

The Race to Punish in American Schools: Class and Race Predictors of Punitive School-Crime Control

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Abstract Despite the general agreement that US schools have become increasingly punitive since the 1980s, researchers are uncertain about what types of schools use tough-on-crime measures. Some assert that punitive control is concentrated in poor, predominantly ethnic minority schools. Governing-through-crime scholars argue that US schools with mostly middle-class and white students are also punitive, but in less harsh ways using soft surveillance techniques. Relying on data from large, stratified samples of middle and secondary US public schools, we found that high rates of ethnic minority enrollment predicted heavy reliance on law enforcement and security personnel. As rates of student poverty increased, use of soft surveillance techniques as well as reporting students to the police significantly increased. Implications for governing-through-crime, racial control, and reproduction of inequalities theories are discussed.

Introduction

On November 5, 2003, the small US town of Goose Creek, South Carolina made news headlines when a police SWAT team rushed onto the Stratford High School campus with guns drawn, yelling at students to “lie down on the ground and put their hands behind their heads.” Some students were physically forced to the ground as police waved guns in their

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faces. Other students were instructed to kneel and face the wall with their hands behind their heads, all while a dog anxiously sniffed their backpacks. Although the police raid was designed to catch drug-dealing students on campus, drugs were never found. Some school administrators supported these draconian measures, but parents, social justice advocates, and civil rights leaders were outraged by this incident, arguing that the police were particularly targeting and roughing up ethnic and racial minority students.

Certainly the Goose Creek incident, and especially the images of uniformed police officers pointing guns in the faces of frightened students, renders an extreme example of punitive measures in US schools. While extreme, this case points to an underlying trend in how the contemporary American school system monitors students. Indeed, since the early 1980s, American schools have increasingly adopted tough-on-crime strategies to control drug use, violence, and disorder at school. Given the punitive turn in American schools, SWAT teams, law enforcement officers, drug sniffing dogs, random locker searches, and urine testing of students for drugs have increasingly become part of the contemporary landscape of American education. So too are schools increasingly meting out severe punishments to students, including expulsion, transfer, and/or arrest for a litany of offenses.

Most scholars argue that the tough-on-crime movement in American schools mirrors, in some fashion, the punitive turn (Austin and Irwin 2000; Garland 2001; Tonry 2004; Mauer 2006) in how US criminal justice agencies respond to street crime. Thus, it can be argued that the increasingly harsh and retributive style of disciplining students showcases the US education system as another peculiarly punitive American institution (see Wacquant 2000). While most scholars and commentators agree that US schools have become increasingly harsh in their discipline and crime control techniques since the 1980s, researchers remain uncertain about what types of American schools are bearing the brunt of this criminalization (see Hirschfield 2008).

There has been much written about the upward trend in school punishments as scholars, civil rights activists, and members of many professional organizations in the US have been vociferous in their concerns about the tough-on-crime trend in schools (Advancement Project 2003, 2005, 2010; American Psychological Association 2008; Boyd 2009; Gordon et al. 2001; Gregory et al. 2010; Kim et al. 2010; Lyons and Drew 2006; Monahan and Torres 2009; Monroe 2005; NAACP Legal Defense Fund 2005; Noguera 2003; Wald and Losen 2003). Summarizing a broad spectrum of arguments, there are at least two explanations for the harshening of monitoring and control in US schools.

Some commentators evoke classic conflict perspectives and argue that the punitive style of discipline and control in American schools disproportionately affects poor and ethnic minority students (Bowditch 1993; Boyd 2009; Gilmore 2007; Giroux 2003; Gregory et al. 2010; Meiners 2007; Nicholson-Crotty and Birchmeier 2009; Noguera 2003; Wald and Losen 2003; Verdugo 2002; Robbins 2005; Skiba 2000; Skiba et al. 2002). While much of the literature on race, class, and school punishment focuses on the demographic characteristics of individual students who are heavily burdened by a new type of punitive control, there are a few studies looking at punishment at the school level. Researchers found that schools with high proportions of black students enrolled were the most likely schools to use extremely punitive measures (Payne and Welch 2010; Welch and Payne 2010).

A second set of scholars draws on Simon's (2007) governing-through-crime thesis. Since its publication, Simon's (2007: 4–5) work has gained increasing attention, and many criminologists agree that in the US the “technologies, discourses, and metaphors of crime and criminal justice have become more visible features of all kinds of institutions, where they can easily gravitate into new opportunities for governance.” Drawing from broad explanations of the “steadily harshening penal policies” in the US (Tonry 2009: 380)

including Garland's (2001) culture of control thesis, governing-through-crime scholars have argued that the tough-on-crime criminal justice discourse has been diffused to the field of education. As a result, white and middle-class *as well as* poor and predominantly ethnic minority schools are employing punitive monitoring and discipline measures. Within Simon's (2007) vision, white, middle-class schools are said to use fluid and less harsh forms of punishment than lower-class schools with mostly ethnic minority students (see Hirschfield 2008).

Certainly the tough-on-crime movement in US schools has garnered much public and scholarly debate. Yet, there have been very few large-scale and systematic studies examining punishment trends in US schools (for exceptions, see Kupchik 2009, 2010; Payne and Welch 2010; Skiba et al. 2002; Welch and Payne 2010). Nor have researchers simultaneously tested multiple theoretical claims explaining what types of schools are likely to use punitive school practices.

Using data from stratified, random samples of public middle and high schools in the US, this study fills several gaps in our knowledge about the characteristics of schools that implement punitive strategies. Given the large and representative nature of the datasets, we were able to identify several patterns in the reliance on punishment across US schools. We used representative datasets collected at different points in time, which allowed us to examine whether school punishment and school crime increased between the 1999–2000 and 2007–2008 school years, although the schools sampled each year were different. The datasets also allowed us to test whether class status of students and racial make-up of schools predicted schools' reliance on punishments. In line with facets of the governing-through-crime thesis, we examined whether soft forms of punishment have become a significant trend in predominantly white and middle-class schools.

Crime, Punishment, and Education

To date, school punishment researchers have drawn on some seminal statements in the street crime control and education literature, especially focusing on reproduction of inequalities theories. Despite the fact that many classic education and street crime control theories are available for school punishment scholars, since 1980 much has changed in the punishment landscape, especially in the US. Consequently, there has been a flurry of recent theoretical activity to explain America's unabated reliance on harsh, retributive justice. As a result, some classic perspectives, especially perspectives on race and crime control in America, have been updated. Given this, we cover a relatively large theoretical field and draw from seminal perspectives as well as contemporary theoretical schemes in an attempt to answer consequential questions about the features of US schools that use various punitive disciplinary practices.

