation Scale have been utilized to assess associated levels of alienation but little if any work has directly compared Black and White adolescents in this domain.

*Family Structure Differences Possibly Affect Delinquency Development*

The life experiences of both White and Black adolescents differ substantially in tangible ways as well as in more enigmatic ways. For example, the family structures of the two groups differ greatly. Given that Black American households have historically been headed by females, and that females generally earn lower wages than males, an inequitable distribution of resources (and therefore attainable level of social status) exists between female headed, Black households and the higher incidence of male headed White households. The predominantly single parent, female headed household frequently found among many Black families is likely to result in substantially lower household income, fewer opportunities for advancement, less likelihood of an advanced education, and diminished opportunities of parent present supervised time. These may result in increased levels of perceived alienation, lower self-efficacy, and more chronic anger than their White counterparts. These differing family structures likely impact the behavioral...
constellations of Black and White Americans differentially. For example, since Black American youth are four times as likely as White American youth to come from a father absent household, an exceptional risk is created for Black youth to grow up without male role models in the immediate family.

*Black family structure and core values*. According to Boyd-Franklin (1989), and Smith (1981), the nuclear and extended families are important components of Black American life. In addition, Nobles (1985) has shown that along with a focus on family life and the inclusion of biological relations as well as essential non-biological relations (such as a minister), Black Americans often view parenting as a central aspect of existence. Given this core commitment to parenting, when a parent (such as would often be the case among Black households) is faced with working excessively only to see her children are not able to have the niceties of their White counterparts, perceived alienation and anger likely become more apparent.

Hill (2001) contends that such an ideal structure as is associated with White American families (two parent households where father is primary breadwinner) has never been a traditional value among Black American families. Hill emphasized that under slavery, many fathers were separated from their children so the fathers could be utilized in demanding physical labor. This often left the mother as head of the family. Such a structure remains today in numerous Black American families. Sampson (1987) indicates that a continually declining pool of economically stable Black males is a major factor influencing the exceptionally high number of Black households that are headed exclusively by females. Placing the entire burden of financial provision, caregiving, and supervision on Black females results in diminished parent-child interaction opportunities,
increases in unsupervised time for these children, and as a result, increased opportunities to associate with peer groups who provide maladaptive influences.

*White family structure.* Hill (2001) suggests that among White American families, a traditional ideal family structure of a two-parent household, with the dad as the primary breadwinner exists. In contrast to the Black family structure (which is headed by a female exclusively in approximately 42% of Black households, White households are only headed exclusively by a female in 11% of homes (Sampson, 1987). Bandura (1976) has demonstrated the importance of modeling in development of behavior. Accordingly, modeling and the resultant behaviors likely occur whether the modeled behavior is prosocial or antisocial. Knowing that father figures are present in White households almost four times more frequently than Black households, it is reasonable to speculate that White youth are at a decreased risk of developing antisocial patterns related to absent, prosocial, male models than Black youth.

*Black family role flexibility.* One permeating characteristic present in most Black American families is role flexibility (Paniagua, 1998). Such flexibility is said to exist as a function of the demands placed upon Black families through limited social resources and opportunities. According to Paniagua (1998), extended family members may often serve as the parental figures among Black American families. In addition, older children in the family may serve as a principal caretaker for younger children. This adult role may require the older child to drop out of school. Baker (1988), and Smith (1981), suggested that this older child may likely go to work and assist the younger child in obtaining a good education.
White family role flexibility. The traditional White American family tends to adopt more rigid roles for each family member. For example, among Anglo families, males tend to fill a primary breadwinner role, while females are expected to adopt primary responsibility for being the homemaker. Even in Anglo families where both the male and female parental figures work comparable hours, the responsibilities of parenting and household maintenance fall to the female (Larson & Richards, 1994).

**Self-Efficacy (mastery)**

Mizell (1999) describes personal sense of mastery as a self-concept construct that captures the individual’s perception of his or her ability to control his/her environment. This definition is very similar to the concept of personal efficacy advanced by Hughes and Demo (1989) and Self-Efficacy discussed by Sherer et al. (1982). Mizell suggested that personal mastery level is indicative of one’s amount of self-care practices, overall life satisfaction, and one’s perceived level of competence. Moreover, Mizell added that regardless of ethnicity, work status and achievement orientation are central to the socialization, life satisfaction, and identity formation of men in the United States.

Self-efficacy is influenced by multiple factors. Economic deprivation is one factor that adversely affects one’s sense of efficacy. However, as other (more salient) factors are accounted for, economic deprivation becomes a non-significant factor. Therefore, as comparisons across samples are made, if differential levels of self-efficacy are encountered, those levels are most likely due to factors other than economic hardship (Mizell, 1999). Mizell found that parental educational attainment and geographical region of origin are two of the most influential factors that are predictive of one’s level of mastery. These findings are important because dynamic social processes have been...
implicated in more deleterious outcomes for Black Americans than for White Americans with regard to both educational attainment and geographical location of origin. Specifically, Black Americans have (and in many ways continue to) experienced institutionally sanctioned embargos against attaining educational opportunities comparable to those of White Americans. In addition, Black Americans residing in the "Southern" region of the country have arguably witnessed the most continuous and overt effects of racism and discrimination.

*Self-efficacy and depression.* Prior research has demonstrated that self-efficacy is a variable that holds important implications for adolescent mental health outcomes such as depression. Ehrenberg, Cox, and Koopman (1991) assessed different domains of self-efficacy including general self-efficacy, physical self-efficacy, and academic self-efficacy. Through their research, they demonstrated that self-efficacy levels were significantly, negatively associated with levels of depression. As such, the greater one perceives themselves as being able to influence their own path in life (high self-efficacy) the less likely that person is to experience depressive symptoms. Given that many variants of depressive symptoms exist (hopelessness, labile mood, anger, and aggression to name a few), self-efficacy becomes a salient research factor when identifying possible influences on the overrepresentation of Black American males in the justice system.

*Self-Efficacy (Mastery) among Black Americans.* Hughes and Demo (1989) highlighted the importance of self-esteem as a factor insulating Black Americans from even more deleterious outcomes. In their study, they described self-esteem along three differing domains (personal self-esteem, ethnicity self-esteem, and personal efficacy). While all three domains were interrelated with each being anchored in interpersonal

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relations with significant others, each develops along a fundamentally distinct trajectory. They found that "personal self-esteem is most strongly influenced by microsocial relations with family, friends, and community, while personal self-efficacy is generated through experiences in social statuses embedded in the macrosocial systems of social inequality." (P. 132) According to Hughes and Demo, the integrity of self-efficacy among Black Americans is subject to external influences such as ethnic inequality and discrimination.

Rosenberg and Simmons (1972) attribute the discrepant self-efficacy levels among adolescents in part to the comparison groups one uses to make comparative analyses. They suggest that the majority of adolescents compare themselves to those in their immediate environment (micro analysis) as opposed to those in one’s broader, less personalized environment (macro analysis). Specifically, Black adolescents are often located in environments where other Black Americans comprise the majority population. Therefore, Black adolescents often compare themselves with other Black adolescents. This postulate strengthens findings that Black Americans can have low levels of self-efficacy while they simultaneously have elevated levels of self-esteem. This would suggest that one’s micro level environment is more deterministic of self-esteem while one’s macro level environment is more deterministic of self-efficacy.

