

**RACE, LABOR MARKETS, AND NEIGHBORHOOD VIOLENCE**

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## INTRODUCTION

Theories of the spatial distribution of rates of violent crime typically include race and ethnicity as well as labor market participation as key explanatory concepts. For example, in his underclass thesis, William Julius Wilson argues that a history of migration of Southern blacks to capitalize on manufacturing jobs in Northern cities, a subsequent loss of jobs in the transition to a service economy, and a movement of upwardly mobile middle-class blacks out of the inner-city resulted in high concentrations of poverty, joblessness, disrupted families, and violence.<sup>1</sup> More generally, social disorganization theory suggests that neighborhoods with high concentrations of racial and ethnic minorities may have high rates of violence in part because of low socioeconomic status, resulting from joblessness and low-quality jobs, which contribute to community disorganization, loss of control over youth, and high rates of crime and violence.<sup>2</sup>

While this literature has focused on the social and economic marginalization of African Americans and subsequent violence, similar processes likely affect both the economic circumstances and levels of violence of other racial and ethnic minority groups. This is particularly likely for Latino populations. In recent decades the size of the Spanish speaking population in the United States has swelled dramatically, largely resulting from immigration from Mexico. Latinos, especially recent immigrants, frequently find work at the margins of the labor market<sup>3</sup> and have levels of violence that some find to be higher,<sup>4</sup> and others find to be lower,<sup>5</sup> than for the general population. Unfortunately, estimates of labor market participation and other social characteristics fail to distinguish recent immigrants from native Latinos or immigrants of longer residence. Nor do they differentiate among Latino national groups. We know that the immigrant experiences of Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans, Mexicans, Central, and South Americans are very different, as are their labor market experiences, residential patterns, and violence rates.

Another important change in the American population results from the post Vietnam War stream of immigrants from Southeast Asia. Historically, American criminology has paid little attention to Asian communities, accepting the image of low crime communities that Takagi and Platt characterized as “gilded ghettos.”<sup>6</sup> In reality, there has always been substantial heterogeneity among Asian populations in the U.S., today even more so than in the past. Yet we know little of the nature and levels of violence within these communities.

Considering simultaneously changes in the ethnic composition of the U.S. population and how the economy affects neighborhoods and violence, the following question arises: What are the key labor market characteristics associated with high rates of violence that help to explain high crime rates in minority neighborhoods? Crutchfield posed one answer: High concentrations of secondary sector jobs, as defined by dual-labor market theory, along with high unemployment, produce high rates of community violence.<sup>7</sup> His empirical research supports the proposition that high concentrations of job instability characteristic of secondary-sector jobs produce high rates of violence. Subsequent articles on labor market participation and violence also provide general support for this relationship.<sup>8</sup> Crutchfield argued that the association between rates of job instability and violence across neighborhoods is mainly due to a “situation of company” in which high concentrations of young men experiencing unstable employment are conducive to violence. Although his arguments were forceful, he was unable to marshal evidence supporting this particular mechanism over competing ones.<sup>9</sup>

This paper builds on the literature on race, labor markets, and violent crime in three ways. First, it re-examines the empirical relationships between neighborhood racial/ethnic composition, labor market indicators, and violent crime using more recent data on census tracts within Seattle, a city whose population dynamics reflect changing U.S. demographics. Second, it capitalizes on data from a new survey on over 4,000 households nested within census tracts to test the “situation of

company” hypothesis. Third, it tests the extent to which the “labor-market concentration” mechanism accounts for racial differences in neighborhood violence rates.

## **DUAL LABOR MARKETS, RACE, AND VIOLENT CRIME**

### ***Dual Labor Market Theory and Race***

Dual labor market theory was developed by economists such as Bluestone and Piore,<sup>10</sup> to address problems of underemployment and urban poverty not captured in models of neoclassical economics.<sup>11</sup> Essentially, it is argued that the economy can be divided into two sectors—primary and secondary—based on job characteristics. The primary sector contains good jobs with high wages, good work conditions, and job stability.<sup>12</sup> Chances for advancement exist and are governed by administrative and due process rules through internal labor markets within organizational units, rather than solely by free market forces through external markets. The stability of primary sector jobs fosters strong social relationships with others in the work force.

In contrast, the secondary sector contains less desirable jobs with low wages, poor work conditions, and, most importantly, job instability.<sup>13</sup> Chances for advancement are poor, discipline is based on personal relationships and can be harsh and capricious, and job turnover rates are high.<sup>14</sup> As a result of job instability, workers fail to develop strong ties to their co-workers and the workplace. For dual labor market theory, job stability is the crucial difference between primary and secondary sector jobs. Because primary sector jobs tend to be stable, enduring, and often part of an occupational career, primary sector workers are required to show up for work regularly and on time. Such is not always the case with secondary sector jobs, which tend to be intermittent, erratic, and short in duration.

