Why Do Black Youth Use Drugs Less Than White Youth?

Sung Joon Jang and Byron R. Johnson
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Introduction

- Black-white differences in drug use among adolescents
  - Use of licit and illicit drugs: Blacks < Whites
    - Cf. Non-drug delinquency: Blacks > Whites
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  - Use of licit and illicit drugs: Blacks < Whites
    - Cf. Non-drug delinquency: Blacks > Whites

- Prior research on adolescent drug use
  - Protective factors
    - e.g., parental attachment, “stakes in conformity,” positive self-concept
  - Risk factors
    - e.g., drug-using friends, low self-control, psychological distress
Introduction

- Black-white differences in drug use among adolescents
  - Use of licit and illicit drugs: Blacks < Whites
    Cf. Non-drug delinquency: Blacks > Whites

- Prior research: Explanations
  - Protective factors
    - e.g., parental attachment, “stakes in conformity,” positive self-concept
  - Risk factors
    - e.g., drug-using friends, low self-control, psychological distress

- Prior research: A key limitation
  - Non-developmental
    - Confined to adolescence without childhood & adulthood included
    - Relatively short-term effects of religious involvement
Previous Studies

- Exposure to drug users: Risk factor

- Religion: Protective factor
Previous Studies

- Exposure to drug users: Risk factor
  - Social learning theory
  - Drug-using parents & peers
    - Imitation, pro-drug attitudes, differential reinforcement, peer pressure
Previous Studies

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- Religion: Protective factor
  - Informal social control, prosocial learning, stress moderator
  - Religiosity & denominational affiliation
  - Religious background & upbringing: Understudied
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  - Religious background & upbringing: Understudied

- **Differential reporting: Methodological artifact**
  - Black youth more likely to underreport drug use than whites
    - Unlikely to explain away black-white differences in drug use
The Present Study

- **Hypothesis 1**
  - Black youth use licit and illicit drugs less than white youth during adolescence and young adulthood.
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- **Hypothesis 2**
  - Black-white differences in drug use are explained by the race differences in:
    - religious upbringing & *childhood* exposure to parents drug use
    - *current* religiosity & association with drug-using peers
The Present Study

- **Hypothesis 1**
  - Black youth use licit and illicit drugs less than white youth during adolescence and young adulthood.

- **Hypothesis 2**
  - Black-white differences in drug use are explained by the race differences in:
    - religious upbringing & *childhood* exposure to parents drug use
      - raised in an evangelical Protestant tradition
      - parent’s smoking, drinking, and/or using illegal drugs
    - *current* religiosity & association with drug-using peers
      - religious involvement
      - friends’ smoking, drinking, and/or using illegal drugs
Figure 1. Theoretical Model of Youth’s Drug Use during Adolescence and Young Adulthood
Data

- National Survey of Children (NSC)
  - 3-wave panel study of a national sample of children based on multistage, stratified sampling design
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    - Waves 1 (1976; ages 7-12), 2 (1981; 11-16), and 3 (1987; 17-22)
    - The weighted sample ($n = 1,127$) is representative of the U.S. population of children born between 9/1/64 and 12/31/69 and living in the households in the 48 contiguous states in 1976
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- Measures
  - Religious upbringing
    - How important it was to the parent respondent to provide religious training for his/her child aside from attending religious services
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- **Measures**
  - Religious upbringing
    - How important it was to the parent respondent to provide religious training for his/her child aside from attending religious services
  - Religious affiliation/denominations
    - Steensland et al.’s (2000) RELTRAD classification scheme
    - Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Other religion, No religion
Data (continues)

- Child’s religiosity ($\alpha = .79 \text{ at W3}; \text{ N.A. for W1 & W2}$)
  - Frequency of attendance at religious service (also asked whether the child liked or disliked going to church, Synagogue, or Sunday School)
  - W3: perceived importance of religion & belief about the Scriptures
Data (continues)

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- **Parent’s drug use** ($\alpha = 60$ at W3)
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  - Alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, cocaine, other non-presc. drugs
Data (continues)

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- Youth’s drug use ($\alpha = .69$ at W2; $\alpha = .73$ at W3)
  - Alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, cocaine, other non-presc. drugs
- Other protective factors
  - Attachment to parent, attachment to school, commitment to school
Data (continues)

