**Research Statement**

My program of research addresses the influence of social and family contexts on violence and crime in adolescence and young adulthood. Specifically, I am interested in the extent to which family of origin experiences (e.g. marital conflict, abusive parenting) and the broader social context (e.g. economic hardship, racial discrimination) are associated with youth crime and deviance including intimate partner violence, sexual assault, delinquency, substance use, and risky sexual behavior. In examining family violence, crime, and deviance, I take an interdisciplinary approach and incorporate literature from sociology, criminology, and the life course perspective. Additionally, my work demonstrates a dedication to methodological rigor and a strong commitment to evaluating and extending theory.

My published works mainly address the connection between violence in romantic partnerships and family processes. I am especially interested in violence against women, including partner violence and sexual assault, and violence against children, including child abuse and neglect. For example, I used structural equation modeling to explore how interparental violence and hostile, aggressive parenting behaviors confer risk for dating violence among college students through beliefs about disagreements (*Violence & Victims,* 2014*)*. This study addressed a lack of work on explanations for the intergenerational transmission of violence. Another study, published in *Journal of Child & Family Studies* (2015), demonstrated that experiences of violence in the family of origin are indirectly related to sexual coercion victimization for women and perpetration for men through engagement in the hook-up culture. This study addressed a lack of research on the role that the hook-up culture plays in fostering sexual assault on college campuses. This issue has gained increasing attention in the past several years given the high prevalence and negative impact of sexual violence on college women’s well-being and health. I have also utilized dyadic data analysis to consider gender differences in the influence of interparental aggression and conflict on ineffective and hostile parenting among African American caregivers (*Journal of Marriage & Family,* in press*).* In addition to these first-authored pieces, I have collaborated on other projects in this area including an examination of the interaction between parenting and pornography use in predicting sexual coercion among college students (*Violence & Victims*, 2012).

My secondary area of interest concerns the impact of family and romantic/sexual relationships on crime, deviance, and risk behaviors (e.g. substance use, risky sexual behavior) among youth. These published works include a growth curve analysis examining unwanted sexual experiences and sexual minority status on substance use and risky sexual behavior among adolescent women (*Journal of Adolescent Health,* 2014*)*. Further, I have contributed to projects using structural equation modeling to investigate: six criminological explanations (e.g. social learning theory, self-control theory) for the connection between parenting and risky sexual behavior (*Journal of Youth & Adolescence,* 2016), aspects of self-control as mediators between child maltreatment and crime (*Personality & Individual Differences,* 2015), and associations between child abuse, social network patterns, and substance use among college women (*Journal of Studies on Alcohol & Drugs,* 2015). In another study, I used latent class analysis to test the impact of romantic relationship characteristics, including having an antisocial or aggressive partner, on substance use and mental health over time (*Journal of Family Psychology*, in press). My body of research provides valuable information on how the family continually influences violence within intimate relationship as well as deviant and risky behaviors over the life course. My work can provide suggestions for intervention efforts aimed at victims and perpetrators of partner and sexual violence and for youth engaging in antisocial and criminal behaviors.

My works in progress continue to focus on in-depth examinations of family violence and the development of antisocial behaviors. These studies mainly employ data from the Family and Community Health Study (FACHS), a large, longitudinal study of diverse African American families. One of these manuscripts involves the use of structural equation modeling to link experiences of racial discrimination in adolescence to partner violence in young adulthood through anger (general strain theory) and hostile attribution biases (social information processing). In this paper, I further examine authoritative parenting and corporal punishment as moderators. I am also currently contributing to several other projects that focus on crime/delinquency and deviant behavior including a studying that utilizes of latent class analysis to investigate the long-term impact of adolescent minor delinquency on African American men’s criminal behavior and familial outcomes (*Youth & Adolescence*, under review), a study applying general strain theory to the connection between sexual harassment and alcohol use among graduate and law students, and a study examining parenting styles in adolescence as predictors of crime, substance use, and deviant values in adulthood.

**Dissertation Research**

My dissertation research builds on my existing body of literature by providing a more contextualized examination of the development of partner violence than can currently be found in the literature. Using data from both FACHS and the Iowa Youth and Family Project (IYFP), I examine the link between childhood economic hardship and partner violence among young adults using longitudinal data. To date, most research on childhood financial difficulties has examined externalizing and internalizing disorders or educational/occupational achievement using cross-sectional data. Thus, my study represents an important step toward understanding how childhood financial difficulties can have a long-lasting effect on adult violence in the realm of romantic partnerships.

Further, much research on familial influences of adulthood partner violence focuses only on parenting and caregiver relationships. In my dissertation, I address a lack of work on *precursors* to ineffective and aggressive relationships in the family of origin. Specifically, I investigate family financial hardship and parental depression as predictors of caregiver conflict and negative, aggressive parenting practices. More work in this area can provide researchers with a broader portrayal of what is happening in families in which members interact in violent and maladaptive ways. My dissertation supports the proposition that family financial difficulties, mental health issues, caregiver conflict, and parenting are important factors that are directly or indirectly linked to partner violence in young adulthood for both African American and Caucasian families.

Through this work, I have become increasingly interested in how stressors that are especially salient to African American families influence parenting and how, in turn, attributes and circumstances of parents are related to deviant behaviors and violence in intimate relationships among young adults. These factors may include racial discrimination, financial hardship, incarceration, or neighborhood disorder and violence. For example, in future work, I plan to investigate how parental exposure to violent neighborhoods is related to parental depression and abusive parenting and how these factors confer risk for partner violence through a lack of self-control among African American youth.

Additionally, there is a need for research that examines greater specificity in the form and consequence of sexual violence and intimate partner violence. For example, I plan to investigate how different constellations of family violence (e.g. child abuse, intimate partner abuse, sexual assault) are related to risk behaviors and health outcomes. Further, more work is needed on how and why consequences of partner violence and sexual assault (e.g. injury, mental health, substance use, risky sexual behaviors) vary based on gender. To accomplish these goals, I plan to apply for a K grant to collect data from young adults on violence in romantic and sexual relationships, antisocial and health risk behaviors, family background, and neighborhood characteristics. I will also continue to utilize large, longitudinal studies such as FACHS and nationally available data sets such as the Longitudinal Study of Violence Against Women.

It its totality, my research program contributes to a greater understanding of the contexts and processes that affect family violence and the development of risk behaviors, crime & deviance, and intimate partnerships. This program of research requires that I draw on a diverse literature, various theoretical perspectives, and several advanced analytic techniques. In my ongoing commitment to scholarly pursuits, I plan to provide a deeper awareness of the long-term impact of family and social contexts on a wide variety of adolescent and young adult behavioral outcomes in the realm of crime, violence, and deviance.