Race and Punitive Control

Due in large part to the high rates of incarceration among African Americans (Mauer 2006), several criminologists have implicated America's history of racial conflict in what some call America's imprisonment binge (Austin and Irwin 2000). Contemporary racial control and punishment theorists, who might collectively be called racialized crime theorists, suggest that race, especially blackness or darkness of skin, has become symbolically

equated with dangerousness and the need for criminal justice control and containment.¹ On this topic, race and punishment scholars trace a line between historic systems of racial control and contemporary criminal justice policies and practices. More specifically, racialized crime scholars forefront historic processes of racial domination such as colonialization (Fanon 1963, 1967; Hawkins 2011) and the demoralization of African Americans (Tatum 1994, 2000a, b) and other groups (Keahioloalo-Karasuda 2010). Scholars also highlight the “historical sequence of ‘peculiar institutions’” (Wacquant 2001: 95) such as slavery (Perkinson 2010), Jim Crow laws (Alexander 2010), and racially restrictive residential covenants (Bass 2001; Wacquant 2001). Racialized crime scholars argue that these historic racist processes and institutions provide a symbolic template for how non-whites are policed and punished. In other words, the twenty-first-century criminal justice system within the US achieves the same objectives as a long line of past American processes and institutions of racial control that have justified the degradation, segregation, and confinement of African Americans and members of other racial and ethnic pariah groups.

Scholars have extended the racialized crime perspective to schools. For example, Wacquant (2001: 108) is particularly concerned that the police presence in urban and predominantly ethnic minority schools “habituates” students “... to the demeanor, tactics, and interactive style of the correctional officers many of them are bound to encounter shortly after their school days are over.” Researchers looking at types of school punishment and the racial composition of schools (Payne and Welch 2010; Welch and Payne 2010) found that, as the size of the African American population increased in a sub-sample of US public schools, punitive control also increased. More importantly, schools with large numbers of African Americans were the most likely schools to use extreme punitive discipline.

Education researchers have also highlighted punishment and race by examining how individual students of color are treated in schools. Ferguson (2001: 1), for example, argues that African American male students in her study are marked as having “jail cells” with their names on them and are generally viewed as being disobedient, dangerous, and deserving of exclusion from classrooms (see also Morris 2005, 2007). Other findings suggest that school staff ignore white rule-breakers, but make an example of African American rule-breakers by punishing them (Kelly 1993; Ferguson 2001; Morris 2005, 2007). In addition, the findings that African American students receive the harshest forms of school punishments (Gregory 1997; Skiba et al. 2002; Franklin 2009) lend some validity to the idea that historic racist processes of degradation and exclusion are manifested in common constructions of students of color as unruly (Downey and Pribesh 2004; Morris 2005, 2007), troublemaking (Bowditch 1993; Kelly 1993), threatening (Fenning and Rose 2007), or potentially criminal (Ferguson 2001; Monroe 2005; Meiners 2007). Theoretically extending these findings to the school level, the idea that students of color are often seen as unruly and potentially criminal may also lead to a general impression that schools with large numbers of students of color need more control and punishment than schools with mostly white students.

Based on the racialized crime hypothesis and findings regarding perceptions of students of color, we develop our first hypothesis:

¹ We prefer the racialized crime theories to racial threat theories, because classic racial threat perspectives assume a curvilinear relationship between minority group size and social control, which does not seem to occur in schools (see Welch and Payne 2010). Also, racialized control theories analyze the historic mechanisms of racial control in America (see Hawkins 2011) rather than shifts in the size of minority population in a given area.

Hypothesis 1 Schools with a higher percentage of ethnic minority students will rely on more punitive control than schools with lower percentage of minority students.

Class Inequalities

Despite a plethora of research on race and punishment in recent decades, some scholars have honed in on the role of economic inequalities in punishment.² For example, echoing the declining significance of race scholarship (Wilson 1980), Weitzer and Tuch (2002) found that class, rather than race, is a stronger predictor of policing style in communities, and in their classic critique of the police, Platt et al. (1982) argue that police brutality of racial minorities ultimately reinforce the economic goal of repressing the working classes. Indeed, a focal concern of many critical criminologists in the past has been that the US justice system in general serves the interests of capitalists by controlling the poor and working classes (Quinney 1977; Reiman 2001), and some have argued that the incarceration of the surplus laborers might be one among many reasons for increasing punishments in the US (see Wacquant 2001).

A focus on class inequalities has also been a mainstay within critical perspectives of education in which schools are seen as locations that perpetuate class inequalities. Pivoting on a learning-to-labor thesis (Willis 1977), critical theorists view schools as training grounds for placement in the labor market. Working- and lower-class students are trained to be compliant, controlled, and bossed, while middle- and upper-class students are groomed to supervise and be the boss of others (Bowles and Gintis 1976). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) suggest that, instead of being labor-training grounds, schools are locations in which cultural capital can be parlayed into economic capital. Schools grant high marks to middle- and upper-class students who acquire the traits, or cultural capital, that schools traditionally reward. Once equipped with superior educational pedigrees, students command superior salaries and job opportunities.

There is also some research suggesting that school punishments may contribute to rates of school failure. Moreover, by examining the relationship between school punishment and school failure, an argument might be made that school punishments propel students into different employment tracks. For example, previous studies found positive correlations among school suspension, poor academic achievement, and dropout rates (Bowditch 1993; Ekstrom et al. 1986; Raffaele-Mendez 2003; Wehlage and Rutter 1986). Also, throughout the early 2000s in the US, the unemployment rate for high school dropouts was, on average, 38 % higher than the unemployment rate for high school graduates who had no college education (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2010). If poorer schools are more likely than

² Although we have presented race and class-based perspectives as independent, contemporary critical criminologists (see Burgess-Proctor 2006)—along with many critical theorists in general (see Collins 1991; Hancock 2007; Landry 2007; Pascale 2007)—view class and race (and gender) as interacting and overlapping forces. We separate our race and class-based inequalities and punishment arguments in this manuscript for clarity and by doing so do not mean to suggest that punishment scholars have not addressed overlap in systems of oppression. Despite acknowledging overlap here, we have decided not to offer or test a hypothesis regarding race and class interaction in this study for two reasons. First, there is no empirical evidence to support an interaction analysis. Past scholarship looking at race and class interaction effects in school punishments have failed to find interaction effects to be significant (Welch and Payne 2010). Second, even if there were empirical support to conduct an interaction effects analysis, we would be unlikely to find a RaceXClass variable to be significant. Theories addressing interlocking systems of oppression are extremely complex (see McCall 2001) and therefore race and class overlap or interconnections are not likely to be accurately represented in a single “RaceXClass” variable (at least not ones developed from the data available).

wealthier schools to rely on school punishments, then poor schools might indeed be using a punitive tracking system to funnel students into specific positions in the job market.

Based on seminal class-based theories of punishment, reproduction of inequalities theories, and research regarding school punishment and school failure, we surmise that punishment in schools may be part of an effort to prepare lower-class students for their future positions in the labor market. This insight is captured in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 As the number of poor students enrolled in schools increases, schools will also use more punitive control strategies.

Governing-Through-Crime

As noted previously, Simon's (2007) governing-through-crime thesis has gained increasing attention, and several punishment scholars have begun to agree that fighting crime has become a central governing framework in the US during the early twenty-first century. American schools have a specific part to play in the governing-through-crime process as "the threat of criminal victimization of their children is at the heart of schooling experience for many parents" (Simon 2007: 230). According to this perspective, schools across the nation are increasingly using punitive discourse and public, especially parents', fears of crime to justify a decidedly harsh and retributive governing style in schools.