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- **Other risk factors**
  - Low self-control, emotional distress
- **Sociodemographic controls**
## Results: Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, T-test Results, and Frequency Distribution of Variables (Weighted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race (black)</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (female)</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age T1</td>
<td>9.044</td>
<td>9.104</td>
<td>9.033</td>
<td>1.617</td>
<td>1.570</td>
<td>1.626</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size T1</td>
<td>3.343</td>
<td>4.262</td>
<td>3.178</td>
<td>1.617</td>
<td>1.947</td>
<td>1.493</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>FamilySES T1</td>
<td>0.660</td>
<td>-2.038</td>
<td>0.436</td>
<td>2.377</td>
<td>2.326</td>
<td>2.183</td>
<td>-0.330</td>
<td>7.240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family SES T2</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>-1.248</td>
<td>0.272</td>
<td>1.632</td>
<td>1.783</td>
<td>1.494</td>
<td>-6.300</td>
<td>4.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family SES T3</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>-1.067</td>
<td>0.212</td>
<td>1.666</td>
<td>1.655</td>
<td>1.594</td>
<td>-6.340</td>
<td>4.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family disruption T1</td>
<td>0.130</td>
<td>0.237</td>
<td>0.110</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>0.427</td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family disruption T2</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.364</td>
<td>0.436</td>
<td>0.347</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family disruption T3</td>
<td>0.161</td>
<td>0.310</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>0.368</td>
<td>0.460</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
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<td>Residential mobility T1</td>
<td>1.336</td>
<td>1.565</td>
<td>1.295</td>
<td>1.715</td>
<td>1.760</td>
<td>1.704</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Residential mobility T2</td>
<td>2.224</td>
<td>2.314</td>
<td>2.208</td>
<td>2.722</td>
<td>2.557</td>
<td>2.752</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential mobility T3</td>
<td>5.094</td>
<td>4.505</td>
<td>5.199</td>
<td>3.997</td>
<td>3.768</td>
<td>4.029</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attachment to parent T1</td>
<td>3.590</td>
<td>3.621</td>
<td>3.506</td>
<td>0.762</td>
<td>0.791</td>
<td>0.757</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attachment to parent T2</td>
<td>17.231</td>
<td>17.105</td>
<td>17.242</td>
<td>2.278</td>
<td>2.675</td>
<td>2.205</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attachment to parent T3</td>
<td>8.102</td>
<td>7.252</td>
<td>8.254</td>
<td>2.198</td>
<td>2.651</td>
<td>2.072</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low self-control T1</td>
<td>5.826</td>
<td>5.580</td>
<td>5.870</td>
<td>2.348</td>
<td>2.458</td>
<td>2.326</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low self-control T2</td>
<td>4.033</td>
<td>4.057</td>
<td>4.029</td>
<td>1.112</td>
<td>1.191</td>
<td>1.099</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low self-control T3</td>
<td>7.890</td>
<td>7.610</td>
<td>7.940</td>
<td>1.937</td>
<td>1.975</td>
<td>1.926</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative emotions T1</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>-0.165</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>2.653</td>
<td>2.641</td>
<td>2.656</td>
<td>-5.300</td>
<td>8.210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative emotions T2</td>
<td>3.736</td>
<td>3.853</td>
<td>3.716</td>
<td>1.489</td>
<td>1.587</td>
<td>1.472</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative emotions T3</td>
<td>27.475</td>
<td>28.088</td>
<td>27.206</td>
<td>8.505</td>
<td>9.683</td>
<td>8.375</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent’s drug use T1</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-0.479</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>2.054</td>
<td>1.962</td>
<td>2.059</td>
<td>-4.980</td>
<td>8.610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug-using peers T2</td>
<td>-0.255</td>
<td>-0.329</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>1.615</td>
<td>1.708</td>
<td>1.593</td>
<td>-2.200</td>
<td>2.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug-using peers T3</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>-0.247</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>1.684</td>
<td>1.864</td>
<td>1.648</td>
<td>-2.770</td>
<td>4.520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Protestant T1</td>
<td>0.421</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>0.347</td>
<td>0.494</td>
<td>0.374</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth’s religiosity T2</td>
<td>12.636</td>
<td>13.041</td>
<td>12.569</td>
<td>5.221</td>
<td>4.796</td>
<td>5.288</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth’s religiosity T3</td>
<td>0.811</td>
<td>1.836</td>
<td>-0.230</td>
<td>3.673</td>
<td>2.987</td>
<td>3.697</td>
<td>-8.120</td>
<td>8.240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth’s drug use T2</td>
<td>-0.019</td>
<td>-0.643</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>2.368</td>
<td>1.977</td>
<td>2.413</td>
<td>-1.960</td>
<td>11.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth’s drug use T3</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>-1.001</td>
<td>0.186</td>
<td>2.252</td>
<td>2.187</td>
<td>2.217</td>
<td>-3.330</td>
<td>8.320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results: Descriptive Statistics (continues)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region of residence T1</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,083</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion child was raised in T1</td>
<td>Evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mainline Protestant</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other religion</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>91.5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None/No religion</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,083</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Items used to construct variable’s measure are mostly not the same across waves, so measures of a same variable cannot be directly compared among the waves in terms of descriptive statistics, such as mean.

