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**Race, deindustrialization, and homicide: Exploring
the relationship between deindustrialization and
racial homicide victimization**

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Honors Program Senior Project

June 2004

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HONORS THESIS

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Abstract

Deindustrialization is an important economic phenomenon affecting present day crime, in particular homicide victimization rates. Previous research has found that deindustrialization has several different effects, including increasing the income inequality and labor instability of a community. These effects also varied among racial groups. This study hypothesizes that deindustrialization effects would increase homicide rates and have a greater effect on black homicide victimization than any other rate. Drawing on a sample of 161 large cities, the direct and indirect effects of deindustrialization were estimated in multivariate regression analyses. The analyses found the opposite effect of what was hypothesized, that white victimization rates were affected directly by deindustrialization while black and total victimizations were not.

One of the more current phenomena affecting today's economy is deindustrialization, which is characterized by the closing or downsizing of factories and other industrial sites. The usual side effects of deindustrialization include unemployment, displaced labor, income inequality, and declining union participation that cause major alterations in the structure of a society (Portes and Walton, 1981). This makes deindustrialization a powerful economic event that can affect the community and criminal activity. Flint, Youngtown, and Altoona are examples of cities that went from being booming manufacturers to ghost towns because of deindustrialization. The rising crime rates occurring at these towns are well documented examples of the effect of deindustrialization on manufacturing based cities. This criminal activity ranges from economic crime to violent crime, but exactly what crimes are influenced more is an important distinction. Because previous research links several of deindustrialization's side effects and homicide, homicide victimization will be the focus of this study. One of the most important effects of deindustrialization on crime is racial differences (Messner 1983, Krahn, Hartnagel, and Gatrell 1986, Harer and Steffensmeier 1992, Shihadeh and Ousey, 1998) to be influential. By examining deindustrialization's effect on white and black victimization rates rates, solutions could be implemented to help curb these rates.

Theory

The first step in determining deindustrialization's effect on race-specific homicide victimization is choosing the proper theory. Theory suggests how deindustrialization causes variation in the victimization rates. The theory that could best explain deindustrialization's effect on crime overall is strain theory. Strain theory states universally shared high expectations of society combined with its inherent inequalities

leads to a phenomenon known as the “yawning gap” (Merton, 1938). This “gap” is what is between attaining one’s ultimate goals and where the person is presently situated. The larger the “gap”, the more pressure is felt by members of society who soon begin to look for alternative methods of achieving their goals, such as criminal activity. In America, this lofty goal is known as the “American Dream”, an essential part of our culture. To achieve the “American Dream”, a healthy economy is necessary and the “Dream” can be shattered by the effects of deindustrialization. Unlike normal unemployment though, deindustrialization creates a deficit of good paying jobs in the labor market. The educational level of manufacturing employees is typically low and hurts their chances at being rehired in jobs paying as well as the factory job they just lost. Merton (1938) suggests that unemployment has a demoralizing effect that creates an anomic environment where crime is more likely, for those in and out of the market. This environment helps lead to violent crime as the stresses of the environment weigh in on people. This stress also has different effects on different groups. In an environment already prone to crime, stress would have a significant impact. Blacks have been long employed and affected by manufacturing; many blacks rely on manufacturing jobs to support themselves (Kasarda, 1993 p.48). With many companies moving or downsizing in the cities to maintain profit margins (Sassen, 1990 p.467), the impact of deindustrialization is only going to grow. This loss of good paying jobs is also going to affect blacks more than whites, as it is more difficult for blacks to find such lucrative employment again and this leads to increases in their income inequality.