Dual labor market theorists maintain that blacks disproportionately begin their careers in the secondary labor market. This occurs in part through statistical and systemic discrimination. For

example, employers making hiring decisions tend to use information that is readily and inexpensively available to them, such as race or demeanor, which may be correlated with job performance in the aggregate, but in individual cases results in discrimination. Piore points out that such discrimination increases the pool of secondary laborers, exerting a downward force on wages, and reduces the pool of primary sector workers, exerting an upward force on wages.<sup>15</sup> Thus, secondary employers and primary workers have incentives to favor such discrimination. Quasi-experimental audit studies have found strong effects of racial discrimination for entry-level jobs.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Pager found stronger effects of employment discrimination against blacks than felons.<sup>17</sup> Once relegated to a secondary sector market, it is very difficult to move out. Erratic and unstable work conditions reinforce absenteeism and tardiness, making workers ill prepared for the regularity of primary jobs. Poor relationships with co-workers and supervisors make workers ill equipped to manage relationships and institutional regulations of primary jobs. Such patterns also set the stage for difficulties outside of the workplace.

### ***Neighborhoods, Race, and Labor Markets***

Labor market sectors help structure patterns of income, career trajectories, and social networks. In most cities, patterns of residential mobility have created spatial distributions of primary and secondary workers. Generally, secondary-sector workers lack the income and other resources to live in affluent neighborhoods, and end up relegated to low-income housing located near commercial sectors in the central city. On this point, Kasarda found that welfare recipients are less likely to move from inner city impoverished areas to suburban areas, where entry-level job opportunities are greater.<sup>18</sup> Primary-sector workers, in contrast, have historically used their higher incomes to settle in more affluent neighborhoods, typically located away from the central area in peripheral or suburban areas.<sup>19</sup>

Such patterns help to explain residential segregation patterns. Indeed, racial assimilation theories argue that assimilation along the lines of increasing human capital, better jobs, and better English-language skills help explain residential mobility of minorities. Competing explanations, such as place stratification models, argue that racial discrimination in the housing market plays an important role in residential segregation.<sup>20</sup> Research has found support for this argument. Blacks seeking to move to better neighborhoods face barriers such as discrimination by mortgage lenders and real estate agents,<sup>21</sup> which in part reflect preferences of residents. The preferences of white residents—generally against integrating their neighborhoods—in turn, derive from their negative stereotypes of ethnic and racial minorities.<sup>22</sup>

These processes have led to enduring residential segregation in major cities, in which high concentrations of black impoverished neighborhoods persist. Quillian has described recent trends in such residential patterns.<sup>23</sup> He finds that upwardly mobile blacks are moving into non-poor white neighborhoods at a higher rate than blacks moving out of such neighborhoods. But as blacks move into these neighborhoods, the white population declines at an even higher rate, which prevents the proportion of blacks in white neighborhoods from increasing. These net flows produce new impoverished neighborhoods, contribute to increasing populations in black impoverished neighborhoods, and produce greater concentration effects.<sup>24</sup> The latter resulted from the recession of the early 1980s, in which a drop in labor demand disproportionately affected secondary sector laborers in moderately impoverished neighborhoods.

### ***Neighborhood Race, Labor Markets, and Violent Crime***

Our argument to this point is that racial discrimination in the labor market along with residential segregation have produced neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans, secondary-sector workers, and unemployed workers. These neighborhoods are at risk of high rates of violence.<sup>25</sup> But what is the theoretical link between labor market characteristics and violence?

We build on arguments of Crutchfield<sup>26</sup> and Crutchfield and Pitchford<sup>27</sup> to identify two mechanisms by which unemployment and secondary sector employment are associated with high rates of violence.

The first mechanism occurs at the individual level among workers. Secondary sector jobs have low wages, low skill levels, and bleak promotion prospects, and as such are unlikely to engender the kinds of job commitments and interpersonal ties to coworkers enjoyed by primary sector occupations. Secondary sector workers have time on their hands, and are unconcerned with losing their jobs or losing the respect of their coworkers. In contrast, primary sector workers receive higher wages, have more complex jobs, or have promotion and career prospects; therefore, they are likely to develop strong job commitments and ties to coworkers, and are less likely to do anything to jeopardize their jobs or their employment relations. On this point, Sampson and Laub found that job stability, rather than employment is associated with desistance from crime,<sup>28</sup> and Crutchfield and Pitchford found that people in more stable jobs are less likely to engage in crime.<sup>29</sup>