While compelling, Simon's (2007) thesis is difficult to test. For example, there is a lack of available data to measure the relationships among shifts in political discourse, public crime fears, and punitive governing technologies in schools. Hirschfield (2008) also suggests that researchers might not find evidence for Simon's (2007) thesis even if data were available. Hirschfield (2008) notes that schools are "semi-autonomous" and make punishment decisions independently from state and federal mandates and discourses. Despite this, there are at least two assumptions that Simon (2007) makes that can be quantitatively explored, including a structural similarity argument and an argument about the temporal order among school crime control discourse, parental fears, and marked increases in harsh school discipline.

Regarding structural similarity, Simon (2007: 18) makes a strong case that governing-through-crime is "not just for the poor/not just for African Americans." His thesis focuses on the idea that as retributive and harsh control has become more diffuse, a broader cross-section of Americans find themselves under the yolk of punitive surveillance in ways that are different *as well as* "structurally similar." As Simon (2007: 21) argues, "there is an undeniable structural similarity across the boundaries of class and ethnicity in the ways of thinking, knowing, and acting that both conceive and justify these practices [i.e., governing-through-crime]." In other words, there are key similarities in how the fear of crime shapes monitoring and control in middle-class and white areas *as well as* in locations marked by severe race and class inequalities (see also Kupchik 2009, 2010).

While not necessarily a governing-through-crime scholar per se, Hirschfield (2008) helps to specify Simon's (2007) structural similarity argument by offering a hybrid theory. He argues that middle-class, white schools are likely to use soft criminalization in the form of fluid surveillance regimes. Moreover, middle class parents who fear that their children will be exposed to drugs or be victimized by thugs in school are likely to support soft surveillance measures. Specifically, such techniques as random drug sweeps, metal detector checks, locker checks for contraband (including weapons), and urine testing are the types of surveillance that middle class parents are likely to approve because these

techniques promise to root out “drugs and thugs” from middle class schools. According to Hirschfield (2008), in inner cities where the effects of deindustrialization are severe, schools use a more hardened, less fluid form of punishment than what is used in non-urban schools. In such locations, schools are like prisons that warehouse and overtly control individuals through punitive measures. To capture the hybrid nature of school punishments, Hirschfield (2008: 84) notes, “in short, the gated community may be a more apt metaphor to describe the security transformation of affluent schools, while the prison metaphor better suits that of inner-city schools.” Kupchik’s (2009, 2010) study supports aspects of the hybrid perspective, as he found punitive similarities across four schools with varying demographic characteristics. Despite punitive similarities, students in schools with mostly non-white and low-income students received more suspensions than students enrolled in mostly white and middle-class schools (Kupchik 2009, 2010).

To measure structural symmetry and structural differences, we offer the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3 As the percentage of white students enrolled and the SES status of the student body increases, reliance on soft forms of surveillance techniques will also increase.

Hypothesis 4 Inner-city, poor, and predominantly ethnic minority schools are the most likely schools to employ harsh forms of punishment.

In terms of temporal order, the timing of changes in school punishments is a key point of concern in the governing through crime thesis (Simon 2007) and for school punishment scholarship in general. Simon (2007) specifically posits a particular temporal order for the “harshening” of school crime control efforts in the US. He argues that tough-on-crime political discourse predates public crime fears in the US (see also Beckett 1997). Following shifts in political rhetoric and public crime fears, came specific legislative changes that opened a wide door for a more retributive style of US school governance. According to Simon (2007), there were three landmark policy initiatives that aided the diffusion of punitive control from criminal justice arenas to schools, including President Bush’s 1990 conference to frame a national education agenda, the 1994 Safe and Drug Free Schools Act, and the 2002 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Although Simon (2007: 209) notes that school punishments increased throughout the 1980s, these three pieces of legislation combined to create a “legal leveling of the space between education and juvenile delinquency.”

Regardless of their diverging explanations for why criminalization has increased in schools, almost all school punishment researchers agree with Simon (2007) about the general timing of upticks in school punishments. Most scholars, for example, support the idea that school punishments have been increasing since the 1980s and that various events and pieces of legislation have amplified the increases in school punishments since the 1990s. Kupchik (2010: 30), for example, argues that punitive control in schools has been increasing since the 1980s, but that “...Columbine might have accelerated these forces and made school discipline and security even more central than before.” Those working with civil rights groups, such as the Advancement Project, have also highlighted the idea that,

...the tragedy at Columbine High School in 1999 then effectively opened the floodgates to the increased use of zero-tolerance [i.e. punitive school discipline] approaches... Now, in many communities across the country, the “law and order” approach to handling student behavior has been fully embraced by schools. (Advancement Project 2010: 10)

Where Kupchik (2010) and Advancement Project (2010: 10) researchers believe that Columbine “opened the floodgates” for law and order in schools (see also Lyons and Drew 2006), others locate an increase in criminalization of schools in different forces. Simon (2007: 209), for example, suggested that the NCLB act of 2001 was a significant contributor to the “leveling of legal space” between governance in the juvenile justice system. In a similar vein, Hirschfield (2008) examines the hypothesis that the accountability movement in education has encouraged schools to punish and push out low-achievers. Because the NCLB act is often considered to be a watershed piece of accountability legislation, one would expect school punishments to increase after the passage of the NCLB act of 2001.³

A few scholars (Berger 2002; Giroux 2003) have also credited the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks with increases in punitive surveillance in schools. According to some scholars’ (Berger 2002; Giroux 2003) logic, in the name of safety the US became increasingly tolerant of invasive surveillance techniques. Such measures as metal detector checks in schools, urine testing students for drugs, and random searches for weapons and drugs are not likely to be critiqued by parents and, consequently, likely to be implemented in schools after September 11, 2001.

Although we do not have comprehensive data from 1980 to 1998, data collected since 1999 allow us to generally examine any upsurges in punishment in the years after Columbine⁴ and to directly examine whether the NCLB act of 2001 and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 amplified punitive practices in American schools. To test the amplification assumption, we offer the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5 Since the 1999–2000 school year, reliance on school punishments in middle and high schools in the US has increased.

Methods

Data

We utilized the 2000 and 2008 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS 2000; SSOCS 2008) to test our study hypotheses. The SSOCS survey has been administered to school principals or school disciplinarians approximately once every two years since 2000. The survey was developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to ascertain the safety and discipline procedures used in public schools. The SSOCS is designed to capture variables relevant to school crime and safety, and includes measures related to

³ Hirschfield (2008) concludes that the accountability thesis is probably not correct because accountability predicts more, rather than less, discretion in schools. The popularity of zero tolerance since the 1990s suggests that there has been less discretion in school discipline practices across the US.

⁴ According to information from state legislatures (www.ncsl.org, retrieved 9/15/2006 and 6/05/2012), between April 20, 1999 (the date of the Columbine shootings) and June 5, 2012, 44 states passed legislation to combat school violence. Only 6.8 % of these states (n = 3) passed legislation between 1999 and 2000, while 63.6 % (n = 28) of these states passed legislation between 2001 and 2007. A remaining 29.5 % (n = 13) passed legislation after 2007. Because the vast majority of state-level legislative changes occurred after 2001, we argue that 1999–2000 is an adequate baseline year to test the hypothesis that repressive measures to combat school violence have been amplified in the years after Columbine. In addition, our 1999–2000 school year data is sufficient to test changes since the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks and the NCLB act of 2001 (which was signed into law in January of 2002).

school policies, violence prevention programs, crimes and crime-related deaths on campus, disciplinary actions, and other school characteristics thought to be related to school crime.

