



## Symposium on the Social Contexts of Adolescent Wellbeing

February 7<sup>th</sup> 2023  
9:15 AM to 4:15 PM  
1101 Morrill Hall

Participant Biographies

# Keynote Presenters



Christopher R. Browning  
The Ohio State University  
Department of Sociology

Title: Racial Differences in Activity Space Disadvantage and Everyday Perceptions of Safety: Implications for Understanding Health Disparities

Abstract: Emerging research indicates that the everyday mobility patterns of urban adolescents are more complex than previously assumed in most residential “neighborhood effects” studies. We describe findings from the Columbus, OH-based Adolescent Health and Development in Context (AHDC) study (N=1405) demonstrating the expansive and heterogeneous nature of routine mobility with a focus on Black-identifying youth. We then consider the influence of intra-individual variability in exposure to neighborhood racial composition and violence for perceptions of safety. GPS data on the mobility trajectories of youth (ages 11 to 17) over a week-long period are combined with ecological momentary assessments of real-time safety perceptions to identify the spatial conditions under which youth report higher levels of unsafety. Findings indicate that exposure to higher area-level violence is relevant for safety perceptions among Black youth. Momentary exposure to residentially whiter neighborhoods also increases perceptions of unsafety, but only for those Black youth who spend more time, on average, in white areas. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of everyday safety perceptions for understanding racial health disparities emerging in adolescence.

Biography: Christopher R. Browning (Ph.D. University of Chicago, 1997) is a Professor of Sociology whose research interests include the causes and consequences of community social organization; the neighborhood context of crime, risk behavior, and health; the long-term effects of maltreatment during childhood; and multilevel statistical models. His current projects apply the concepts of activity space and ecological networks to research on the mechanisms linking contextual exposures (e.g., neighborhoods and schools) to youth behavioral health and well-being. He is Principal Investigator on the [Adolescent Health and Development in Context \(AHDC\) study](#) - a large scale, longitudinal investigation of the link between sociospatial exposures and developmental outcomes among youth in Franklin County, OH. The project is funded by NIDA, the WT Grant Foundation, and the National Science Foundation.



Dawn Witherspoon  
Pennsylvania State University  
Department of Psychology

Title: What's Place Got to do with It? A Cultural-Developmental Approach to Understand the Impact of Place and Race on Diverse Youth and Families.

Abstract: In this talk, Dr. Dawn Witherspoon will share her approach to understanding how, for whom, and under what conditions place-based environmental characteristics and exposures impact Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) families and youth. Rooted in a cultural-developmental framework, Dr. Witherspoon will use exemplars from her work, and that of others, to demonstrate the ways in which social stratification specific to place and race intersect to create unique sociocultural contexts for BIPOC families that impact youth development in a variety of ways. The talk will conclude with broad implications and future directions for this line of scholarship.

Biography: Dawn Witherspoon is the McCourtney Family Early Career Professor of Psychology at Pennsylvania State University. She is also Director of the Context and Development Lab as well as Parents And Children Together, a community-university partnership to enhance the lives of diverse children, youth and families. Her research focuses on the ways in which families and youth are influenced by the neighborhood, family, and race/ethnicity-related contexts in which they are embedded. Her work is published in such journals as *Child Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, and the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

## Session Chairs



Rod Brunson  
University of Maryland, College Park  
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Rod K. Brunson's research informs criminal justice policy and crime control practices. Professor Brunson is also a Fellow of the American Society of Criminology. His scholarship appears in the British Journal of Criminology, Criminology, Criminology & Public Policy, City & Community, Evaluation Review, Urban Affairs Review, and the Journal of Research, Crime and Delinquency.



Lauren Porter  
University of Maryland, College Park  
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Biography: Lauren Porter's research centers on punishment, with particular interest in the health and wellbeing of currently and/or formerly incarcerated individuals. She is also interested in topics related to the criminology of place, such as how aspects of the social and physical environment affect crime concentration and crime reporting.



## Session Moderators



Jean McGloin  
University of Maryland, College Park  
Dean, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences  
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Biography: Jean Marie McGloin is the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Education in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice. She is also prior Editor of the *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* (2017-22). Jean's primary research interest is groups and crime, which includes (deviant) peer influence, street gangs, co-offending and collective behavior. Jean received her Ph.D. and M.A. from the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers-Newark, and her A.B. from Bryn Mawr College.