Hughes and Demo (1989) suggest that low personal-efficacy among Black Americans might be a manifestation of low status, limited access to resources, and a pervasive exposure to discrimination. Pettigrew (1964) suggested that the low personal efficacy among Black Americans might even have an indirect causal link to elevated self-esteem. In essence, many who experience a low sense of personal efficacy resort to
blaming the system as a method of coping. By blaming the system, one can disavow personal responsibility for his/her present condition. Once the burden of personal responsibility for circumstances has been removed, one is free to experience elevated self-esteem. However, Hughes and Demo cite opponents to such a conclusion. Hughes and Demo postulated that personal efficacy among Black Americans is dependent upon the opportunities one has to engage in efficacious activities and is therefore strongly related to institutionalized oppression that is manifested in the occupational, educational, and financial domains.

Hughes and Demo (1989) found that personal efficacy among Black Americans was significantly affected by education, personal income, quality of family and friendship relations, gender, and age. They went further to speculate that among those Black Americans who are low in self-efficacy (highly externally controlled) and blame the system, social class is not likely to exert much influence on one’s level of self-esteem. Alternatively, for those who adhere to more of an internal control system, social class is likely to have a greater impact upon one’s level of self-esteem. Unfortunately, no direct comparisons between Black and White American youth have been made relative to self-efficacy and it’s possible effects on aggression. However, it appears that among Black Americans, inequality with White Americans does result in lower levels of personal efficacy such that opportunity deprivation experienced by Black Americans is minimizing the efficacious type activities Black Americans can experience. In this same vein, Hughes and Demo (1989) suggest that institutionalized ethnic discrimination has relegated Black Americans to positions of subordination, which has a consequence of
limiting access to "power, resources, and contexts of action that afford individuals the best opportunity to experience themselves as powerful and autonomous" (p. 153).

*Mastery among White Americans.* Historically, White Americans have reported higher levels of mastery (self-efficacy) than have Black Americans. Hughes and Demo (1989) reported on several studies that showed consistently higher levels of self-efficacy among White Americans. They speculated that such a pattern may be related to the higher status resources that Whites enjoy relative to Black Americans.

*Angry Aggression Likely Develops at Differential Rates*

Combining two previously mentioned factors (modern urban living & low social position), one would expect that low status people living in urban conditions would experience extremely elevated levels of chronic arousal compared with those in suburban areas (Bernard, 1990). Such a combination is more likely to exist among Black American adolescents than White. As such, it seems reasonable to expect higher levels of chronic anger (and therefore more angry aggression) among Black adolescents than White adolescents. Therefore, among adolescents from similar urban living conditions and social strata, differences in aggressive responding might arguably be attributed to the differences between other factors common to the Black experience or the White experience of living in the United States. A similar thought has been addressed through analysis of a prison population. Harer and Steffensmeier (1996) compared the rates of aggressive offending between Black and White inmates. They reasoned that all inmates occupy comparably low status positions. Moreover, since prisons are extremely dense living environments, the analogy to urban living was made. After numerous controls for potentially confounding variables were implemented, they concluded that Black
Americans brought with them (importation model of aggression) a propensity toward elevated levels of aggression. Measures such as the EXPAGG (Campbell, Muncer, McManus, and Woodhouse, 1999) have been used to discriminate angry aggression (reactive aggression) from more goal-oriented aggression (proactive aggression). Such a tool would be useful when attempting to identify various underpinnings of aggressiveness among White and Black adolescents.

**Alienation**

Calabrese and Adams (1990) investigated alienation as an explanatory variable that might account for differential levels of delinquency among adolescents. To do so, they compared incarcerated with non-incarcerated adolescents and assessed the levels of alienation among each sample. They found that incarcerated youth (compared with non-incarcerated youth) had significantly greater levels of total alienation, apparent isolation, and perceived powerlessness. However, no investigation was conducted to determine varying levels of alienation between White and Black youth. Given the marginalized existence of Black Americans relative to White Americans, one would expect to find higher levels of alienation among Black American adolescents compared with Whites. Elevated levels of alienation among Black Americans could also explain decreases in social bonding and therefore increases in angry aggression among Black adolescents.

**Measuring Aggression**

Because human aggression has brought so much attention to people through the media, many researchers have focused efforts on operationalizing, measuring, and understanding interpersonal, human aggression. Although aggression research is often conducted as a laboratory experiment or through use of self-report/paper and pencil
measures, each method has its unique benefits. The present study will rely upon paper/pencil measures of aggression in an attempt to gain access to a larger sample by conducting research that is more readily portable (and hopefully more generalizable) as opposed to a centralized laboratory where investigators must rely on participants to travel to the laboratory.

Laboratory measures of aggression, such as the Taylor Aggression Paradigm (TAP; Taylor, 1967) and the Point Subtraction Aggression Paradigm (PSAP; Cherek, 1981) have gained much exposure in the research literature. When using the TAP, participants are enlisted to compete against an opponent (predominately a fictitious opponent) on a reaction-time task. The task involves connection of electrodes to participants’ fingers through which electrical shocks may be delivered. Participants have the opportunity to administer shocks to their opponents via a shock selection panel. The basic premise is that aggressive persons will choose to deliver higher intensity shocks to their opponents than will less aggressive participants (Giancola & Chermack, 1998). Laboratory experiments such as the TAP permit the study of aggression while maintaining tight control over potential confounding variables. However, Tedeschi and Quigley (1996) raised arguments against the validity of laboratory measures of human aggression. They cited reasons that included internal validity (Is aggression the construct actually being measured?), ecological validity (Can shocking in a laboratory really indicate likelihood of engaging in interpersonal human aggression?), and sensitivity (Can laboratory measures actually detect those likely to aggress?).

Paper and pencil measures of aggression have also been developed and employed in research and practice. While survey measures of aggression are also met with some
concerns of validity, they have gained great representation in the developing literature. Measures such as the EXPAGG (Campbell et al., 1999), Brown-Goodwin Aggression Scale (BGA-Revised, Clinician Version; a semi-structured interview format) and the MMPI Inhibition of Aggression Scale (Graham, 2000) have been utilized in research. The EXPAGG appears to be a more appropriate measure of aggression in some situations because it enables the researcher to discriminate proactive aggression from reactive aggression.

Importance of this study

With such a disproportionate representation of Black Americans in both the adult and juvenile systems of justice, finding explanations for the overrepresentation is imperative. Identifying one factor that exerts substantial influence on the ethnically based, disparate distribution of delinquents cannot possibly explain all of the discrepancy in question. Rather, one can only strive to systematically refine efforts geared toward disentangling the complex social malady of delinquency. However, to make consistent advances toward ameliorating some of the juvenile delinquency experienced today, we must systematically work at identifying one influencing component at a time.

One of the most perplexing considerations is that the presence of delinquent activity during childhood (early onset) may in fact be one of the strongest predictors of enduring antisocial pathology in adulthood (Slutske et al., 1997). Therefore, the earlier the onset of criminogenic patterns, the more likely will be a life of criminal involvement, hence the greatest numbers of opportunities to be judicially processed and perhaps become incarcerated across one’s life span. Following such a line of thinking, one would expect Black males to have greater likelihood of pursuing career criminal trajectories.
than White males since data suggest that Black males begin offending earlier than do White males. However, it may be that the earlier onset is related to social factors that mediate or moderate the development of these criminogenic patterns and are actually adaptations to perceived inequitable distribution of opportunity.