* $p < .05$ (one-tailed test), $+ p < .05$ (one-tailed test)
### Results: SEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black (B)</td>
<td>-.433*</td>
<td>-.421*</td>
<td>-.397*</td>
<td>-.305*</td>
<td>-.371*</td>
<td>-.370*</td>
<td>-.261*</td>
<td>-.285*</td>
<td>-.345*</td>
<td>-.240*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>-.277</td>
<td>-.121</td>
<td>-.152</td>
<td>-.256</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>-.198</td>
<td>-.392*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.066*</td>
<td>.066*</td>
<td>.087*</td>
<td>.087*</td>
<td>.081*</td>
<td>.087*</td>
<td>.076*</td>
<td>.087*</td>
<td>.076*</td>
<td>.073*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family size T1</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family SES T3</td>
<td>.037*</td>
<td>.029*</td>
<td>.036*</td>
<td>.048*</td>
<td>.029*</td>
<td>.028*</td>
<td>.059*</td>
<td>.041*</td>
<td>.025*</td>
<td>.031*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family mobility T3</td>
<td>.024*</td>
<td>.024*</td>
<td>.017*</td>
<td>.017*</td>
<td>.015*</td>
<td>.018*</td>
<td>.011*</td>
<td>.018*</td>
<td>.012*</td>
<td>.010*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast T1</td>
<td>.243*</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>.203*</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.139*</td>
<td>.164*</td>
<td>.066*</td>
<td>.140*</td>
<td>.114*</td>
<td>.007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midwest T1</td>
<td>.240*</td>
<td>.206*</td>
<td>.180*</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>.167*</td>
<td>.157*</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.135*</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West T1</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.158</td>
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<td>.095</td>
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<td>.092*</td>
<td>.078*</td>
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<td>.094*</td>
<td>.006*</td>
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<td>R²</td>
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<td>.362</td>
<td>.308</td>
<td>.452</td>
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<td>.432</td>
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<td>ΔR²</td>
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<td>-0.056</td>
<td>-0.148</td>
<td>-0.082</td>
<td>-0.074</td>
<td>-0.192*</td>
<td>-0.168*</td>
<td>-0.106</td>
<td>-0.204*</td>
<td>-0.144</td>
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<tr>
<td>(z statistic)</td>
<td>(-0.034)</td>
<td>(-1.014)</td>
<td>(-1.635)</td>
<td>(-0.927)</td>
<td>(-0.793)</td>
<td>(-2.204)</td>
<td>(-1.814)</td>
<td>(-1.230)</td>
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<td>7.06%</td>
<td>12.36%</td>
<td>22.36%</td>
<td>18.10%</td>
<td>19.34%</td>
<td>22.38%</td>
<td>37.09%</td>
<td>33.43%</td>
<td>23.84%</td>
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<td>R² / df</td>
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1. Refers to change in the unstandardized coefficient of the race dummy variable (B), which measures black-white difference in drug use. Negative value indicates decrease in the coefficient, that is, added variable(s) explaining the race difference. Statistical significance of the change was tested based on z statistic (Paternoster et al. 1998).

* p < .05 (one-tailed test), ** p < .05 (two-tailed test).
Figure 2. Structural Equation Model of Youth’s Drug Use during Adolescence and Young Adulthood (n = 1,122)

Overall Model Fit
\( \chi^2 / df = 3.614 \)
CFI = .907
RMSEA = .048
(90% CI) (.045, .051)
Summary

- **Hypothesis 1**
  - Black youth use licit and illicit drugs less than white youth during adolescence and young adulthood.
  - Black youth less likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and use illegal substances than white youth.
Summary & Conclusions

Hypothesis 1
- Black youth use licit and illicit drugs less than white youth during adolescence and young adulthood.
- Black youth less likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and use illegal substances than white youth.

Hypothesis 2
- Black-white differences in drug use are explained by the race differences in (a) religious upbringing & childhood exposure to drug-using parents and (b) current religiosity & drug-using peer association.
- Black-white differences in drug use during young adulthood were partly but significantly explained by the explanatory variables, while the differences during adolescence were not.