Kerry Green  
University of Maryland, College Park  
School of Public Health

As a prevention scientist, Dr. Kerry Green's work concentrates on improving the health and well-being of disadvantaged populations. Her research focuses on identifying the causes of adverse outcomes over the life course among urban African Americans, including structural factors. Much of this work has been with the Woodlawn Study, a community cohort study that began in 1965 and includes data spanning 55 years of the cohort's lives with funding over time from NIDA, NIA and NICHD.

## Panelists



Héctor E. Alcalá  
University of Maryland, College Park  
School of Public Health

Title: Early Life Adversity and Exposure to Secondhand Smoke Among Children: Modeling Risk Health Behaviors and Increasing Environmental Tobacco Exposure

Abstract: Background: This study examined the association between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including discrimination due to sexual orientation and gender identity, and exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS). Methods: Using data from the 2018-2020 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), logistic regression models calculated adjusted odds ratios (AORs) of two SHS measures: (1) anyone living in the household uses combustible tobacco products, irrespective of them using that product in the home or not, and (2) anyone smoking inside the home. Individual and cumulative ACEs served as independent variables. Data from the 2020 NSCH included discrimination due to sexual orientation and gender identity as an ACE, for children 6-17, but prior years did not. Results: Each additional ACE was associated with a 36% increase in odds of having a smoker in the household and a 37% increase in odds of smoking occurring in the home. Most ACEs were associated with both SHS outcomes. Experiencing discrimination due to sexual orientation or gender identity was associated with 144% higher odds of smoking occurring in the home. Conclusions: The 2020 NSCH is the first to include discrimination against sexual and gender minority identity as an ACE. This study highlights that this ACE impacts exposure to tobacco, potentially leading to early modeling of smoking behavior and exposure to the health harming impacts of SHS. Future work should continue to examine discrimination against sexual and gender minority youth as an ACE.

Biography: Dr. Héctor E. Alcalá's research focuses on a few areas: 1) Understanding health inequities, particularly around race, ethnicity, religion, nativity and generation; 2) Examining the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on cancer, cancer screening and utilization of health care; 3) Use of tobacco products; 4) The impact of discrimination on health and utilization of health care.



Amelia Branigan  
University of Maryland, College Park  
Department of Sociology

Title: Parental Incarceration and Sleep Health Disparities in Adolescence

Abstract: Parental incarceration is associated with negative sleep outcomes among young children, but it is unknown whether sleep differentials by parental incarceration persist into adolescence. Here we address that question, investigating whether parental incarceration history is associated with sleep duration, timing, efficiency, and regularity among 15-year-olds in the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study. We find that adolescent children of ever- versus never-incarcerated parents no longer get less sleep, reflecting the pervasive sleep deprivation among adolescents more generally— but they continue to get worse sleep, struggling to fall asleep and stay asleep at higher rates and going to sleep at more variable times between school nights and weekends. Poor sleep is both a standalone health outcome of interest and a mechanism of poor performance in other arenas, potentially contributing to the wide array of negative academic, behavioral, and health outcomes associated with a history of parental incarceration.

Biography: I am a social demographer with central interests in inequality, health, and the criminal justice system. I currently have three projects ongoing. The first project considers the social consequences of variation in visible phenotype, specifically focusing on body mass and skin color. A second project uses Scandinavian registry data to consider how infertility, defined as the inability to conceive a wanted pregnancy, is associated with differential outcomes in children ultimately conceived. Two new projects consider the interaction between health and the criminal justice system: the first interrogates the association between parental incarceration and child physical health, while the second asks how shifts in spatialized neighborhood violence, operationalized as transitioning gang boundaries in Chicago, affect a range of individual-level and neighborhood-level health and educational outcomes. Studies from these three projects have been published in journals including *Demography*, *Social Forces*, and *Sociology of Education*.