According to Sampson (1987) the worst White urban environment (with respect to poverty and family disruption) is considerably better off than mean levels for Black communities. Accordingly, Black adolescents overall, come from more severely impoverished environments than do White adolescents. Therefore, it is likely that Black Americans are more susceptible (through greater exposure) to developing antisocial patterns with environmentally moderated underpinnings. However, such investigative strategies have been largely neglected in the developing literature. If the developmental pathway for aggression differs between White Americans and Black Americans, individualized treatments may be more effectively implemented if they include one’s perceived life experiences when designing intervention strategies.

Integration and Hypotheses

Aggressive adolescent offending presents society with real and substantial costs. In attempts to understand and ameliorate this pattern, researchers have investigated distinct criminogenic constructs such as Conduct Disorder (Lynam, 1996; Moffitt, 1993), characterological patterns of antisocial offenders (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1998), and Psychopathy (Hare, 1998). However, much of the literature has focused on identifying predictable trajectories that begin in youthful years and continue into the adult years. As such, environmental influences have been given little attention as to their impact in shaping aggressive offending. While some research has identified consistent
environmental risk factors associated with increases in criminal offending and aggression (Farrington, 1987; Saner & Ellickson, 1996), researchers have largely worked from a vantage point that environmental factors such as socioeconomic status, population density, low family educational attainment, and employability have a constant effect on people as a whole. Unfortunately, little if any research has directly investigated the life encounters that might have different effects on different ethnic groups and how those effects might then influence the degree of aggression manifested by each group. Therefore, when considering the disproportionate representation of Black Americans in the justice system relative to White Americans, an obscure picture emerges regarding how to address the problem of disproportionately high levels of offending among Black American adolescents.

Data have consistently shown that Black Americans generally experience much lower household income (Bureau of the Census, 1996) greater job instability (Sampson, 1987), higher incidence of one parent households (Hill, 2001), far fewer educational and career opportunities (Mizell, 1999), and perception of exclusion from the greater social network than do White Americans. As such, Black Americans are at greater risk of feeling alienated from the larger social structure and as a result, experience lower levels of perceived sense of control (self-efficacy) over their life encounters. A possible outcome of exposure to such deleterious, emotionally impacting encounters, is likely to be elevated levels of anger among Black Americans relative to their more advantaged White counterparts. Given that anger can lead to aggression, it is reasonable to assume that Black Americans will experience higher levels of aggression driven by anger.
(reactive aggression) that is associated with elevated levels of alienation, and a lower sense of self-efficacy than will White Americans.

Hypotheses

The present research hypothesizes:

1. Blacks will report higher levels on Total Alienation as well as other alienation subscales.

2. Blacks will score higher on Trait Anger as well as other anger scales and subscales.

3. Blacks will report lower Social Self-efficacy scores and General Self-Efficacy scores.

4. Blacks will report higher levels of reactive aggression.

5. Whites will report higher levels of proactive aggression.

6. Controlling for ethnicity, alienation, self-efficacy, and trait anger will predict reactive aggression.

7. Controlling for ethnicity, alienation, self-efficacy, and trait anger will predict proactive aggression.
CHAPTER II

METHODS

Participants

The participant pool was limited to only male cadets entering a Youth Challenge Program in Mississippi. Because males are more likely to resort to interpersonal physical aggression than are females (Bjorkqvist & Osterman, 1999), only males were considered for participation. However, because ethnicity was essential to this study, participant exclusions (with the exception of sex) were accomplished after data collection so as not to alert the participants to the full question under investigation by allowing only the Black and White cadets to participate. Therefore, the total pool of male cadets to whom test protocol packets were distributed included 192 potential participants. From that group, only those who indicated either “Black or African American” or “White” were included in the actual sample of subjects for analyses purposes. From the total group of 192 males, 13 were omitted as a result of reporting an ethnic group other than Black or White. An additional 15 were eliminated at the discretion of the experimenter for generating response patterns that appeared to clearly indicate fabrication of responses and not being forthright in study requirements. Indications of such protocols included geometric designs created by response choices on response forms, clear and consistent response patterns (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1 repeated for multiple pages) and responses to response choice headings (where no question existed). The final sample consisted of 163 participants of which 64 (39%) were Black and 99 (61%) were White. Table 1 provides more thorough details describing the demographic composition of the final sample.
Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>16.76 (.75)</td>
<td>16.55 (.66)</td>
<td>16.6 (.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest grade completed</td>
<td>9.30 (1.01)</td>
<td>9.28 (.95)</td>
<td>9.29 (.97)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* All numbers listed above are raw numbers (n) relative to the total sample with the exception of Age and Highest grade which are presented in Mean (s.d.) format.

The research protocols utilized for this study were administered to all male cadets within their first four days of participation in the program. All cadets entered the program at the same time, constituting a cohort. The entire male cohort consisted of various ethnic groups with the majority of the adolescents claiming themselves to be either Black or White. Subjects ranged in age from 16 to 18 years old (M = 16.6, SD = .70). All participants were residents of Mississippi prior to entering the Youth Challenge Program.

Each adolescent admitted to the Youth Challenge Program in Mississippi is evaluated for academic achievement level either prior to beginning the program or as a component part of the program. Conversations with program staff indicated that many cadets enter the program with an estimated reading level of 6th grade (some slightly lower) or higher. Therefore, the reading demands of all measures seemed appropriate.
given developers of each measure utilized reported a 6th grade reading level would be adequate.

Measures

All measures were administered in a paper/pencil format. Each research participant packet included a demographic information sheet and a measure specific to each research construct of interest. The packet was administered and completed during one sitting and required approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Each instrument within the packet required approximately a 6th grade reading level. Participants had the choice of reading the instrument items and responding or following along as the experimenter read each item out loud for the benefit of those who might have had difficulty reading or who wanted clarification on any items.

Demographics. A questionnaire assessing demographic information was the first instrument in each packet. Demographic information included age, family size and structure (single parent vs. intact parental dyad), highest education level of cadet, grade retention ("Have you ever failed a grade?"), declaration of race (ethnicity), Parents' highest education level, SES declaration/estimate, and region of residence. This information was helpful in determining amounts of homogeneity across the sample on demographic variables. In addition, the information was utilized as a criterion for participant exclusion in the data analysis phase of the study. For example, only those who identified themselves either as White, or Black or African American were included in the analyses relevant to this study.

Self-Efficacy (Mastery). The Self-Efficacy Scale (Sherer et al., 1982) was utilized to assess participant's sense of self-efficacy (mastery). The scale is a 23-item measure of
self-efficacy expectancies. The items target respondent’s willingness to initiate behavior, to expend effort completing the behavior, and persistence when faced with adversity relative to the target behavior (Sherer et al., 1982). Each item was rated on a 4 point Likert scale with possible responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Fourteen items required reverse scoring to yield a uniform direction for interpreting scores obtained on the scale. The higher the total score, the greater the level of self-efficacy one is thought to possess. During development of The Self-Efficacy Scale, Sherer and colleagues administered the measure, recoded those items requiring reverse scoring, and a total score was obtained for each participant. All scores for each participant were summed (after recoding was completed) and a grand sum was obtained. Sherer and colleagues (1982) found Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients of .86 and .71 for the General Self-Efficacy and Social Self-efficacy subscales respectively. The Self-Efficacy scale has been found to be a valid and useful measure general self-efficacy (Sherer, et al., 1982). This scale has also been used in other research to assess self-efficacy among adolescents (Ehrenberg, Cox, & Koopman, 1991).