The second criminogenic mechanism described by Crutchfield occurs when relatively large portions of marginally employed people live in proximity to one another.<sup>30</sup> Residential segregation produces neighborhoods with high concentrations of jobless and secondary sector male workers, who move in and out of the labor force, work less than full-time when employed, and develop few commitments to jobs. Freed from commitments to work, they have time on their hands with little to do. Such “workers” frequently pass the time by hanging out on street corners, in pool halls, and in local taverns, bars, and nightclubs—places that are often staging grounds for violent encounters. According to Cohen and Felson’s routine activities theory, their location in the social structure makes them “suitable targets”—that is, potential victims of violent “motivated offenders”—in the absence of “capable guardianship.”<sup>31</sup> The absence of constraints from labor market and educational institutions may free such individuals to become “motivated offenders,” as well. Difficulties arise,

in particular, when conventional institutions are unable or unwilling to resolve the disputes of such uncommitted men. In neighborhoods, concentrations of marginally employed secondary sector workers result in a situation of company where suitable targets, motivated offenders, and a lack of capable guardianship come together, making crime more likely.

The above mechanisms imply a specific model of how neighborhood racial composition is related to rates of violence, which unfolds in four steps. First, macro processes of dual labor markets and residential segregation give rise to neighborhoods with concentrations of marginally unemployed black adults and youth. Second, high rates of job instability and the accompanying low levels of economic resources in such neighborhoods give rise to a “situation of company,” in which high concentrations of jobless and marginally employed black males have time on their hands and weak institutional commitments. Third, labor instability and low levels of economic resources result in increased violent crime through the presence of these “situations of company.” Finally, collectively these processes produce the association of neighborhood racial composition with violent crime. Research on these topics has focused on African American and white communities. Here we move beyond that racial dichotomy by including Latino and Asian populations in our analyses.

A link between the aggregate distribution of labor market participation and violent crime rates has been established in the literature<sup>32</sup> and between individual labor market participation and criminal involvement.<sup>33</sup> Research has not, however, examined the extent to which the racial composition effect on violent crime can be explained by labor market participation. Indeed in most major industrial cities, extreme residential segregation makes it impossible to disentangle racial composition from structural disadvantage. Also, research has not established empirically whether the mechanism relating labor market processes to rates of violence involves large concentrations of



marginally employed young men freed from institutional controls and forming a “situation of company” conducive to violence.

## **THIS STUDY**

### *Hypotheses*

To determine if higher levels of violence in minority communities can be explained by higher unemployment and the allocation of workers who live in minority neighborhoods into secondary sector jobs, we analyze a set of models that are illustrated by Figure 1, which displays the interrelationships among factors described above. Social disorder, which includes young men conspicuously socializing in public places, unregulated by legitimate institutions, refers to neighborhood conditions that capture the presence of “situations of company.” The hyphenated line between racial composition and violent crime depicts the often-observed higher levels of violence in minority neighborhoods when compared to predominantly white communities. Here it is hyphenated because we hypothesize that when labor instability and social disorder are “taken into account” the “often observed” connection between neighborhood racial composition and violence will be shown to be illusionary. What do we mean by “taken into account?”

We take other factors “into account” when we analyze their influence simultaneously with racial composition and violent crime. The solid arrow between “racial composition” and “labor instability” represents the higher unemployment rates and disproportionate secondary sector employment of people of color, resulting in higher labor instability in neighborhoods with more minority residents. The dotted line connecting “labor instability” and the “violent crime rate” represents the results of past research, showing that neighborhoods that are high on the former are also high on the latter. Here, the line is dotted because we expect an important mechanism through which labor instability causes violent crime to be present. This is because the places where

disadvantaged workers live have more social disorder, and will thus have more of the “situations of company” conducive to crime. Social disorder then is here represented as the mechanism through which labor instability affects crime. The higher levels of social disorder, resulting from labor instability, are depicted by the solid arrow. Racial composition also leads to neighborhood social disorder because of disadvantages experienced by residents, so a solid line connects these two variables in the model. Finally, our prediction that neighborhood social disorder leads to high levels of violence is illustrated with a solid line.

In summary, we hypothesize that: (1) labor instability leads to neighborhood social disorder which in turn leads to higher rates of violent crime; (2) the connection between racial composition and social disorder can, in part, be explained by higher levels of labor instability in minority neighborhoods; and (3) the connection between racial composition and violent crime rates can be explained by higher levels of labor instability and social disorder in minority neighborhoods.

### ***Measures***

Our measures of local work force composition, as well as the other measures of local structural disadvantage and race and ethnic composition come from the 2000 U.S. Census. We created a measure of neighborhood labor instability by combining the proportion unemployed and the proportion of workers employed in secondary sector jobs.<sup>34</sup> Though the association between secondary sector employment and unemployment has dropped in Seattle since Crutchfield’s original paper,<sup>35</sup> it is still high enough to warrant the creation of a combined measure. We use census tracts’ median income as a measure of neighborhood economic well being.