Angel Dunbar  
University of Maryland, College Park  
Department of African American Studies

Title: Observed Maternal Racial Socialization Predicts  
Positive Self Concept among Black Teens

**Abstract:** **Background:** Racial discrimination is a socially marginalizing experience that can breed feelings of inferiority. Youths' emotional reactions serve as important mechanisms by which discrimination leads to detrimental outcomes (Dunbar et al., 2017). Boys' and girls' positive self-perceptions and competences may promote adaptive affective responses (i.e., feeling strong) in the face of racial discrimination. In addition to youths' internal assets, maternal racial socialization (i.e., MRS) may be uniquely important for boys' positive development (Cooper et al., 2015). Accordingly, we examined the role of observed MRS, youths' positive self-perceptions, and their combined effects in promoting boys' and girls' resiliency. We hypothesized that 1) perceived athletic competence would uniquely promote boys' feeling strong in response to discrimination; 2) other domains of self-worth such as scholastic competence and social acceptance would promote feeling strong for both boys and girls; and 3) adaptive MRS would promote boys' endorsement of feeling strong, particularly for boys with lower levels of the internal assets assessed. **Methods:** The sample included 110 Black adolescents (*Age* = 15.5 yrs.; 42% boys) and their mothers. Dyads were observed during a task responding to a hypothetical discriminatory event (Smith-Bynum et al., 2016). Latent profile analyses identified three profiles. Two profiles, *warm advocates* and *no-nonsense advocates*, demonstrated similarly high levels of dyadic acknowledgement of racial bias, maternal advocacy and suggestions, and adolescent solutions. However, the *warm advocates* (43.64%) did so with a high level of dyadic warmth and open expression of emotions while the *no-nonsense advocates* (42.73%) were more directive. The last profile was *low engaged* (13.64%) across all indicators. Teens reported on their affective responses (i.e., feeling strong) to racial discrimination (Perceived Racism Scale; Nyborg, 2001) and perceived scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, job competence, behavioral conduct, and global self-worth (Harter Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents; Harter, 2012). **Results:** We conducted a series of gender multi-group multiple regression models via MPlus. Boys' perceived athletic competence, social acceptance, and global self-worth were positively linked to feeling strong in response to racial discrimination. Only girls' athletic competence significantly predicted feeling strong; however, as predicted, the effect of athletic competence on feeling strong was statistically stronger for boys. Perceived scholastic competence, job competence, and behavioral conduct had no impact on feeling strong for boys or girls. There was a significant interaction such that maternal no-nonsense advocacy was positively linked to feeling strong for boys (but not girls) with low athletic competence and low global self-worth. **Discussion:** Results indicate that Black youth with greater athletic competence demonstrate feeling strong in the face of racial discrimination. Moreover, being confident in their social status and overall self-worth may also protect boys from the notions of Black inferiority. However, in the absence of high levels of internal assets, a no-nonsense approach to MRS that prioritizes control, structure, and advocacy may be particularly adaptive in bolstering boys' resiliency in the face of racial discrimination.

**Biography:** Angel Dunbar is an Assistant Professor in the African American Studies Department at the University of Maryland. She is a developmental scientist whose research focuses on understanding the unique developmental challenges that children of color encounter and the family processes and individual factors that influence positive adaptation in the face of these challenges. Her work has appeared in *Child Development*, *Attachment and Human Development*, and *Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology*.



Wade Jacobsen  
University of Maryland, College Park  
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Title: Does Legal System Contact Alter Friendship Ties?

Abstract: We examine the prevalence of criminal justice involvement in a sample of rural youth and the ways in which contact with the legal system may affect relationships with peers. We rely on a theoretical framework that suggests that the stigma of police contact may lead to peer rejection (fewer friendship nominations received) and peer withdrawal (fewer nominations extended). We estimate that about half of the youth in these rural schools who participated in the baseline questionnaire were arrested for suspected law violations by their senior year of high school. Arrest is disproportionately concentrated among boys of color. Consistent with our predictions, it is associated with declines in friendship ties received and extended. Furthermore, the negative associations of arrest with friendship ties are stronger for girls than for boys. In sum, many of these youth experience arrest, and the stigma of police interactions may interfere with their normative friendships at school. Given that arrests are disproportionately concentrated among youth of color, our findings imply that legal systems in these rural communities may be perpetuating patterns of racial inequality.

Biography: Wade Jacobsen is an assistant professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is also a faculty associate at the Maryland Population Research Center and a member of the research team for the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center. His research examines how the development of risky behaviors in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood is shaped by interactions with institutions (e.g., schools, criminal legal system) and social networks. Most of his current research assesses the impacts of a youth's experience with school discipline or criminal justice involvement on changes in their peer networks and risky behaviors. He has a PhD from Penn State University and MS and BS degrees from Brigham Young University. His work has appeared in *American Sociological*





Cassie McMillan  
Northeastern University  
Departments of Sociology and Criminology and Criminal Justice

Title: School Transitions, Peer Processes, and Delinquency: A Social Network Approach to Turning Points in Adolescence.