The Self-Efficacy Scale is comprised of two different factors (general self-efficacy, and social self-efficacy). Criterion validity of the Self Efficacy Scale was confirmed by evaluating the relationships between scores on the Self-Efficacy Scale and ratings of past successes in educational, employment, and military experiences. Significant relationships were found for both scales. Sherer et al. (1982) reasoned that past successes in such areas would be positively associated with higher scores on the Self-Efficacy Scale. Correlation analyses revealed significant results in the predicted directions.
Anger. The State Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAXI-2; Spielberger, 1999) was utilized to assess subject’s anger constellation and to discriminate chronic (Trait) anger from situational (State) anger. The original STAXI (Spielberger, 1988) targeted three different domains of anger: State, Trait, and Expression. The STAXI-2 was developed to enhance the measurement of experience, expression, and control of anger in adolescents and adults (Spielberger, 1999). It is comprised of 57 items compared with the 44 items from the original STAXI. The STAXI-2 consists of six scales and five subscales. The measure was developed to require a sixth grade reading level. Test developers indicate use of the measure is still valid for those who might have below a sixth grade reading level if the examiner reads the questions to examinees. Each item in the STAXI-2 is completed along a four point Likert type scale. The test developer (Spielberger, 1999) found psychometric properties of the STAXI-2 to be sound for use with adolescents 16 years and older with scale reliabilities ranging from .77 to .95. The STAXI has been used and shown to be a valid measure of anger expression in past research to assess anger levels among young offenders (Swaffer & Hollin, 2001).

Alienation. Dean’s Alienation Scale (1961) was used to assess subject’s perceived sense of alienation. The Dean Alienation Scale has been widely utilized to assess levels of alienation among adolescents (Calabrese & Adams, 1990; Moyer & Motta, 1982) in studies that compared incarcerated adolescents with those not incarcerated and differences between Black and White adolescents respectively. The scale consists of 24 items with responses being placed upon a 5-point Likert type scale. Possible responses range from 0 (strongly disagree) to a maximum of 4 (strongly agree) with a midrange option of 3 (uncertain). Five of the items are presented in reverse format and require
reverse scoring. Possible scores on the total scale therefore range from 0 (lowest level of alienation) to a maximum of 96 (greatest level of alienation). The total scale is further divided into three subscales (Powerlessness, Normlessness, and Social Isolation). Split half reliabilities for each of the subscales (Powerlessness, Normlessness, and Social Isolation) as well as the total scale were modestly strong (.78; .73; .84; and .78) respectively. When originally developed, the total scale had weak validity results when compared with other measures of seemingly similar constructs (Srole’s Anomie Scale (1956), and Nettler’s Alienation scale (1957). However, it was concluded that these scales might be measuring different constructs than was the Dean Alienation Scale. Subsequent research has found the Dean Alienation Scale to be of great utility when assessing alienation among adolescents (Warner & Hansen, 1970).

Aggression. To assess subject’s aggressive tendencies, the revised version of the EXPAGG (Campbell et al., 1999) was employed. The revised EXPAGG is a two-scale, self-report measure that assesses instrumental and reactive (expressive) aggression. Each scale contains eight items with a 5-point Likert-type response format. Item response options range from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Therefore, each subscale has a potential total score ranging from 8-40. The eight item instrumental scale has a resulting Cronbach’s alpha of .80. The expressive scale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .62. A correlation coefficient between the two scales was derived and found to be −0.02 suggesting near perfect independence (Campbell et al., 1999).

Scoring considerations. Prior to statistical analyses, various items from the Dean Alienation and Self-Efficacy scales required reverse scoring as determined by the original instrument developers. All study measures (scales and subscales) required grouping each
item into the appropriate scale or subscale prior to completion of any analyses. For convenience to the reader, a summary of instrument scoring guidelines has been compiled and included in the appendix section of this manuscript. A summary of instrument scoring guidelines can be found in Appendix G.

Procedure

Upon arrival at the Youth Challenge campus, each cadet was assigned to a platoon after initial preliminary inprocessing is completed. A full platoon consisted of approximately 35 cadets. Within the first 3-5 days of inception of each new cadet cycle (the beginning of the 22 week program) each platoon was scheduled to attend their first meeting (as a platoon) with the director of counseling services. With the exception of one platoon, all platoons completed the assessments for this present study during their first group meeting with the counseling staff.

Each member of the respective platoons entered the room and took a seat as directed by platoon leader (cadre). Seating was side by side in classroom fashion. The room was organized with five rows of tables with 8 available seats in each row. No space was available between cadets.

The experimenter introduced himself and verbally explained his desire for the cadet’s participation in a research study as research packets were distributed with assent forms attached to outside of the packet. Given the nature of the research (a direct comparison between Black and White adolescents), the instrument packet was distributed to each cadet in each platoon regardless of perceived ethnic membership. Each research packet was identical in appearance and content. No potential identifying information was located anywhere on the research forms. As part of their child’s admission criteria,
parents were informed that information gathered may be utilized for research purposes and parents agreed to this prior to their child being admitted to the program. Therefore, only assent forms needed to be administered to the participants. The assent form was read aloud and cadets were given the option of reading it themselves as well. After being fully informed, each cadet signed the assent form and passed it back to the experimenter (all agreed to participate). Participants remained with their respective platoon during study participation and all members of a respective platoon were surveyed simultaneously. All data was collected on a voluntary basis. No compensation was offered for participation in the study.

The experimenter proceeded to read each of the research questions aloud and afforded cadets the opportunity to read themselves and answer the questions at their own pace. Cadets were encouraged to ask for clarification if an item was not easily understood and clarification was required for approximately 8 items per platoon. Once the questionnaires were completed, they were randomly collected and stored apart from the previously collected assent forms. Cadets were thanked for their participation, and the study was concluded. The identical process occurred for the platoon tested apart from the introduction to their counselor, however, it occurred during an “undefined” duty time. Each platoon completed the entire administration in approximately 20-30 minutes.
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

Participant demographics. Participants completed questionnaires providing general demographic data. Demographic data (specifically ethnicity) provided the principal criterion for participants to be determined ineligible for study analyses if they identified themselves as belonging to any group other than “Black or African American” or “White.”

Participants included in the final analysis resulted in two very similar groups (Black and White) relative to most demographic variables when considering actual numbers. For example, 59 Black cadets reported having received free lunch in the past compared with 55 White cadets. However, when considering the proportional representation of each group, substantial differences were found in that a greater proportion of Blacks reported having received free lunch in the past (92% compared with 56 % of the White cadets), having lived with only one or neither of their parents immediately prior to cadet initiation, and living with the mother only. Table 1 provides a summary of demographic information for the study sample.

Both groups (White and Black adolescents) were fairly comparable on demographic variables. The entire study sample as a whole consisted of male teenagers that were 16 years old, had a “highest grade completed” of 9th grade, had failed at least one grade previously, and came from low socioeconomic backgrounds as determined by being the recipient of “free lunch” at some time in the past. When stratifying the total sample by ethnic group, participant groups did appear to differ on whom they last lived with prior to entering the Youth Challenge Program. Black adolescents more frequently
reported greater levels of “free lunch”, almost half as many two-parent homes, and twice as many mother only homes as White adolescents.