We also use a set of census characteristics as control variables, including the proportion of the population who are young males (age 15 to 24), and the proportion of the population age 5 and above who lived in the same house five years ago (residential stability). Finally, we include measures of the respective proportions of the neighborhood that are African American, Asian, and

Latino. Seattle has a large Asian-Immigrant population, and the tract-level correlation between proportion Asian and proportion immigrant is .944. For comparability with the other racial groups only proportion Asian is used, but empirically, the effect of the proportion Asian cannot be disentangled from the effect of the proportion immigrant

The Seattle Neighborhoods and Crime Survey (SNCS) is a survey of 4,904 residents of 123 Seattle census tracts conducted in 2002 and early 2003. This survey provides the measures of neighborhood disruption. We rely on reports of survey respondents, who are neighborhood residents, to signal the presence of “situations of company” within their neighborhoods. Residents were asked about local problems in the neighborhood, including groups of teenagers hanging around on the street and neighbors who cause trouble and make noise. The resulting measure of social disorder is the sum of valid responses to the two 3-category items.

Finally, the crime measure is the yearly average for 2002 and 2003 of the sum of robberies, assaults, rapes, and murders adjusted by the census tract population. The violent crime rate measure was highly skewed so a logged variable was used in the analyses. The measure is based on Seattle Police Department data.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Race and Ethnicity and Seattle Neighborhoods***

It is useful to begin by describing the ethnic composition, topography, and community organization of the city of Seattle. All are relevant for our consideration of the effects that labor market participation has on neighborhoods and violent crime. The most striking characteristics of Seattle’s ethnic composition is the large percentage of white residents. At the time of the 2000 census, Asian Americans were the largest minority group at 13.1 percent. African Americans were 8.3 percent of the cities population; Latinos were about 5.3 percent; and, 16.9 percent of city

residents were foreign born. Less than one percent of those reported in the census are Native Americans. The largest groups of immigrants are of Asian descent and many live in neighborhoods that include Asian Americans. This residential pattern prevents us from separating the effects of Asian Americans from immigrant populations. The Latino population, while small compared to some other western cities, is largely a result of people who moved to Seattle between the 1990 and 2000 census of the population. This new group of residents is concentrated in a small area in the southwest section of the city. While the total percentage of the non-white population is small when compared to other large cities, the racial/ethnic diversity of the nonwhite population makes Seattle a good location for studying race, neighborhoods, and crime while going beyond the black/white dichotomy or the white/non-white comparisons that have historically characterized criminological research.

Seattle's topography is important for understanding residential patterns. The city (note Map 1) sits between Puget Sound, a saltwater inlet off the Pacific Ocean, and Lake Washington, a twenty-mile long freshwater lake to the east. Lake Union and canals connecting it to the Sound and Lake Washington divide the city's north and south. Originally Seattle was built on seven hills; early on, high-pressure hoses were used to sluice some of the hills into the Sound. The surviving hilly terrain affects residential patterns as much or more than the bodies of water. The hillsides, which are proximate to the water, are today the location of high priced "view" property. In the south end of the city, two of the larger concentrations of minority residents, the Central District and the Rainier Valley, are separated by ridges from high-end lake view neighborhoods, some of which have considerable racial integration. To the east, facing the lake are very expensive houses, to the west (in addition to some increasingly expensive houses as a result of gentrification) are inexpensive houses and neighborhoods with the poorest citizens of the city. There are similar patterns elsewhere in the city, in which middle and upper-middle class people live in houses facing

the water, while middle class and even working class people live on the non-view side of the hill. Rarely are these neighborhoods separated by anything more than a few transitional residential or minor commercial blocks.

Seattle can also be described as a “city of neighborhoods.” While elsewhere realtors use this phrase as a code for “segregated,” this is less the case in Seattle. There are discernable neighborhoods, with unique character, that are well known to residents. For example, Ballard, once a Scandinavian logging village before annexation into the city; Beacon Hill until the 1990’s was characterized by nearly equal populations of Asians, African Americans, and whites but is now nearly fifty percent Asian as a result of immigration; and, Fremont is an artsy, formerly “hippie,” neighborhood that advertises itself as the “center of the universe.” These and other neighborhoods are meaningful because of the racial and ethnic composition of residents, but they also have social meaning. Ballard, where people of Scandinavian descent are but a small minority today, is more socially conservative than Fremont just to the east, which annually holds a solstice parade that includes nude bike riders. The Central District, the historic center of the city’s African American community, has never been more than fifty percent black and the Rainier Valley is not only home to Seattle’s poorest residents but also stable racially integrated neighborhoods, large communities of recent immigrants, and a revitalized, trendy restaurant and club district. Map 1 displays the distribution of minority populations in Seattle census tracts. Clearly, most people of color live in the south end, but all regions of the city have minority residents, and all tracts have white residents.