Strain theory is not the only theory that explains deindustrialization’s effect on homicide; control theory can explain the deindustrialization’s effect as well. Control

theory states one of the most important factors causing crime is the strength of social bonds one forms. According to Hirschi (1969), those with weak social bonds have lower “stakes in conformity” and are prone to commit crime. These bonds are formed everywhere, but outside of the family the place where the most important bonds are formed occurs in the work place. People spend most of their lives in the work place and deindustrialization removes people from these bonds, severely weakening them and having a similar effect on other social bonds. Deindustrialization’s disruption of the labor market and creation of limited job avenues reduces quick reentry into the work force. Soon those out of the workplace are unable to reform their bonds and this loss has an affect on the rest of their bonds, especially those with the community. Add to this the economic deprivation associated with deindustrialization weakens many bonds to the point where the person becomes prone to crime. Violent crime occurs because with the stress and frustration accompanying deindustrialization it becomes easy to break weak social bonds. The differences between whites and blacks also come into play since factory jobs are so important to blacks they are more likely to affect their social bonds. Because of this we would expect to see blacks more affected by deindustrialization’s impact and more likely to break social bonds like committing murder.

Labor market instability

Both theories predict deindustrialization will increase the labor market instability of the affected community. The effect of unemployment on crime, especially economic crime, is well documented (Cantor and Land 1985, Chiricos 1987, Cook and Zarkin 1985), as well as a link between violent crime and black unemployment (Shihadeh and Ousey 1998). White (1999) studied the effects of crime rates and the decline of

manufacturing from 1970-1990. White hypothesized that the loss of manufacturing jobs would force people to take lower paying jobs with less benefits and this would result in crime. White found the decline of manufacturing and its unemployment effects increase economic crimes only (burglary, robbery, and drug crimes). He also found poverty did not have an effect on the crime rate, showing that deindustrialization influences crime but not through an increase in poverty.

The economic crime link has been supported, but the link with violent crime has not. Besides crimes that are economic and violent (e.g., robbery), research has found little relationship between violent crime and labor instability research, except for Crutchfield's (1989) finding that labor instability had an effect on all violent crimes.

Deindustrialization leads to labor instability as people attempt to find jobs and take up lower echelon jobs, which weakens their social bonds and increases the chances for crime.

Poverty and income inequality

Deindustrialization is an economic phenomenon and may affect other economic phenomena like poverty and inequality. Messner (1983) looked at urban homicide rates and found that poverty affected homicide more than inequality. Numerous studies have found that poverty predicts crime but its effects are indirect. Blau and Blau (1982) studied the differences between economic inequality and poverty to see which had the largest impact. Blau and Blau (1982) results suggest that in an urban setting, income inequality has more of an effect than poverty on violent crime. Shihadeh and Steffensmeier (1994) found similar results of income inequality on black violent crime rates, as did Humphrey and Palmer (1987). These study and others (Blau and Golden

1986, Harer and Steffindmeier 1992, Krahn Hartnagel Gartrell 1986) suggest that economic inequality is a stronger predictor of crime rates than poverty, which would present a problem because income inequality affects black crime rates (Harer and Steffindmeier 1992). Blau and Blau (1982) theorized that economic inequality was such an influential predictor of crime because it creates alienation and hopelessness. According to strain theory, these feelings would only be compounded by the fact that the “American Dream” perception is stronger than ever. People want to achieve the “Dream”, but inequality not only limits their chances financially but also breaks their will leaving the chance for the increased crime, especially violent crime like homicide. Again here is a place where a difference in the two races will be played out, blacks being more affected by the occurrence of this inequality.

Deindustrialization affects crime in many ways, yet its effects on black and white homicide victimization rates are unsure of. Using variables from strain and social control theories, these relationships will be examined. Previous research states the main effect of deindustrialization is the income inequality it fosters. By reducing good job opportunities and having many people earn less income, the dispersion of income increases and this increase in income inequality weakens social bonds while also expanding the “yawning gap”. These pair of phenomenon help foster the probability of homicide happening, and with the high probability of blacks being in more unequal situations it will increase the black homicide victimization rate. Deindustrialization’s direct effect also will have an effect on the victimization rate. The sheer loss of jobs for so many combined with worker’s typical low education and lack of good jobs will have effects similar to that of income inequality. These occurrences can be too much for some, leading to antisocial

behavior like crime. This is especially a problem for blacks who are more dependent on factory work. Just like income inequality and deindustrialization, economic deprivation forces people into situations where with weakened social bonds they may become more prone to commit crimes that break those norms. These first variables are economic in nature because that is the major impact of deindustrialization, and although homicide is highly personal event these impacts cannot be ignored.