*Measure reliabilities.* Each scale and subscale was analyzed to determine the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of reliability when employed in this setting and with this sample. Of all instruments utilized, the STAXI-2 demonstrated the strongest and most consistent reliabilities. For the entire study sample, the STAXI produced Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranging from .84 for Trait Anger to .83 for Anger Control. Overall, the Dean Alienation Scale performed very poorly with each of three subscales yielding alpha coefficients ranging from .41 to .49. These coefficients are much lower than those reported in the test development. Researchers have frequently used the Dean Alienation Scale among adolescents (Calabrese & Adams, 1990; Calabrese & Seldin, 1986, 1987; Moyer & Motta, 1982; Warner & Hansen, 1970) but in each case failed to report reliability coefficients obtained in these studies. Rather, each referred back to those coefficients obtained and reported by Dean (1961) during the test development. Table 2 provides the psychometric properties of each measure, its scales and subscales, and provides reliability coefficients reported from the original test development.
Table 2

*Instrument Scale and Subscale Reliabilities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Cronbach’s</th>
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<th>Possible</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
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<td>.84b</td>
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<td>3.24</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.85b</td>
<td>4-16</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tang-r</td>
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<td>.65</td>
<td>.65b</td>
<td>4-16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
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<td>.73b</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.84a</td>
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<td>.78</td>
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<tr>
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**EXPAGG**

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<td>.48</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>.62</td>
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</table>

**Note:**

a. Coefficients are taken from 16-19 year “normal adult” males (Spielberger, 1999)
b. Coefficients are taken from “adolescents 12-18 years” (Spielberger, 1999)
c. Reid Cross (2002) found \[pwr=.65; norm=.74; soc=.61; tot=.82\]
d. Self-Efficacy normative sample was college students;
e. Measures are listed on table in order of administration during data collection
Multivariate test. Multiple variables were analyzed in this study to determine if any difference existed between Black and White adolescents across any of the research variables (alienation, self-efficacy, anger, and/or aggression). To determine if differences existed, a single multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) was utilized. Ethnicity (Black/White) was used as the fixed factor with each instrument scale and subscale of interest included as the dependent variables. Analyses included a total sample size of 163 participants (64 Black and 99 White). According to the analysis, no significant differences were found between White and Black adolescents across any of the variables included in the study. MANOVA produced the following result: $F(17, 145) = 1.52, p = .097$. Table 3 provides the means and standard deviations for each scale and subscale of interest.
Table 3

*Scale/Subscale Means and Standard Deviations by Ethnicity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Black (n=64)</th>
<th>White (n=99)</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Trait</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tang-t</td>
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<td>8.19 (3.42)</td>
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<td>Tang-r</td>
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<td>9.05 (3.19)</td>
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<td>76.03 (12.40)</td>
<td>75.42 (12.83)</td>
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<td>Ax-o</td>
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<td>17.58 (5.56)</td>
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<td>20.33 (5.49)</td>
<td>20.21 (6.30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEAN</td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
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<td>19.27 (4.90)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Powerless</td>
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<td>Normless</td>
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<td>13.25 (3.72)</td>
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<td>Self Eff</td>
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<td>17.09 (3.00)</td>
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<td>General</td>
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<td>51.95 (7.22)</td>
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<td>Proactive</td>
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<td>19.97 (6.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.08 (5.21)</td>
<td>21.20 (4.73)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because no differences were found between Black and White adolescents among any of the variables of interest, protected F-tests were not completed.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to investigate how life experiences might differentially affect White and Black adolescent males and how those discrepant effects might be useful in understanding the overrepresentation of Black adolescents in the juvenile justice system. Specifically, this project was directed at determining whether Black and White adolescents (taken from a group deemed to be at high risk for resorting to aggression) might differ in the amounts and variants of aggression they manifest. Furthermore, the experimenter sought to determine if the aggression reported by each group (Blacks and Whites) might be associated with different types and/or levels of anger that might be related to their respective aggressive patterns. The final goal of this study was to determine if socially derived temperaments such as perceptions of low Self-Efficacy and/or excessive Alienation might be associated with the different types of anger each group experiences. Black and White at-risk adolescents were directly compared to determine if they differed in their responses to measures of each construct (Alienation, Self-Efficacy, Anger, and Aggression).

The hypotheses of this study predicted differences between White and Black adolescents across one or more of the variables of interest (Alienation, Self-efficacy, Anger, and Aggression). The data failed to support any of these hypotheses. Results indicated no significant differences between the two groups (Black and White adolescent males) when all of the scales and associated subscales utilized in this study were included in the analysis. These results indicate that in fact no differences exist between the White and Black adolescents used for this study in the areas of Alienation, Self Efficacy, Anger,
or Aggression. However, of critical importance is the reliability of the scales utilized in this study. Given such low reliabilities, results from analyses are highly suspect and cannot be interpreted with confidence. Taking into account the low reliability levels, these data still provide some important information.

At first glance, these results appear to contradict prior research indicating differences between the two groups in anger and aggression. Reyes, Meininger, Liehr, Chan, and Mueller (2003) found that differences did exist between Black and White adolescents on aggression as measured by the Anger Out scale of the original STAXI. In their study, they used all adolescents actively attending school (compared with the present sample of adolescents who had all been unsuccessful in traditional school settings). The Reyes and colleagues sample differs fundamentally from this present research sample in that none of the youth included in this study were actively enrolled in traditional secondary education programs. Because the Youth Challenge Program is comprised entirely of adolescents who could not function in traditional school settings for one reason or another, it is possible that the two populations (this study sample and the sample used by Reyes et al.) differ substantially in some meaningful way. For example, given their active enrollment in traditional school programs, those adolescents surveyed by Reyes and colleagues may have been more proficient readers and therefore more appropriate for surveys that require participants to read and respond to survey items. This study included many participants that were reading at the sixth grade level or lower (according to incidental conversations with program staff).

Another fundamental difference that might explain the differences between conflicting outcomes from this study and the study of Reyes and her colleagues (2003)
involves the measurement of aggression used in the respective study. This study was specifically investigating potential differences in proactive and reactive aggression (both specific subtypes of physical aggression, each with a different constellation of underpinnings) between the two groups. However, the Reyes et al. (2003) study used a more general measure of hostility, the Cook-Medley Ho (hostility) scale taken from the MMPI, that is much more global and includes verbal aggression. As a result, direct comparison of the Ho aggressiveness used by Reyes and colleagues and the EXPAGG could not be conducted. However, exploratory analysis with the present study data found aggression patterns similar to those reported by Reyes et al. (2003) and Pinti (2003) when using the STAXI-2 Anger Out scale as a measure of aggression. However, as it was not a designed part of this project, those results have not been reported.

The present study has multiple limitations that require mention. These limitations include population, motivation (of participants), instrumentation deficiencies, or unfavorable physical environment of test administration.

Population. The cadets utilized in this study differ from the general population of adolescent males residing in the same geographic area in obvious ways. First, given that the Youth Challenge Program is an alternative for high school dropouts, each participant in the program has at some time demonstrated an inability to persevere in a traditional school setting. Reasons for prior academic failure vary greatly between cadets, nevertheless, they were all unable to thrive in the school system from which they came. Moyer and Motta (1982) reported that alienation was negatively associated with academic performance and positively associated with scores on behavioral maladjustment. The cadets who participated in this study may be highly alienated as a
whole as evidenced by their academic failure and therefore the study participants may represent a more homogeneous group on this construct than originally anticipated. Given that a comparison group from the general population was not included in this study, it is unclear if the observed homogeneity is actual or possibly an artifact of sampling confounds.