Map 2 presents the distribution of violent crimes in Seattle as well as the distribution of labor instability, a measure of the secondary labor market that was described above.

Neighborhoods with high levels of violent crime and high labor instability are clustered in the central and southern parts of the city, as is much of the nonwhite population. The important

question for this research is to what extent are high levels of violence in minority communities explained by high levels of labor instability in these neighborhoods?

### ***Labor Instability Disorder and Crime***

Can social disorder help us understand the effect of labor instability on crime, and can labor instability and social disorder help us understand the association of neighborhood racial composition and crime? To answer these questions, we constructed two sets of models. The first predicts neighborhood levels of social disorder with the race and ethnic composition of the neighborhoods as well as controls for the proportion of young males and the residential stability of the neighborhood. Then labor instability and median income—which represents in part the economic resource consequences of labor instability—are introduced. A second set of models predicts neighborhood violent crime rates. An initial model again uses race and ethnic composition, young males, and residential stability. Then labor instability, median income, and finally social disorder are added to the model. Key findings from each of these models are highlighted below.

The first question is whether the effect of labor instability on crime, previously established by Crutchfield,<sup>36</sup> can be explained by the intervening mechanism of social disorder. The results indicate that both labor instability and lower median income are important in determining neighborhood levels of social disorder. In turn, it appears that social disorder does mediate some of the effect of labor instability and median income on violent crime. Figure 2 presents selected standardized effect sizes from the models predicting crime. In the first model, controlling for race and ethnic composition, young males, and residential stability, labor instability has a moderate positive association with violent crime. Adding lower median income to the model, hypothesized to capture the economic resource effects of labor instability, decreases somewhat the association of labor instability and violent crime. Finally, adding social disorder reduces further the effects of both labor instability and median income on violent crime. This appears to support the notion that

the association of labor instability and violent crime can be understood, in part, through local social disorder.

### *Explaining the Association of Race and Violent Crime*

The second question of this research is whether we can understand the association of race and violent crime through this process of labor instability, resource deprivation, and social disorder. We begin this analysis by considering if, in fact, neighborhoods with larger minority populations have high levels of social disorder and if they also have more people working at the margins of the local labor market. Our thesis is that observed correlations between violent crime rates and the percentage of the population that is African American, Latino, or Asian/Immigrant will be explained, at least in part, by higher levels of social disorder brought on by relatively high levels of economic marginalization.

### *The effects of racial composition on social disorder*

In Figure 3 we present the results from an analysis designed to explain variations in neighborhood social disorder. The unstandardized effect sizes for the percent African-American, Latino and Asian from this model are presented. Here (the left-hand set of three histograms), the ability to predict social disorder from the size of minority populations is displayed first holding constant percent young males and residential stability, then taking labor instability into account (the middle set of histograms), and finally taking the median income of tracts into account (the right-hand set). We should note that the average levels of social disorder for neighborhoods with relatively large Asian and immigrant, African American, and Latino populations are higher than in non-minority neighborhoods. This pattern holds even after taking into account residential mobility and the age composition of neighborhoods. We note also that, with rare exception, these neighborhoods, even those typically thought of as minority communities, still have substantial, white populations.

Next, we introduce a measure of the degree of labor instability present in neighborhoods, and then the median income of tracts. The explanatory power of each measure of racial composition of neighborhoods declines when economy, jobs and income, are considered, but the change in effect sizes are not the same for each group. The effect of the percent Asians and immigrants on social disorder is explained by labor instability, suggesting that these communities have higher levels of disorder because residents are more likely to be unemployed or working in secondary sector jobs. Greater labor instability also helps to account for higher social disorder where African American and Latino residents live, but the presence of these race/ethnic populations is still significantly related to disorder even after employment is considered.

The amount of social disorder declines as the income of census tracts increases. And, taking income into account further reduces the effect of racial and ethnic composition on neighborhood social disorder. And, of course, we know that economic marginalization is a direct result of labor market marginalization (labor instability). The predictive ability of percent African American, while still significant, is reduced. The effect of percent Latino is also reduced substantially by taking median income into account. So, these results indicate that the economic marginalization of people of color in Seattle helps to explain why minority group members are more likely to live in neighborhoods with more social disorder. But, even after taking labor instability and income into account, African Americans and Latinos are still more likely to live where there is more social disorder. Our next question concerns how much of observed higher levels of violence in minority neighborhoods are due to economic factors and social disorder.

*Does Labor Instability Explain the Race Violence Connection?*



As in most cities across the U.S., in Seattle neighborhoods where more people of color live violent crime rates are higher. We expect that these higher levels of violence are explained, at least in part, by neighborhood labor instability and low income, because these factors create greater disorder, which in turn leads to crime. Figure 4 displays what happens to the association between the sizes of racial/ethnic minority populations first when we consider the percentage of the population that is young, male, and residentially stable, and second, when we consider labor instability, median income, and social order. The figure presents the unstandardized effect sizes from the respective regressions of logged violent crime.