Questionnaires were mailed to a representative sample of 3,370 US public schools in 2000, with a total of 2,270 completed questionnaires returned. A total of 3,480 public schools were chosen in 2008, with 2,560 questionnaires returned. We ultimately utilized the restricted use version of both datasets, as they allowed us to analyze variables of interest in their raw form and were, thus, more amenable to our research needs, including providing information on schools' ethnic minority and poverty status, number of crimes at school, and schools' disciplinary measures.

The schools included in this study were drawn from stratified samples of public schools across the US for each study period. The strata included instructional level, type of locale, and enrollment size of schools. The SSOCS documentation also reports that minority status and region were used as sorting variables during the stratification process. The resulting dataset presents a fairly comprehensive, representative, cross-sectional measure of US public schools, including elementary, middle, secondary, and combined. We utilized data on the schools identified as middle or secondary, excluding elementary and combined public schools. This yielded a sample of 1,510 schools for the 1999–2000 school year and 1,830 for the 2007–2008 school year. To test whether there have been significant changes in the reliance of punitive measures since 1999 (hypothesis 5), we also utilized data from the SSOCS 2003–2004 and 2004–2005 school years. These data collection efforts included the same variables and followed the same overall methodology as did collection in the 2007–2008 school year. The 2003–2004 dataset included 1,980 middle and high schools and the 2004–2005 dataset included 1,870. These data were utilized to analyze changes over all four years of data collection (1999–2000, 2003–2004, 2004–2005, and 2007–2008) in the use of school surveillance methods, security and law enforcement on campus, and the use of police reporting, and school sanctions.

Although we had access to four years of the SSOCS survey, we decided to use only the earliest (SSOCS 2000) and most recent (SSOCS 2008) years in our models of our dependent variables. Our goal was to provide a snapshot image of different models across as broad of a time period as we could. We did not offer models for each dependent variable for all 4 years because doing so would imply that we could describe longitudinal differences in models over time, which these data do not allow. We did, however, utilize all four years to examine if there were any changes in rates of reliance on different types of punishment. Because scholars have consistently assumed that there have been dramatic upticks in the reliance on punitive measures since 1999–2000, we thought that it was important to test this assumption, even with the limits of our data.

Our research is a secondary analysis, and thus carries the typical limitations inherent in this type of work. Namely, we did not always have ideal variable operationalizations. However, the dataset presents a rich, representative look at crime control policies and measures employed in the US public school system.

Measures

Dependent Variables

We utilized four primary dependent variables to measure school discipline. The variables were chosen because they are the best available measures to test our hypotheses. Further, we needed to keep each variable separate, given operational and conceptual differences for each dependent variable, as described below. Our first three variables measure harsh

punishments in the form of school sanctions (e.g., suspensions, expulsions, and transfer of students), law enforcement/security presence, and reporting school crimes to the police. We had one measure of what Hirschfield (2008) identifies as “soft” or “fluid” forms of discipline, that we call school surveillance.

The first dependent variable is school sanctions. This variable measures the degree to which schools took disciplinary actions against students for the following offenses: use or possession of a firearm or explosive device; use of a weapon other than a firearm or explosive device; distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs; distribution, possession or use of alcohol; physical fights or attacks, and insubordination. The following possible sanctions comprise our school sanction variable: removals with no continuing school services for at least the remainder of the school year; transfers to specialized schools; and out-of-school suspensions lasting 5 or more days but less than the remainder of the school year. We did not use questions about the use of zero tolerance codes, primarily because there was little variation among schools in their use of zero tolerance methods.

The second harsh punishment measure concerns the use of law enforcement and security (LES) on campus. There are different measures in the SSOCS 2000 compared with the 2008 version. The 2000 version uses a continuous count of average LES hours utilized, measured by the following question:

On average, how many hours per week did at least one paid law enforcement or security person provide law enforcement or security services in the 1999–2000 school year?

This variable captures the degree to which schools utilize paid law enforcement and/or security, and serves as a measure of formal social control. The 2008 questionnaire measured the actual number (rather than hours) of full and part-time security guards, school resource officers, and sworn law enforcement officers employed on campus. We utilized a count of these LES personnel as a measure of law enforcement/security for the 2007–2008 year. Since the SSOCS 2000 data do not allow a determination of law enforcement officers (i.e., police officers) as separate from security guards, we refer to these agents as law enforcement personnel.

The third dependent variable and measure of harsh punishment is police reporting. This variable is the number school crimes reported to the police during the 1999–2000 (SSOCS 2000) and 2007–2008 (SSOCS 2008) school years (respectively). This also serves as a measure of formal social control, capturing the degree to which schools handled school crime misconduct with formal reports to the police. The level of actual crimes committed on campus is a control variable.

School surveillance is our fourth dependent variable and our only measure of soft surveillance. School surveillance captures the degree to which schools used security practices on campus that include several of the types of surveillance techniques that Hirschfield (2008) identifies as “soft” forms of punitive control, including drug sniffing dogs, contraband sweeps, and metal detector checks to find drugs or weapons on campus. The SSOCS 2000 survey was worded as follows:

In the 1999–2000 school year, did your school do the following: Perform one or more random metal detector checks on students; use one or more random dog sniffs to check for drugs; perform one or more random sweeps for contraband, but not including dog sniffs; and require testing for any students?

In the SSOCS 2008 version, this question was changed by separating questions regarding drug testing into three separate questions, “require drug testing for athletes”,

“require drug testing for students in extra-curricular activities other than athletics,” and “require drug testing for any other students.” The survey allowed for a dichotomous “yes” or “no” response to questions regarding use of these school surveillance measures. We used the responses to these questions and created a composite index of between 0 and 4 whereby 0 indicates no use of any of these measures and 4 represents use of all of these measures for the 2000 analyses, and an index of 0–6 for 2008 (accounting for the two additional questions). A factor analysis confirmed that these variables do load together, thus enhancing our confidence in the composite school surveillance index.

Independent Variable

The key independent variable is school crime. This measure represents the total number of crime incidents occurring on campus during the 1999–2000 and 2007–2008 school years. All crimes counted in the SSOCS were used in our study, including rape, sexual battery, robbery, physical attack or fight, threat of physical attack, theft/larceny, possession of a firearm or explosive device, possession of a knife or sharp object, distribution/possession or use of illegal drugs or alcohol, and vandalism. Because this study is not longitudinal, we could not assess the temporal relationship between the amount of crime and the amount of punishment at schools. Also, because the SSOCS was focused on particular school crimes and not other common, but minor forms of misbehavior (i.e., insubordination, failure to follow school rules, or acting out) we could not measure the effects of common, yet disruptive, student misbehaviors on punishment.