Most adolescent males are able to survive and/or thrive in traditional school settings. This fact alone may present associated inherent differences between the participants in this study and those adolescent males in the general population. The sample used in this study may also differ from adolescent males under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system. Although many of the cadets participating in this study have had some association with delinquent activity, they cannot be involved in the juvenile justice system at the time of program participation. Moreover, although they all are considered to be at-risk of future delinquency, they are not presently identified as delinquent offenders. As such, it may be that they constitute a less severe variant of at-risk status and therefore their characteristics may not generalize well to the actual delinquent population.

Motivation. Participants' motivation to exert maximal effort during this study is suspect. Many of the cadets come to the Youth Challenge Program with defiant attitudes toward authority figures and rebel when opportunities permit. Many have developed patterns of defiance and noncompliance throughout their lifetime and bring the same patterns of behavior to the program. Cadets are immediately made aware that as long as they are in the program, they will comply with all the rules and regulations. Although cadets are told the program is totally voluntary, many feel coerced to participate by
family members (parents, siblings, or others), judicial officers (probation officers, judges, attorneys), or other authority figures in their life.

Cadet initiation into the program is an institutionally sanctioned immersion into a life environment that signals they don’t have much control over their environment. For example, male cadets are given buzzed haircuts, exchange their personal clothing for mandated uniforms, and are assigned to a barracks (platoon) without any say or selection about whom they might like to associate with. When confronted with the request to participate in this study, cadets were informed that their participation was totally voluntary, their responses would be totally anonymous (from program director, staff, and experimenter alike), and there was no tangible compensation for complying with the study requirements. Given the institutionally imposed dictates (buzzed hair cut, mandatory uniforms, institutionally determined schedule, and imposed peer group such as the assigned platoon), it is possible that cadets have acute senses of powerlessness and decreased self-efficacy associated with having been immersed in a highly structured environment just three days prior to participating in this study. It is further possible that this acute powerlessness (especially among youth with well entrenched patterns of defiance) may exacerbate their tendency toward noncompliance. To that end, it is possible cadets viewed the study as a means of retaliating (without any chance of reprisal) against the system that recently instilled regulation and forced compliance.

The following suggestions are considered avenues for possibly improving motivation to cooperate and cadet response reliability. First, cadets may be offered a token amount of money or purchasing vouchers (five dollars worth) for their complete cooperation. To do so would require informing participants that their program account

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would be credited with the five dollars only after the validity of their responses was verified by the experimenter by reviewing each protocol, checking validity scales (if such were integrated), and deciding if level of cooperation was acceptable. To maximize likelihood of adequately contemplated responding might require misinforming the cadets initially that protocols would be individually checked by the examiner during collection of the packets and that spurious responding would be identifiable to the experimenter and the examiner would be able to identify the respondent if necessary. Individual administration of study packets might make this more believable to participants. To assist further, it may be helpful to inform them that noncompliance would be counted as one incident of “nonparticipation” in program activities. Upon completion of the study a debriefing could occur during which cadets could then be informed that anonymity was certain and the false statement regarding the experimenter’s ability to identify individual protocols was necessary to ensure maximum cooperation.

Next, cadets’ cooperation could be elicited by alerting them to the idea that this is an opportunity (without any chance of being identified or incurring any negative outcome) to make a difference in the institution that has forced them into compliance. Moreover, it may be helpful to make them aware that this is a chance to really be heard by fully cooperating in the tasks.

*Instrumentation Deficiencies*

The instruments used for this study are believed to be the most appropriate given the specific research questions and available measures; however, much improvement in instrumentation for use with this population and/or in similar settings is needed. For example, the STAXI-2 is the most well researched instrument used in this study. It has
been shown to be reliable and valid in prior research for each scale and subscale (Spielberger, 1999). The STAXI-2 (and its predecessor, the STAXI) has been utilized with adolescents across various contexts and among various ethnic groups (Pinti, 2003; Reyes et al., 2003; Spielberger, 1999). However, it too had shortcomings in this study. Reliability coefficients were well below those reported in prior research as well as those found during test development. Given the high incidence of oppositional and defiant attitudes and behaviors among participants in this study, it is possible they were not forthright in their responding. A validity measure integrated into the scale, and informing respondents of such, would likely have improved attention to items and forthright responding.

Reyes and colleagues (2003) found differences between African American and Euro American adolescents on the original STAXI in Trait Anger with the former group showing greater levels. When checking the reliability of the STAXI relative to the participants utilized in their study, they found stronger alpha coefficients than those found by the present study. The differences in reliabilities between this study and the Reyes and colleagues study may be a function of sample differences. The Reyes et al. study was conducted in the Houston, Texas area (one of the largest metropolitan areas of the United States). This is in sharp contrast to a catchment area in Mississippi that encompasses mostly rural communities with the largest community being approximately 100,000 residents or less. Larger metropolitan areas may affect residents in fundamentally different ways than do rural communities and this could in turn translate to constitutional differences between the residents of each area. For example, Bernard (1990) reported that chronic arousal is elevated among those from more dense
metropolitan areas. In addition to metropolitan size and associated adaptations, academic success may account for some of the differences between the present reliability coefficients and those reported in prior research.

The Reyes et al. (2003) study utilized all students presently enrolled in school. This differs substantially from the present study sample which consisted solely of adolescents who did not perform well in the traditional school system for one reason or another and who likely had a high incidence of learning disability and or other psychopathology such as attention or hyperactivity issues as evidenced by low reading ability and reports of long histories behavioral difficulty. The sample utilized by Reyes and colleagues was likely a higher functioning group in that all were still in school and a cross section was taken to include those from all levels of function.

The Dean Alienation scale was likely an inferior measure to use with this population as well. Although the Dean Alienation Scale has previously obtained support for use with adolescents (Calabrese & Adams, 1990), the reliability coefficients obtained during this study analyses indicate each scale was well below the acceptable, established level .70. Prior research reported much higher Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients than those obtained in this study. This scale was believed to be the best for this particular study given past use (Calabrese & Adams, 1990; Moyer & Motta, 1982; Calabrese & Seldin, 1986). However, the Dean Alienation Scale may need updating to meet the specific needs of participants such as those used in this study. Given the era in which it was developed (1961), the Dean Alienation Scale has survived numerous generations in which enormous social change occurred. Coupled with our growing understanding of social relationships, it is likely that a more historically relevant measure could be
designed that would use language more easily identified with by this population who largely had a sixth grade reading level. Although participants had the benefit of the experimenter reading each item aloud, given their limited reading ability it is entirely possible their mastery of pragmatic language is also limited and therefore not fully comprehending some of the items. Items written in more concrete ways with expressions that are common among youth such as those studied here could be beneficial.

Other measures of alienation have been utilized with adolescents in the past. Moyer and Motta (1982) administered the Adolescent Alienation Index (AAI) and found that alienation was inversely related to academic achievement and behavioral maladjustment, and positively related to social involvement. However, this was inconsistent with findings from a simultaneous administration of the Dean Alienation Scale. There were no reliability or validity statistics reported by Moyer and Motta. This may indicate that among the population in their study, the Adolescent Alienation Index was better able to detect the construct of interest or it may also mean that the two measures are assessing different constructs. Nevertheless, it is certain better instruments need to be developed for assessing this domain of inquiry.
Unfavorable physical testing environment. The present study was conducted in group format. Much of the information contained within the study packets was potentially personally revealing. Cadets had just met one another three days earlier and many had histories of interpersonal behaviors. Some reportedly had gang affiliations. All these factors combined elevated the risk for public disgrace in the presence of a cohort the cadets would be living with for the next 22 weeks.