Just as we saw when we examined social disorder, the effects of race and ethnicity can, to some extent, be explained by considering other factors. Neighborhoods with more African Americans, Latinos, Asians and immigrants have higher violent crime rates. However, the pattern differs for the minority groups when we introduce additional factors. Higher levels of labor instability help to explain why minority communities have higher crime rates. Once we take employment into account, communities with more Asians and immigrants have no more violent crime than other neighborhoods. It appears that the employment disadvantage of neighborhood residence completely accounts for higher violent crime rates where more Asians and Immigrants live. The relationships between the percentage of neighborhood residents who are African American or Latino and violent crime rates remain when we take into account the labor instability of those living in the community, but the effects of both are substantially reduced.

The same is true when income and neighborhood disorder, are considered. When median income is introduced into our consideration of neighborhood violent crime the effects of racial composition are again reduced. The reduction is larger where Latinos live than in African American neighborhoods. Taking both labor instability and income into account helps to explain the higher crime rates in these neighborhoods, but while both appear to be important where Latinos

live, labor market instability is more important in reducing the effect of percent black. What of social disorder? Above we showed that these same economic factors explained some of the higher levels of disorder in minority communities. Here (Figure 4) we see that when social disorder, which results from labor instability, is taken into account the association between violent crime and percent African American or Latino is reduced further.

These analyses help to tell an important story that links the economic circumstance of residents to levels of social disorder in neighborhoods which together explain in part why the communities in which more minorities live have higher violent crime rates. Their neighborhoods have more labor instability and that causes more violence because it lowers income and increases social disorder. But this does not complete the story.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Our analyses yield five key findings, which help to explain the relationship between macro-level labor market processes operating at the community and neighborhood level and rates of violence. First, we find that labor market participation affects the level of social disorder in neighborhoods. Second, minority communities have higher levels of social disorder. Third, higher levels of disorder in minority communities are explained in part by higher levels of instability and lower median incomes. Fourth, higher violent crime rates in minority neighborhoods can, in part, be accounted for by the higher levels of social disorder there. And fifth, these patterns are different for racial and ethnic groups.

In Figure 1 we presented a diagram depicting the interrelationships of the variables in these analyses. That figure can be used to summarize important differences in patterns for the ethnic groups. We predicted that racial composition's effect on neighborhood violent crime rates would operate through labor instability and social disorder. Neighborhoods with higher percentages of

racial and ethnic minorities would have more labor instability, which in turn would lead to social disorder, which would then directly increase violent crime rates. We found that taking these factors into account completely explains why violent crime rates are higher in Asian American and immigrant communities relative to other communities. Neighborhoods with large percentages of Asian Americans and immigrants have higher rates of violence because they have higher levels of labor instability and social disorder. In contrast, social disorder and labor instability explains part, but not all, of the effects of the percentage of African Americans and Latinos on neighborhood violence. Even after taking into account labor instability and social disorder, African American and Latino neighborhoods still have higher rates of violence than other neighborhoods.

Our conceptual model, following from research on the underclass and “American apartheid” theses, emphasizes the spatial distribution of secondary sector and underemployed residents throughout the city of Seattle. We argue that overlapping concentrations of labor instability in neighborhoods with concentrations of racial and ethnic minorities are produced by residential patterns, some of which entail discrimination. These residential patterns produce concentrations of social incivilities, disorder, and “situations of company” that are conducive to high rates of violence. Thus, the causal mechanisms in our models operate at the neighborhood or community level, and we find support for those mechanisms.

Our major findings point to additional directions that we believe criminologists should pursue. First, because labor instability and social disorder do not completely explain why violence rates are higher in African American and Latino communities than elsewhere, criminologists should explore alternative mechanisms. One such possibility might entail cultural processes such as Anderson’s codes of the street.<sup>37</sup> Here, ethnographic research could prove crucial for unearthing new causal mechanisms involving cultural processes, structural mechanisms, and the interaction between the two.<sup>38</sup>

Second, our analyses highlight the importance of moving beyond the black-white dichotomy when considering race and crime. The labor market and residential histories of African American, Asian, and Latino people are very different so our results should come as no surprise. To gain a real appreciation of how labor market participation affects crime indirectly through income, social disorder, and alternative mechanisms we must study the members of unique racial and ethnic communities. For example we should disaggregate Asian, Latino, and black groups, making distinctions among Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, Southeast Asians, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans, Mexicans, Central, and South Americans, African Americans, Jamaicans, Somalis, and Ethiopians.