Control Variables

The SSOCS also captured several important control variables⁵ that were theoretically relevant and were included here as well. First, given our interest in ethnic minority enrollment and punishment, we utilize the restricted use version of overall ethnic minority enrollment. Specifically, this variable captures the percentage of the student body that is classified as ethnic minority. Socioeconomic status (SES) was measured using the percentage of the student body eligible for free and reduced price lunch.

School size was captured via school enrollment figures. Some studies suggest that reports of disorder and student victimization increase as school size increases (see Gottfredson and Gottfredson 1985), indicating that school size might be an important variable to consider. School size is a continuous variable measuring the size of the student body.

The remainder of our variables are categorical. We measured urbanicity in terms of the school’s location as either city (=1) or other (=0). We include measures of urbanicity given the assumption that urban schools are prone to crime (Gottfredson 2001; Payne and Welch 2010; Welch and Payne 2010) or are more likely than non-urban schools to use punitive strategies (see Wacquant 2001). We also measured region of the country as South (=1) and all other regions (=0). Our rationale was that Southern schools, particularly with that region’s unique history related to both race and punishment in the US, might be more inclined to utilize punitive measures. Finally, neighborhood crime level measures the level

⁵ As noted previously, our study was not designed to test theories of race and class interaction in school punishments. Given that past scholarship used but did not find a race and class interaction variable to be significant in punishment models (Welch and Payne 2010), we were curious about whether a race and class interaction variable would be significant in our models. Although not shown in this study, we ran this interaction variable in all of our models and it was not significant in any of them.

of crime in the area where the school is located. We included the neighborhood crime measure based on the findings that the characteristics of the neighborhoods surrounding schools influence school crime more than the characteristics of students' neighborhoods (Gottfredson 2001). Using the measures provided, we collapsed this variable into high level of crime (=1) and all other (=0) (Table 1).

Results

Our first two hypotheses examine traditional conflict theories of punishment. Our first hypothesis examines race-based conflicts and states that schools with a higher percentage of ethnic minority students will rely on more punitive control than schools with a lower percentage of ethnic minority students. In our second hypothesis we examine economic inequalities, and we expect there is a positive relationship between poor schools and punitive control strategies. Results from ordinary least squares regression, used to test these hypotheses, are presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4 (tables presenting predictive models of three types of harsh punishment).

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for study variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Range	N
Dependent (1999–2000 school year)				
School surveillance (total of 4 possible)	.89	.91	0–4	1,490
Law enforcement/security (hours)	22.97	19.81	0–201	1,250
Police reporting	23.00	32.48	0–289	1,510
School punishments	26.41	51.14	0–604	1,510
Dependent (2007–2008 school year)				
School surveillance (total of 6 possible)	1.10	1.17	0–6	1,830
Law enforcement/security (number)	4.08	6.92	0–180	1,430
Police reporting	25.71	35.76	0–281	1,830
School punishments	28.91	91.79	0–3054	1,830
Independent and controls (1999–2000 school year)				
School crime	52.71	63.12	0–1011	1,480
Percent minority students	28.94	29.84	0–100	1,510
Percent students receiving free/reduced lunch	33.45	24.85	0–100	1,510
School enrollment	931	641	3–5,296	1,500
Neighborhood crime (1 = high, 0 = all else)	.04	.20	0–1	1,500
Local (1 = urban, 0 = all else)	.23	.42	0–1	1,510
Region (1 = south, 0 = all else)	.30	.46	0–1	1,510
Independent and controls (2007–2008 school year)				
School crime	51.21	56.57	0–578	1,830
Percent minority students	37.20	31.82	0–100	1,830
Percent students receiving free/reduced lunch	40.93	26.61	0–100	1,830
School enrollment	988	652	27–4,554	1,830
Neighborhood crime (1 = high, 0 = all else)	.05	.22	0–1	1,830
Local (1 = urban, 0 = all else)	.26	.44	0–1	1,830
Region (1 = south, 0 = all else)	.37	.48	0–1	1,830

Table 2 OLS regression results for school sanctions

	1999–2000 school year			2007–2008 school year		
	β	SE	Beta	β	SE	Beta
Coefficients—block 1						
Constant	4.004**	1.532		−8.345	17.455	
School crime	.314***	.014	.425	2.229***	.163	.314
Percent minority	18.120***	3.805	.128	27.290	32.864	.024
Percent poverty	−.090*	.043	−.056	.474	.432	.031
Model summary						
<i>R</i> -squared		.206			.108	
Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared		.205			.107	
F statistic		189.92***			72.749***	
Coefficients—block 2						
Constant	−7.742***	2.019		−84.335***	23.492	
School crime	.260***	.016	.352	1.776***	.186	.250
Percent minority	2.283	4.252	.016	−29.483	35.005	−.026
Percent poverty	.050	.047	.031	1.090*	.471	.072
Enrollment	.015***	.002	.193	.082***	.017	.134
NBHD crime (1 = high)	−.010	4.066	.000	102.784*	42.659	.057
Locale (1 = urban)	4.751*	2.226	.046	2.192	22.383	.002
Region (1 = south)	3.983*	1.962	.039	22.154	18.925	.027
Model summary						
<i>R</i> -squared		.236			.124	
Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared		.234			.120	
F statistic		96.541***			36.215***	

NBHD neighborhood

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

In our first model (Table 2), we measured punitive control via what researchers and school personnel commonly agree to be indicators of harsh school punishments, namely the number of expulsions, suspensions, and transfer of students (school sanctions). The 2007–2008 data reveal that schools with higher levels of crime, a greater percentage of poor students, larger student bodies, and located in high crime neighborhoods are more likely than other schools to utilize school punishments. This is similar to the pattern in 1999–2000 when schools with higher levels of crime, larger numbers of students, and located in urban areas and in the southern regions were more likely to use those same school punishments. Race was not a significant predictor in either year, yet class was in the 2007–2008 school year. In this model, there is only partial support for our second hypothesis and no support for our first hypothesis.

In Table 3, we examine another measure of harsh punishment in the form of the use of campus law enforcement and security personnel (LES). The findings here provide partial support for perspectives focusing on race-based control. However, caution should be used when comparing the 1999–2000 and 2007–2008 school years for use of LES. Different measures were used in each survey, rendering comparisons difficult. With this in mind, the 2007–2008 school year data demonstrate that schools with a greater percentage of ethnic

Table 3 OLS regression results for law enforcement/security

	1999–2000 school year			2007–2008 school year		
	β	SE	Beta	β	SE	Beta
Coefficients—block 1						
Constant	16.794***	.996		1.999***	.355	
School crime	.049***	.008	.162	.015***	.003	.129
Percent minority	.211***	.025	.323	.037***	.008	.171
Percent poverty	-.096***	.030	-.122	-.006	.009	-.025
Model summary						
<i>R</i> -squared		.107			.050	
Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared		.104			.048	
F statistic		48.075***			25.273***	
Coefficients—block 2						
Constant	7.603**	1.424		.621	.498	
School crime	.012	.009	.041	.006	.003	.056
Percent minority	.077**	.028	.118	.030***	.008	.140
Percent poverty	.020	.031	.025	.015	.010	.061
Enrollment	.010***	.001	.327	.002***	.000	.157
NBHD crime (1 = high)	8.437***	2.630	.090	.102	.786	.004
Locale (1 = urban)	2.866*	1.323	.063	-.519	.428	-.035
Region (1 = south)	.766	1.212	.017	-1.108**	.371	-.079
Model summary						
<i>R</i> -squared		.195			.073	
Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared		.190			.068	
F statistic		41.680***			15.941***	