The study was conducted in a small room that was crowded and with little privacy. Participants were seated in adjacent seats with no divider between participants. Furthermore, if a participant asked a question such as clarification of an item, the entire group knew he did not understand the item. Moreover, participants would easily be able to identify those with reading difficulties since they could easily see how long it took the rest of the cadets to complete the questionnaires. This environment could easily have influenced the cadets to refrain from asking questions for clarification, and it likely resulted in multiple cadets responding without having even read or understood the items. For future research with this or a similar population, it may be more effective to employ multiple examiners and present the materials individually. The participant will likely feel more supported and will have the added security of not being scrutinized by his peers. Moreover, he would have the added pressure toward maximal performance knowing the examiner is watching completion of each item.

Validity scales. The STAXI-2 manual recognizes the potential for response patterns with specific populations and issues a warning indicating that if respondents are suspected of possible misinformation, corroborating scales with validity checks should be included. The STAXI-2 relies upon forthright responding for valid results. The other
measures utilized likewise had no validity checks. In this research, multiple respondents were eliminated from analysis because of blatant response patterns. This reinforces the need to take precautions against participant fabrication of responses. This goal can best be accomplished by making integration of validity scales an essential component of new instruments developed for use with adolescents such as those used on this population. Until the development of specialized instruments (complete with integrated validity scales) for use with this population becomes the standard followed, an alternative would be to identify and utilize brief measures of validity (i.e., lie scales/instruments) that can be included as adjunctive measures in all research packets used on adolescents with high risk of fabrication such as those included in this study.

Alternative Explanations

This study clearly has multiple limitations that likely contributed to null results. However, there are other considerations worthy of mention. First, it may be that with this sample, Black and White male adolescents in fact did not differ on any of the measures employed. The sample appeared to be a very homogeneous group when considering age, education, and socioeconomic status. Similarity across these demographic variables may result in a group of adolescents that are likewise similar across the variables utilized in this study. However, one fact is constant throughout the literature, Black Americans are disproportionately over represented at each juncture of the justice system. Therefore, two areas of inquiry seem worthy of pursuit given the findings from this present study, socioeconomic status and ethnicity as an indirect factor.

Socioeconomic status. Low socioeconomic status has been associated with numerous deleterious effects throughout history. Health concerns resulting from lack of
financial resources to obtain appropriate medical care, nutritional deficiencies, and inadequate housing are just a few of the struggles common among those in the lower echelon of socioeconomic status (Steinberg, 1993). Problem behaviors and delinquency have been consistently associated with low socioeconomic status as well (Dembo et al., 1996; Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1998). However, Patterson and colleagues point out that SES in and of itself does not determine delinquent/aggressive behavior. Rather, they clarified that the combination of low SES and ineffective parenting skills greatly increases the likelihood that a child will resort to aggressive behavior.

History has demonstrated a consistent pattern of low SES being associated with lower IQ and lower academic achievement (Steinberg, 1993). Steinberg also pointed out that lower SES is associated with more frequent school drop out, less parental involvement in their child’s academic affairs, and greater levels of ineffective parenting tactics. Therefore, it may be that the population studied in this project is an amalgam of many of these risk factors. As such, it would be reasonable to find similar levels of the study constructs across the entire population studied rather than differing based on ethnic stratification.

*Ethnicity may indirectly affect aggression.* The central thesis of this study has been that life experiences of Black adolescent males differ from those of White adolescent males in ways that substantially alter overall adjustment and that poorer adjustment (i.e. lower sense of self-efficacy and/or higher levels of alienation) can be related to differences in aggression. Given that no differences were found among the sample, an indirect effect of ethnicity must be considered.
Patterson, Ried, and Dishion (1998) advanced a theory of coercion to explain etiology of aggression among adolescents. In their theory, they indicated that aggression can ultimately develop along a predictable pathway where coercive families engage in ever escalating levels of coercion as a primary conflict resolution practice. They acknowledged an increased risk of persons from a lower socioeconomic stratum to experience such a progression. Relative to the present study, it may be that ethnicity directly affects the socioeconomic stratum a person will occupy. As a result, the deleterious effects of that stratum (as previously mentioned) would influence the amounts of aggression within that stratum. Since Black Americans have historically occupied the lower SES echelon in much greater proportions than their White counterparts, it is no surprise that the deleterious effects of that stratum are experienced by Black Americans more frequently. To that end, Blacks may be disproportionately over represented in the justice system because they more frequently occupy lower SES positions and in turn they have outcomes associated with lower socioeconomic status. More research will need to be conducted to determine if the pathway is similarly followed for Blacks and Whites.

Conclusion

Adolescent aggression is a perplexing social malady. It presents substantial costs to society. The observed disparity of aggressive delinquency existing between Black and White adolescents has been largely ignored in research pursuits. However, the problem is substantial. It is likely that life experiences unique to each ethnic group work in such ways that they contribute to the overrepresentation of Black American adolescents in the juvenile justice system.
Although the present data did not support the hypotheses of this study, salient information has resulted from this inquiry. Multiple demographic patterns found among this study sample were consistent with documented patterns that differentiate Black and White existence in America. For example, with this sample, the Black male cadets were more likely to come from single parent households, live in a mother-only household, and experience poverty than were their White counterparts. Moreover, there was a substantial overrepresentation of Black cadets in the Youth Challenge Program when considering the national statistics of Black/White census. This is important in that all study participants were taken from the same geographic region, were fairly comparable on education level, and were from equivalent age groups. This suggests that the Black cadets from this study were consistently exposed to more deleterious life circumstances than their White counterparts across their lifetime. These data may indicate that Black male adolescents are more likely to drop out of school than their White counterparts or they are more likely to participate in a program such as the Youth Challenge Program for some unknown reason. Given the higher proportion of deleterious life circumstances, the Black males studied should be considered as higher risk of future delinquent activity. This is consistent with a report by Moyer and Motta (1982) that promoted an inverse link between alienation and academic achievement and a positive relationship between alienation and behavioral maladjustment.

To advance our understanding of this problem (adolescent aggression, specifically the overrepresentation of Black adolescents in the Juvenile Justice System) we must develop better tools to accurately assess differences that are socially derived and therefore can likely be socially remediated with well-planned intervention at the
in institutional level. Researchers need to improve efforts toward consistent and cohesive operationalization of constructs such as alienation, anger, marginalization, self-efficacy, and aggression and develop effective measures to tap these constructs, both the general construct as well as the individual components that comprise the general constructs.