Abstract: Although normative, structural transitions from lower- to higher-level schools can be challenging for young people to navigate, this change in context tends to reduce adolescents' participation in delinquency. The current project considers whether adolescents' social networks can help explain why school transitions carry positive implications for delinquency trajectories. Through the analysis of longitudinal network data on almost 14,000 students from 26 school districts, we compare students who change schools between 6th and 7th grade to those who remain in the same building. We find that school transitions reorient school-based networks in ways that isolate delinquent youth by limiting their contact to pro-social peers. While these network changes will inspire positive outcomes for non-delinquent youth, they can jeopardize the well-being of adolescents who continue to participate in risky behavior. Findings suggest that school districts should consider how delinquency impacts friendship networks when organizing transition patterns.

Biography: Cassie McMillan is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminology & Criminal Justice at Northeastern University. Her research applies a social networks perspective to disentangle how our connections both reproduce and challenge systems of social inequality. She is interested in developing statistical and computational methodologies that can better address these questions and applying these techniques to study adolescent delinquency, health, and migration.



Nolan Pope  
University of Maryland, College Park  
Department of Economics

Title: Making Teaching Last: Long-Run Value-Added

Abstract: Teacher value-added (VA) measures how teachers improve their students' contemporaneous test scores. Many teachers, however, argue that contemporaneous test scores are a poor proxy for their permanent influence on students. This paper considers a new VA measure – 'long-run VA' – that captures teachers' contributions that persist by replacing contemporaneous test scores with subsequent test scores in VA estimation. We find that students assigned to high long-run VA teachers fare substantially better in terms of long-term outcomes. Policy simulations indicate that the use of long-run VA improves policy effectiveness by a factor of two compared to traditional VA measures.

Biography: Assistant Professor Nolan Pope joined the Department of Economics beginning in Fall 2017. Professor Pope is a labor economist and applied microeconomist who specializes in public policy that improves individuals' labor market and educational outcomes. Nolan uses quasi-experiments, large administrative data sets, and field experiments to answer questions in education, public economics, and labor economics. His recent research focuses on how measuring and rating teacher quality affects both students and teachers, and how public policies influence underprivileged groups such as immigrants and low-income populations. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Chicago, and a B.A. in Economics from Brigham Young University.





Sophia Rodriguez  
University of Maryland, College Park  
College of Education

Title: Anticipated Gains?: Exploring Latino/x immigrant youth from mixed-status families' experiences of belonging in community-based organizations and schools.

Abstract: This mixed-methods study explores how immigrant youth perceive belonging in school and community-based contexts. The presentation will share survey data of racially/ethnically diverse youth belonging in one school district (N=603), and community-based organization context (N=32), and then elaborate upon the survey data with qualitative data from Latino immigrant youth about their sense of belonging in the community based organization that focuses on reducing Latino immigrant youth inequalities. Factors that impact belonging include supportive relationships with adults, social and organizational ties outside of school contexts, and immigration enforcement. Implications for educators, policy-makers and researchers will be discussed to improve immigrant youth well-being and belonging.

Biography: Sophia Rodriguez is an Assistant Professor in the Urban Education specialization in the Teaching, Learning, Policy, and Leadership department. Dr. Rodriguez's interdisciplinary scholarship, drawing on tools from education, anthropology, and sociology, asks questions about the social and cultural contexts of education policy and practice. Her integrated research agenda addresses issues related to racial equity, urban education and policy, and centralizes minoritized youth voices. Her two current longitudinal projects, funded by the Spencer and W.T. Grant Foundations (2018-2022) and the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), utilize mixed-methods and ethnographic designs to investigate how community-school partnerships, teachers, and school-based mental health professionals promote equity and advocate for undocumented (im)migrant and refugee youth. The IMLS project that focuses on newcomer migrant youth belonging was recently awarded the prestigious Library of Congress Literacy Award. Her scholarly work has appeared in *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *Educational Policy*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Teachers College Record* and *Urban Education*. In 2022, she was named a William T. Grant Scholar to conduct a longitudinal study about how schools manage the welcome of newcomer immigrant youth. For her work to date, Rodriguez received the Early Career Award for Division G (Social Contexts of Education) in the American Educational Research Association.