There is a different measure for our law enforcement at time 1 (combined police and security and the measure is the number of hours) versus time 2 (we could separate them, but it is also a count of the number of officers and security personnel used instead of hours). We can only analyze law enforcement/security as one, then, for 99/00 and it will be hours versus bodies (as with time 2). Here we want to be careful to explain the different measures in light of the findings, although there aren't huge differences in the overall *R*-squared values

NBHD neighborhood

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

minority students, larger student bodies, and located in non-Southern states employed more LES officers on campus. This represents a slight change from 1999 to 2000, when urban schools in neighborhoods with high crime rates relied on more LES hours than other schools. In both cases, when LES was measured as hours in 1999–2000 and number of officers in 2007–2008, however, school size and size of the ethnic minority population were significant predictors. Findings for LES, then, confirm hypothesis one but not hypothesis two.

When punitive control strategies are measured via reporting of crime incidents to the police (Table 4), levels of poverty seem to be important. Schools in 2007–2008 with a greater percentage of poor students as well as more crimes, higher percentage of white students, larger student bodies, and that were located in urban areas were more likely than other schools to report school crime incidents to the police. This represents a shift from

Table 4 OLS regression results for police reporting

	1999–2000 school year			2007–2008 school year		
	β	SE	Beta	β	SE	Beta
Coefficients—block 1						
Constant	6.748***	.864		2.193*	1.064	
School crime	.288***	.008	.600	.491***	.010	.769
Percent minority	15.283***	2.145	.167	1.546	2.003	.015
Percent poverty	-.182***	.024	-.172	-.051	.026	-.038
Model summary						
<i>R</i> -squared		.402			.590	
Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared		.401			.589	
F statistic		492.255***			862.651***	
Coefficients—block 2						
Constant	-7.132***	1.054		-10.510***	1.367	
School crime	.218***	.008	.456	.416***	.011	.653
Percent minority	-2.414	2.221	-.026	-6.891***	2.037	-.068
Percent poverty	.027	.025	.026	.070*	.027	.051
Enrollment	.019***	.001	.383	.013***	.001	.239
NBHD crime (1 = high)	-1.454	2.124	-.011	2.465	2.483	.015
Locale (1 = urban)	1.309	1.163	.019	3.307*	1.303	.041
Region (1 = south)	-3.200**	1.025	-.048	1.761	1.102	.024
Model summary						
<i>R</i> -squared		.502			.632	
Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared		.500			.631	
F statistic		314.477***			441.672***	

NBHD neighborhood

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

1999 to 2000 when percent ethnic minority, percentage of poor students, and urbanicity of schools were not predictors of police reporting, yet size of the school and region of the country (South) were. Therefore the most recent SSOCS data in our study do provide support for hypothesis two and the effects of poverty on school punishments, but do not support our first hypothesis regarding the race-based effects on punishment. In fact, it seems that predominantly white schools and not predominantly ethnic minority schools were the most likely schools to report students to the police.

Our police reporting model is noteworthy because of the relatively large *R*-squared. On the surface, it seems that police reporting is, for the most part, an outcome of the amount of school crime, with school size being the next most powerful predictor. In the larger scheme, although significant, percent minority, percent poverty, and urbanicity are not particularly powerful in this otherwise powerful model. Here, we offer a cautionary note. It is very likely that the contribution of school crime is an artifact of measurement. In the SSOC questionnaire school personnel were asked to report the total number of crimes on campus alongside the total number of crimes reported to the police.

We next turn to the issue of governing-through-crime, whereby we hypothesized that reliance on soft forms of punishment via school surveillance techniques would increase along with increases in the percentage of white students and in the SES status of the student

Table 5 OLS regression results for school surveillance

	1999–2000 school year			2007–2008 school year		
	β	SE	Beta	β	SE	Beta
Coefficients—block 1						
Constant	.579***	.043		.752***	.052	
School crime	.001*	.000	.061	.000	.000	.020
Percent minority	.001	.001	.046	-.001	.001	-.037
Percent poverty	.007***	.001	.186	.009***	.001	.210
Model summary						
R-squared		.055			.037	
Adjusted R-squared		.053			.035	
F statistic		27.628***			23.112***	
Coefficients—block 2						
Constant	.507***	.063		.299***	.066	
School crime	.001	.000	.055	-.001	.001	-.025
Percent minority	.001	.001	.049	-.004***	.001	-.102
Percent poverty	.008***	.001	.212	.010***	.001	.231
Enrollment	.000	.000	.032	.000***	.000	.158
NBHD crime (1 = high)	-.275*	.127	-.060	-.048	.120	-.009
Locale (1 = urban)	-.001	.063	.000	-.088	.064	-.033
Region (1 = south)	.041	.054	.020	.797***	.053	.331
Model summary						
R-squared		.059			.166	
Adjusted R-squared		.054			.163	
F statistic		12.750***			51.832***	

NBHD neighborhood

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

body (hypothesis 3). As the results in Table 5 demonstrate, we found partial support for our third hypothesis. First, our model indicates that as the percent of ethnic minority enrollment increases, use of these soft forms of surveillance decreases. Thus, schools with a greater percentage of white students do use more of these campus soft surveillance techniques. Yet schools with a greater percentage of poor students also utilize these methods more than schools with large numbers of high SES students. Schools with larger student bodies and those located in the South use more soft forms of surveillance as well, when compared with smaller and non-Southern schools. This does represent a change from 1999 to 2000 when neighborhood crime was a predictor (lower crime neighborhoods used more soft surveillance techniques than higher crime neighborhoods) and minority status and region of the country were not significant predictors of soft surveillance. In sum, we find support for the hypothesis that reliance on soft forms of surveillance will increase with the percentage of white students, but not with the increase in wealthier students. Thus, support for the structural similarity argument is limited in this study.

Our fourth hypothesis states that inner-city, poor, and predominantly ethnic minority schools are the most likely schools to employ harsh forms of punishment. We can again refer to the results presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4 as a test of this hypothesis. The findings demonstrate partial support for this hypothesis, using the latest available data. The

Table 6 School crime-control strategies and rates over time: 1999–2008

	School year			
	1999–2000	2003–2004	2004–2005	2007–2008
School sanctions				
Per 1,000 students	29.6	24.8	29.5	27.7
School surveillance (# methods used)***				
Percent of schools reporting				
0	41.3	35.6	37.2	37.2
1	34.7	35.9	34.7	35.1
2	18.0	20.3	20.9	19.3
3	6.0	7.5	6.3	7.1
4	.0	.6	.9	1.3
Security/law enforcement**				
% Schools reporting use at any time	N/A	96.4	97.2	96.7
Police reporting***				
Average % incidents reported	45.6	50.7	47.1	47.9
% Schools reporting above average	45.6	49.5	46.2	46.6
School crime incidents				
Per 1,000 students	52.9	51.3	56.8	50.9