Williamson and Cullingford (1997) provided a summary of inconsistencies in construct conceptualization in alienation research. They indicated two different underpinnings have influenced scientists differentially, that of viewing alienation either as a sociological process or a psychological state. Discrepancies such as those identified by Williamson and Cullingford (1997) continue to impede our understanding of alienation and the relationship it may have with delinquent behavior, specifically, violence among adolescents. Therefore, it is imperative we strive to develop measures that are reliable and valid either across all adolescents or develop measures specifically for specialized populations.
APPENDIX A

Background Information

1. How old are you?  13  14  15  16  17

2. What is your birthdate? Month _________  Day _________  Year _________

3. Who did you live with before entering Youth Challenge?
   a. Mother only
   b. Father only
   c. Both parents
   d. Family member but not a parent
   e. Friend
   f. Other

4. What is the highest grade completed in school?
   a. 8th grade or less
   b. 9th grade
   c. 10th grade
   d. 11th grade
   e. 12th grade

5. Have you ever failed a grade?
   a. No
   b. Yes  (What grade___________?)
6. Most people say they belong to a racial group. What group do you say you belong to?
   a. American Indian or Alaskan Native
   b. Asian/Pacific Islander
   c. Black or African American
   d. White
   e. Haitian
   f. Other

7. Parent’s highest level of education?
   a. 8th grade
   b. some high school but didn’t graduate
   c. high school graduate
   d. some college but not graduated
   e. college graduate

8. Have you ever gotten “free lunch” at school?
   a. No
   b. Yes

9. What part of Mississippi are you from?
   a. Gulf Coast
   b. Delta
   c. Jackson (and surrounding areas)
   d. Hattiesburg (and surrounding areas)
   e. Other
## APPENDIX B

### DEAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sometimes I feel all alone in the world.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I worry about the future facing today's children.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I don't get invited out by friends as often as I'd really like.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The end often justifies the means.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Most people today seldom feel lonely.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sometimes I have the feeling that other people are using me.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. People's ideas change so much that I wonder if we'll ever have anything to depend on.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Real friends are as easy as ever to find.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. It is frightening to be responsible for the development of a little child.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Everything is relative, and there just aren't any definite rules to live by.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. One can always find friends if he shows himself friendly.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I often wonder what the meaning of life really is.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. There is little or nothing I can do towards preventing a major “shooting” war.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The world in which we live is basically a friendly place.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. There are so many decisions that have to be made today that sometimes I could just “blow up.”</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The only thing one can be sure of today is that he can be sure of nothing.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. There are few dependable ties between people any more.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. There is little chance for promotion on the job unless a man gets a break.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. With so many religions abroad, one doesn’t really know which to believe.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. We’re so regimented today that there’s not much room for choice even in personal matters.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>We are just so many cogs in the machinery of life.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>People are just naturally friendly and helpful.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>The future looks very dismal.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I don't get to visit friends as often as I'd really like.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX C**

**SEA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat (2)</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat (3)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It is difficult for me to make new friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. One of my problems is that I cannot get down to work when I should.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If I can’t do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If I see someone I would like to meet, I go to that person instead of waiting for him or her to come to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I give up on things before completing them.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I avoid facing difficulties.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. If I meet someone interesting who is hard to make friends with, I’ll soon stop trying to make friends with that person.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. If something looks too complicated, I will not even bother to try it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree Somewhat</td>
<td>Agree Somewhat</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. When I have something unpleasant to do, I stick to it until I finish it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. When I'm trying to become friends with someone who seems uninterested at first, I don't give up easily.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. When trying to learn something new, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. When unexpected problems occur, I don't handle them well.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I avoid trying to learn new things when they look too difficult for me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I do not handle myself well in social gatherings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Failure just makes me try harder.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I feel insecure about my ability to do things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I am a self-reliant person.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I have acquired my friends through my personal abilities at making friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree 1</td>
<td>Disagree Somewhat 2</td>
<td>Agree Somewhat 3</td>
<td>Strongly Agree 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I give up easily.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I do not seem capable of dealing with most problems that come up in life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX D

**EXPAGG**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Mixed Feelings</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I believe that physical aggression is necessary to get through to some people.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. During a physical fight I feel out of control.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If I hit someone and hurt them, I feel as if they were asking for it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am most likely to get physically aggressive when I’ve been under a lot of stress and some little thing pushes me over the edge.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am most likely to get physically aggressive when I feel another person is trying to make me look like a jerk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. After a physical fight I feel drained and guilty.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. In an argument, I would feel more annoyed with myself if I cried than if I hit the other person.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. After I lash out physically at another person, I would like them to acknowledge how upset they made me and how unhappy I was.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>Mixed Feelings</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The best thing about physical aggression is that it makes the other person get in line.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I believe that my aggression comes from losing my self-control.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. If someone challenged me to a fight in public, I'd feel cowardly if I backed away.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am more likely to hit out physically when I am alone with the person who is annoying me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. After I lash out physically at another person, I would like them to make sure they never annoy me again</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. When I get to the point of physical aggression, the thing I am most aware of is how upset and shaky I feel.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I am more likely to hit out physically when another person shows me up in public.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. In a heated argument I am most afraid of saying something terrible that I can never take back.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E
STAXI

In accordance with copyright guidelines, a copy of the STAXI could not be included in the appendixes section of this document.
Hello. My name is William J. Thornton and I'm from the University of Southern Mississippi. I am a doctoral student working in conjunction with Dr. Mark Leach who is also from The University of Southern Mississippi. General Crowson has agreed to allow you to participate in a research study on teenagers. If you participate, you'll be excused from your regular activities during the time spent to complete the study. All you have to do is answer some questions that are in the packet you are about to receive. It should only take about 25 minutes to complete the entire packet. However, if you choose not to complete the questions then we won't hold it against you and there will be no penalty involved whatsoever. Should you choose to not participate in the study, while the other cadets are completing the study you will be expected to participate in your regularly scheduled activities. The questions have to deal with how teenagers think and feel about different situations. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

After you finish answering the questions, place the form into the envelope at the back of this packet and seal it. You should notice that there is no place on the question form for a name. This is so you can be confident that your answers are totally anonymous. When you have finished the questions, a staff member or I will collect your question forms in the sealed envelope. Again, they will be kept totally anonymous.

All participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the group at any time. Data gathered from the study will be kept safe and private, and will be destroyed after we are done with it. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Mark Leach at 266-4543.

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, Box 5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406, (601) 266-6820.

I understand the information above, and agree to be a part of this group study.

__________________________
Signature of Participant

__________________________
Date
# APPENDIX G

## MEASURE SCORING GUIDELINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Scale/Subscale</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Likert Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Powerlessness</td>
<td>2, 6, 9, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21, 23</td>
<td>S. D. – S. A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normlessness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Isolation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>1*, 5, 9*, 13, 17*, 21</td>
<td>4 point (1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>2, 3*, 4, 6*, 7*, 8*, 10*, 11, 12, 14*, 15*, 16*, 18, 19*, 20, 22*, 23*</td>
<td>S.D. – S. A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EXPAGG

(Aggression)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Subscale</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Likert Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15</td>
<td>5 point (1-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Proactive)</td>
<td></td>
<td>S. A. – S. D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Subscale</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Likert Scale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Anger</td>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>4 point (1-4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Anger)</td>
<td></td>
<td>N.A.A. – V.M.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-Ang/F</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 6, 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>S-Ang/V</td>
<td>4, 9, 12, 13, 15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-Ang/P</td>
<td>5, 7, 8, 11, 14</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trait Anger</td>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>4 point (1-4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>T-Ang/T</td>
<td>16, 17, 18, 21</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>T-Ang/R</td>
<td>19, 20, 23, 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>26-57</td>
<td>4 point (1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express/Control</td>
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<td>A. N. – A. A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AX-O</td>
<td>27, 31, 35, 39, 43, 47, 51, 55</td>
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<tr>
<td>AX-I</td>
<td>29, 33, 37, 41, 45, 49, 53, 57,</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC-O</td>
<td>26, 30, 34, 38, 42, 46, 50, 54</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC-I</td>
<td>28, 32, 36, 40, 44, 48, 52, 56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Items marked with an asterisk (*) are reverse scored.

Likert Scale abbreviations are as follows: A. A. represents “Almost Always”; A. N. represents “Almost Never”; S.A. represents “Strongly Agree”; S.D. represents Strongly Disagree; N.A.A. represents “Not at all”; V.M.S. represents “Very Much So”
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