Third, the changing nature of the economy, immigration, and residential patterns of cities across the United States provide opportunities to build on our research on ethnicity, labor markets, and violence. To illustrate, earlier we described Seattle's neighborhoods. The industrial transition that has affected America's blue-collar workers has not had the devastating effects in Seattle as in many other places, presumably because of the presence of good aerospace and shipping industry jobs. Nevertheless, there are blue-collar neighborhoods where residents have lost economic ground. How might blue-collar neighborhoods like predominately-white Ballard and predominately-minority Beacon Hill be differentially affected by labor market changes? How are Seattle's extremely heterogeneous south end neighborhoods affected by these changes? These neighborhoods include middle class whites and minorities living in close proximity to the poor and working class—people most affected by labor market transitions. Perhaps most interesting of all, there is a group of neighborhoods in the southwest of the city which ten years ago, was heavily populated by immigrants of southeastern Asia. Now, the writing on the facades of formerly Vietnamese storefronts is giving way to Spanish, a reflection of Seattle's new Latino population moving into the area. A very rapid racial transition is being accompanied by an economic

transition. These changes in Seattle, and similar changes elsewhere, provide rich opportunities for developing better understandings of how race, ethnicity, employment, and economic circumstance affect violent crime.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson 1987; Sampson and Wilson 1995

<sup>2</sup> Sampson and Groves 1989; Sampson and Raudenbush 1999

<sup>3</sup> Wright and Dwyer 2003

<sup>4</sup> Jasinski, Asdigian, and Kantor 1997

<sup>5</sup> Martinez 2002

<sup>6</sup> Takagi and Platt 1978

<sup>7</sup> Crutchfield 1989

<sup>8</sup> Crutchfield and Pitchford 1997; Crutchfield, Glusker, and Bridges 1999; Bellair 2003

<sup>9</sup> Crutchfield 1989

<sup>10</sup> Bluestone 1970 and Piore 1970, 1975

<sup>11</sup> Kalleberg and Sorenson 1979

<sup>12</sup> Bluestone 1970; Piore 1975

<sup>13</sup> Bluestone 1970; Piore 1970

<sup>14</sup> Andrisani 1973; Bosanquet and Doeringer 1973

<sup>15</sup> Piore 1970

<sup>16</sup> Turner, Fix, and Struyk 1991; Cross, Genevieve, Mell, and Zimmerman 1990; Bendick, Jackson, and Reinoso 1994

<sup>17</sup> Pager 2003

<sup>18</sup> Kasarda 1989

<sup>19</sup> e.g., Fugitt and Brown 1990

<sup>20</sup> Alba and Logan 1993

<sup>21</sup> Shlay 1988; Yinger 1995

<sup>22</sup> Farley, et al. 1994; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996

<sup>23</sup> Quillian 1999

<sup>24</sup> Quillian 1999

<sup>25</sup> Crutchfield 1989; Sampson and Wilson 1995

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- <sup>26</sup> Crutchfield 1989
- <sup>27</sup> Crutchfield and Pitchford 1999
- <sup>28</sup> Sampson and Laub 1990
- <sup>29</sup> Crutchfield and Pitchford 1997
- <sup>30</sup> Crutchfield 1989
- <sup>31</sup> Cohen and Felson 1978
- <sup>32</sup> Crutchfield 1989; Crutchfield Glusker and Bridges 1999
- <sup>33</sup> Crutchfield and Pitchford 1997; Uggen 2000; Bellair 2003
- <sup>34</sup> See Crutchfield 1989
- <sup>35</sup> Crutchfield 1989
- <sup>36</sup> Crutchfield 1989
- <sup>37</sup> Anderson 1999
- <sup>38</sup> Sullivan 1989; Bourgois 1995

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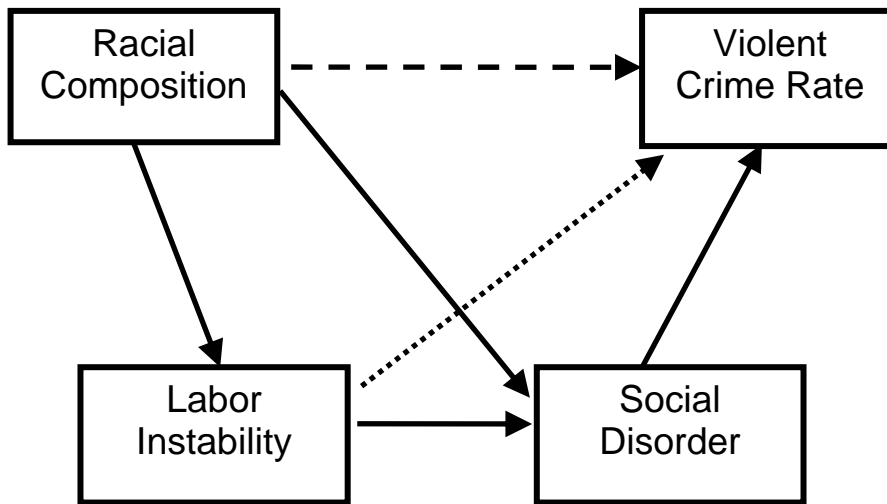
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Figure 1: Neighborhood Model of Race, Labor Markets, Social Disorder, and Violence Rates