Differences based on ANOVA analyses. Note, surveillance measures include: Random metal detector checks, random dog sniffs for drugs, random sweeps for contraband, and drug testing for any student (1999–2000 measure, combines the three separate measures for drug testing for the 2003–2008 school years)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

2007–2008 data indicate that schools with a greater percentage of poor students (along with larger enrollments and higher levels of school crime and neighborhood crime) and are likely to sanction students, while a schools with a greater percentage of minority students, larger student bodies, and that are located in non-Southern regions are significantly more likely to use LES. Urban schools with a greater percentage of poor students and larger student bodies, but with less crime and a greater percentage of white students are more likely to report school crime incidents to the police. In 2007–2008, schools with a large number of ethnic minority students were the likeliest schools to rely on law enforcement and security presence, while schools with a large percentage of white students were the most likely to report school crimes to the police (along with and controlling for other factors). In terms of class and punishment, the SES status of schools was predictive of school sanctions and police reports (along with and controlling for other various factors in our models), but not LES. The patterns of reliance on different types of harsh punishment, therefore, do not lend consistent support for the idea that poor and ethnic minority schools are the most likely schools to use harsh punishment.

Our last hypothesis (hypothesis 5) was that reliance on school punishment techniques have increased in middle and high schools in the US. An analysis of our dependent measures over four data collection periods, 1999–2000 through 2007–2008, demonstrate some overall significant changes in the use of soft surveillance techniques (school surveillance), as well as some harsh forms of punishment in the form of law enforcement/security ($F = 5.913, p < .001$) and police reporting ($F = 6.909, p < .001$) across all years. Looking at changes from one year to another, school surveillance significantly changed

between the years of 1999–2000 and 2003–2004 ($t = 3.988, p < .001$), although not in the direction we predicted (such methods actually decreased). The use of security/law enforcement also showed a significant decrease from 2004–2005 to 2007–2008 ($t = 2.899, p < .01$). Finally, police reporting went up significantly from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004 ($t = 4.302, p < .001$), but then down again from 2003–2004 to 2004–2005 ($t = -3.318, p < .001$). Thus, we only find partial support for our last hypothesis, namely that there has been some slight upward trends in the use of school punishment techniques over time. At the same time, however, there has also been downward trends from year to year. The image offered is one of slight upward and downward fluctuations, rather than consistent and dramatic upticks over time. Finally, it is noteworthy that the rate of school-based crimes was lower in 2007–2008 than in 1999–2000, suggesting that crime has decreased in the representative samples of schools surveyed (Table 6).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to test claims about whether and what types of school punishments are predicted by the race and class profiles of a sample of US middle and high schools. We also examined whether there have been marked increases in school punishments in the US since 1999. Below we explain some of the more consequential findings for governing-through-crime theories, as well as theories about the reproduction of class and race inequalities.

Governing-Through-Crime

Simon (2007) and others (Hirschfield 2008; Kupchik 2009, 2010) have argued, first, that punitive measures are becoming more common across US schools and, second, within this punitive diffusion there is a structural similarity in punishments. Our findings offer very little support for the structural similarity argument. In fact, the only evidence for “soft versus harsh” punishment in schools fell along regional lines (i.e., Southern vs. non-Southern schools) rather than along “disadvantaged versus advantaged” school lines. Simon (2007) and others (Hirschfield 2008; Kupchik 2009, 2010) might be correct, however, in that many middle-class, predominantly white schools have increasingly relied on “soft” surveillance, but not significantly above and beyond surveillance use in poor, white, and Southern schools. Here, scholars may want to revisit the idea that middle-class, white schools are being systematically targeted through soft surveillance punishments.

This study also did not confirm the idea that the beginning of the twenty-first century marked an “amplification” of punitive control throughout US schools. While there have been some increases in the reliance on school punitive measures since the 1999–2000 school year, the increases have been relatively small. In addition, there have also been some decreases in punitive trends over time. On a theoretical level, this finding runs counter to Simon’s (2007) and others’ (Advancement Project 2010; Kupchik 2010) assumptions that increasingly intense school-crime control legislative discourse and public crime fears opened the “floodgates” for more punishment across institutions and schools. For example, there is evidence that since the 1999–2000 school year there has been a plethora of national, state, and local legislative school crime control initiatives. On the topic of funding for school resource officers (SROs)—often a euphemism for police officers in schools—Kupchik and Monahan (2006: 621) note that, “since 2000, the Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services... has awarded over \$350 million to hire SROs

nationwide.” In addition, Gallup Poll (Gallup 2011) findings also show notable increases in parental fears of school crime after the Columbine shootings on April 20, 1999.⁶ Despite increases in tough-on-school-crime legislation and parental crime fears, upticks in school punishments in the US are not dramatic and, instead, seem to fluctuate up and down slightly among and between years, according to our measures.

The lack of substantial increases in school punishment since the 1999–2000 school year can be interpreted in two ways. First, Hirschfield’s (2008) arguments might be correct, and schools’ decisions to punish may function somewhat independently from parental school-crime fears as well as tough-on-crime legislation and discourse. A second interpretation is that, regardless of what led to increases in school punishments, reliance on retributive control measures in US schools may have reached a high water mark before the twenty-first century, and has fluctuated in minor ways since that time.

Although not related directly to the governing-through-crime thesis, one major finding from our study was that larger schools were more likely than smaller schools to rely on the four types of punishment that we considered. This school size and punishment finding points to some of Hirschfield’s (2008) arguments. Hirschfield (2008) suggests that just as prisons have become “warehouses” to contain the surplus labor brought on by deindustrialization (see also Wacquant 2001), schools in locations ravaged by deindustrialization (e.g., inner cities and some rural areas) and high poverty rates are also serving a warehousing function. More specifically, warehouse schools deny students the services, programs, and opportunities to improve their life chances, and offer instead considerable punitive control and monitoring to students considered to be “disposable.”

The presence of high rates of surveillance, law enforcement/security, and police reporting measures in larger schools affirms the school-as-warehouse thesis, to the extent that warehousing implies places where large numbers of people are present and where there is a noteworthy reliance on harsh discipline. Support for Hirschfield’s (2008) claims about deindustrialization and warehousing in inner cities, however, is limited. Because urbanicity was only related to police reporting in 2007–2008 and to number of law enforcement hours in 1999–2000, it is uncertain whether the ravages of deindustrialization in urban areas are linked with reliance on harsh school punishment.

Class, Race, and Punishment

Although this study provides only limited support for aspects of the governing-through-crime thesis, our findings offer some support for various perspectives on race and class inequalities and punishment. More importantly, this study suggests that class and race are independent predictors of punitive measures. Although contemporary scholars have paid considerable attention to racial inequalities in American punishment since the 1970s, lower class status emerged as a significant predictor in both harsh and soft punishment in our study. In addition, class emerged as significant in more of our punitive models than race. The findings have some implications for class and race-based theories of school punishment, which are addressed below.

When considering theory development, our soft punishment findings seem to offer some support for class reproduction perspectives (see Bowles and Gintis 1976; Bourdieu and

⁶ For example, in June 5–7 of 1998, 37 % of parents surveyed answered “yes” to the question “thinking about your oldest child, when he or she is at school, do you fear for his or her physical safety?” In contrast, 55, 52, and 43 % of parents surveyed answered “yes” to this question on April 21, 1999, May 21–22, 1999, and April 7–9, 2000, respectively (Gallup 2011).

Passeron 1977; Willis 1977) rather than a structural similarity argument in school crime control. Specifically, our school surveillance measures might be interpreted as serving a labor preparation function in poor, predominantly white, Southern schools. Here, the components of school surveillance (i.e., random metal detector checks, dog sniffs, sweeps for contraband, and drug testing) could be said to mimic the kinds of invasive techniques used to monitor low-level employees in many industries. Looking at Southern labor arrangements, scholars have noted that the legacy of slavery created particular contemporary employment conditions in the US South (see Ransom and Sutch 2001). These conditions include the creation of a relatively cheap, industrial, non-unionized, and surplus Southern labor pool (Bartley 1995; Newman 1984). Thus, surveillance in poor, white, and Southern schools might be habituating students to the lack of privacy in non-union and low-level industrial jobs—the types of employment available to lower-class workers in the South.

Most school personnel and researchers agree that harsh forms of punishment are best measured in terms of expulsions, suspensions, and transfer of students (i.e., school sanctions). Although class was a relatively inconsistent and weak predictor of school sanctions, our significant class finding deserves some theoretical exploration. As noted previously, deindustrialization of urban areas is unlikely to be significantly contributing to heavy reliance on school sanctions. In a very general way, however, it might be that poor, large, high crime schools in high crime neighborhoods are consciously or unconsciously preparing students for their future place in a de-industrialized US economy (see Hirschfield 2008; Kupchik and Monahan 2006). In addition, as noted previously, the research regarding school suspension, poor academic achievement, and dropout rates (Bowditch 1993; Ekstrom et al. 1986; Raffaele-Mendez 2003; Wehlage and Rutter 1986) as well as the rates of unemployment for high school dropouts (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2010), lend some support for the idea that school sanctions might “prepare” students for their future place in the economic order, with unemployment being one possibility. Also, it might be that large, poor, crime prone schools in high crime neighborhoods are preparing students for their future place within the US criminal justice system. Although speculative, the idea that school sanctions might be used to habituate lower class students to their place in the economy or the criminal justice system points to the need for more information about the class make-up of sanctioned students as well as the incarcerated population in the US. It also suggests that critical criminologists may want to pay equal attention to race as well as class disparities when examining punitive criminal justice trends since the 1970s.

Our findings regarding police reporting can also contribute to a class-based analysis of school punishments. The most consistent predictors of police reporting across time were percent of white students and student poverty, although again neither predictor was particularly powerful. Also, the reliance on police reporting in predominantly white and poor schools is not easily explained with these data. One possible explanation might be that large, poor, and white schools rely on police reporting as a way to control the few students of color in attendance. The Stratford High School example points to this possible trend. Although Goose Creek, North Carolina is not urban, Stratford High School was a mostly white school that was becoming more ethnically diverse throughout the 1990s. After the Goose Creek police raid on November 5, 2003, the NAACP and other civil rights groups argued that the principal and police officers specifically targeted students of color in their efforts to catch drug dealers on campus (Lewin 2004). Here, one argument is that white school administrators and police officers assumed that black students were the source of campus drug problems. Without data regarding the demographic characteristics of

individual students who are reported to the police, this explanation for our findings remains speculative.

Our analyses of harsh punishment trends also offer some support for a race-based perspective of school punishment. Specifically law enforcement/security presence was particular to large, predominantly ethnic minority schools, and schools outside of the South (in the 2007–2008 school year). Here, it is likely that crime-prone schools with large numbers of ethnic and racial minority students might be habituating students of color to being policed, regardless of the class status of the student-body, especially in schools outside of the South.

Moreover, our race and law enforcement findings point to racialized crime scholars' arguments (Alexander 2010; Bass 2001; Keahiolalo-Karasuda 2010; Perkinson 2010; Tatum 1994, 2000a, b). Scholars note that in the effort to achieve racial control, individuals of color, especially African Americans, have historically been constructed in negative ways, often as shiftless, uneducable, dangerous, criminal, and in need of strict control, exclusion, and/or confinement (see also Bowditch 1993; Downey and Pribesh 2004; Fenning and Rose 2007; Ferguson 2001; Meiners 2007; Morris 2005, 2007; Monroe 2005). Given our race and law enforcement finding, we hypothesize that these historic negative stereotypes may also help construct schools with many students of color as locations deserving of heavy law enforcement presence. Also, Wacquant (2001) argues that heavy reliance on law enforcement officers habituates ethnic minority students to the demeanor and tactics of criminal justice agents that they may encounter when they leave school. Once again, our findings add that this race-based law enforcement "habitation" extends beyond American inner city schools in recent years. Here the metaphor of the "ghetto school" as being a place more like a prison than a school comes into question. Most recently, it seems likely that schools with many ethnic minority students inside *as well as* outside of American ghettos are maximum security locations, at least in terms of being locations with a heavy presence of law enforcement personnel.

Overall, the findings reported here support the idea that class and race function independently and predict different forms of school punishment. More importantly, our findings combine with other research (Payne and Welch 2010; Welch and Payne 2010) suggesting that race has, indeed, not declined in its significance (see Wilson 1980), at least not in large American public schools. Our findings, however, go beyond a pure racial oppression or racialized control perspective of education and punishment in America. Adding more complexity to the issue of school punishment, our study indicates that while race matters in terms of some harsh forms of punishment (law enforcement presence), lower-class status is a significant predictor of other punishments (surveillance, sanctions, and police reporting). We suggest that school punishments might be serving economic preparation function *as well as* a racialized control function (depending on the type of punishment). The exact relationships between race and class inequalities and school punishments need to be fleshed out in future scholarship.

Limitations and Considerations for Future Research

This study confronts several limitations. First, SSOCs data is not longitudinal and, therefore, we cannot discern the temporal relationships between crime and punishment. Also, some important data were not consistently collected, and the wording of some questions has changed over time, making comparisons between explanatory models at different times difficult. One of the most problematic aspects of measuring crime and crime control in schools is that most large-scale studies do not indicate the characteristics of

students who receive punishment. For example, it is unknown whether punishment (suspensions, expulsions, transfers, police reports, or arrests, etc.) is given out to boys more than girls, to members of ethnic minority groups more than whites, or to poor and working-class more than middle-class students.⁷ Given the limitations of available data, our discussion should be viewed as our best effort to explain some of the relationships we found in national, representative samples of US schools. We encourage future researchers to test and illuminate various aspects of our claims.

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⁷ This lack of data is consequential. For example, education statistics in the US (US Department of Education 2000, 2006) indicate that, between 2000 and 2006, African American students made up a larger percentage of students who were cut off from education services entirely (e.g., an increase from 29 to 46 %). From 2000 to 2006, the percentage of African American students in public schools dropped from 16.6 to 15.6 % (National Center for Education Statistics 2010). The lack of data mentioned here means that we cannot discern whether there is a connection between reliance on punitive measures and the increasing rate of exclusion of African Americans from public schools.

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