- - - - -> No effect implies that race effect on violence is explained by labor instability & social disorder
- .....> No effect implies that labor instability effect on violence is explained by social disorder

Figure 2: Selected Standardized Coefficients from Regression of Logged Average Yearly Violent Crime Rate on Race, Young Males, Labor Instability, Median Income, and Social Disorder

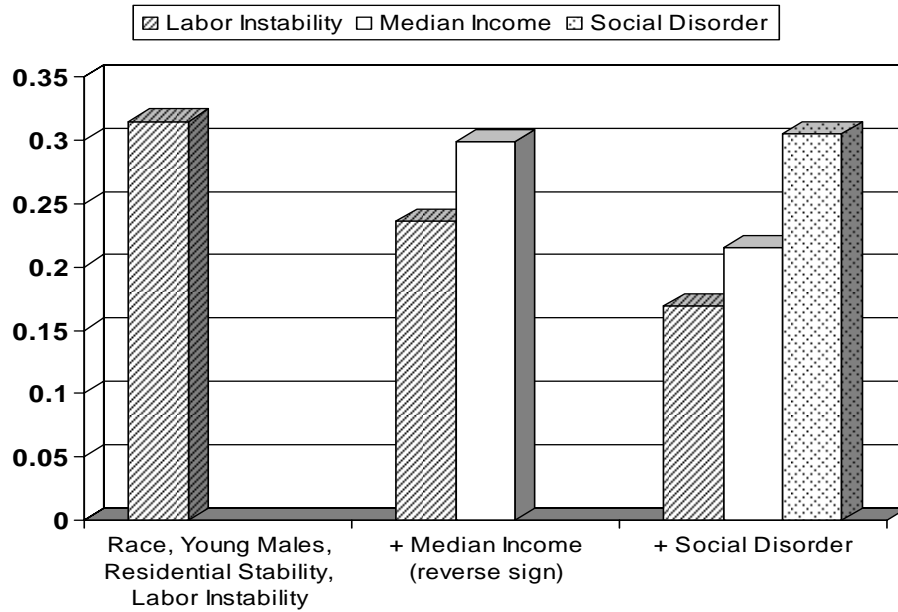


Figure 3: Race Coefficients from Regression of Social Disorder on Race, Young Males, Labor Instability, and Median Income

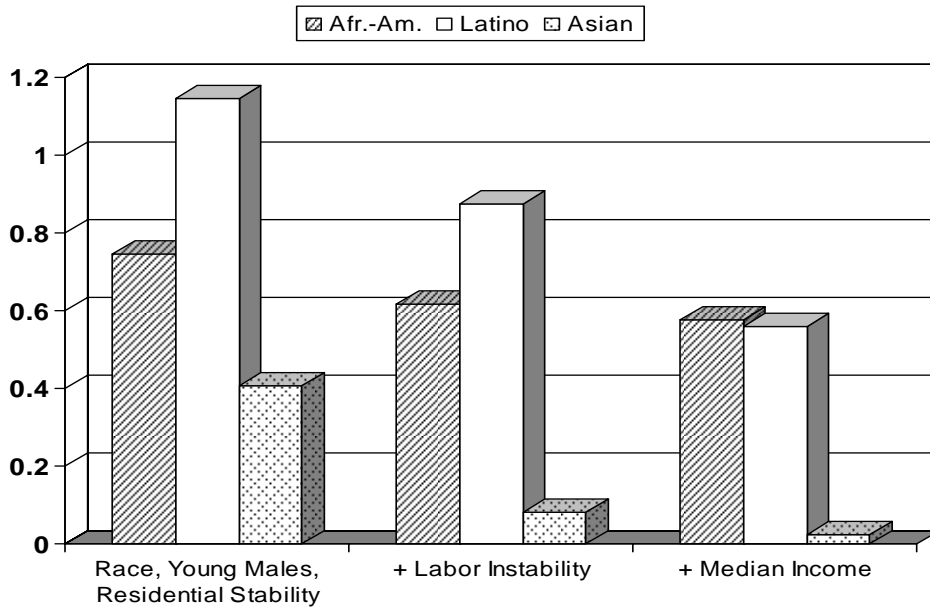


Figure 4: Race Coefficients from Regression of Logged Average Yearly Violent Crime Rate on Race, Young Males, Labor Instability, Median Income, and Social Disorder