Other variables that are linked to deindustrialization and homicide are unemployment, a direct product that follows the same theory as the other economic variables. Population size is linked to deindustrialization as well as the more people there are the more likely the consequences of deindustrialization (“gap” and weak social controls) are going to increase. Young adults will also suffer from deindustrialization as the influx of more qualified workers fill the market looking for lower paying jobs and lower the chance of young adults getting jobs. From these theories it is hypothesized that deindustrialization will have a direct effect and indirect effect through economic factors of increase in income inequality and economic deprivation. Also this effect will have a larger impact on black homicide victimization rates than white homicide victimization rates.

H1: Deindustrialization will directly affect homicide victimization rates.

H2: Due to the racial differences in risk exposure to deindustrialization, black homicide victimization rates will be affected to a greater degree than other rates.

H3: Income inequality will affect homicide victimization rates.

H4: Due to racial differences in exposure to income inequality, black homicide victimization rates will be affected to a greater degree than other rates.

Data and Methods

The unit of analysis for this study was cities with a population of over 100,000 in the year in 2000. State level data was not used because states are too large for accurate analyzing and county level data, although compatible on the population and manufacturing level has had problems in the past with accuracy on proper homicide reporting to the UCR (Maltz and Targonski 2002). Cities were used because it allowed for the largest sample size while at the same time allowing for accurate racial victimization data. The final number of cities was 161. Most structural data are taken from the 2000 Census report for cities and counties. For the change in manufacturing for the cities, additional data was taken from the 1990 Census. The homicide data was taken from the 2000 Supplementary Homicide Report from the UCR. The state of Florida was not included in the Supplementary Report so Floridian cities are not included in the data set.

Dependent variables: The dependent variable for the analyses is homicide victimization rate per 100,000. The variable is broken into 3 categories, total victimization rate, black victimization rates, and white victimization rates. Victimization is a better indicator of the different racial effects of deindustrialization than are the offender rates. The identity of the offender is not always known, the identity of the victim is. This knowledge of proper identity means that the proper race-based results can be drawn from a the sample. For black victimization rates the natural log of the variable was used because of a skew in the data. Black victimization rates had to be modified for this because of the lack of black victims in a number of the cities. To accommodate for this, every cities' black victimization total had one victim added to it. By adding one extra

victim, every city would have at least one black homicide and all the cities could be naturally logged and used in the analysis.

Independent variables: The independent variables in the analysis are broken into three different sections. The first are the structural variables, natural log of the population of the city, natural log of the percent of the population which is black, and the percent of the population which is a youth. The second set of variables dealt with economic parameters, percent unemployed of the civilian work force and the gini index for households. The gini index measures the cumulative inequality (gap between actual distribution of wealth and 45 degree line of equal wealth) in a city. The last group of variables dealt with the direct effects of deindustrialization, manufacturing loss and hyper deindustrialization. Manufacturing loss was measured by calculating the percent loss in manufacturing jobs from 1990 to 2000. Hyper deindustrialization is a dummy variable representing cities where there has been a 10% or higher drop in manufacturing jobs in the last ten years to examine if large scale deindustrialization has more of an effect than regular deindustrialization.

Methods: Standard OLS regression was used in the study. The variables were introduced cumulatively in each analysis in four different models, structural variables the first model, economic predictors the second model, direct manufacturing loss the third model, and hyper deindustrialization the fourth model. Collinearity diagnostics and case-wise-diagnostics were run on each of the four analyses and no influential outliers nor was collinearity discovered.

Results

Table 1 here

The descriptives are listed above and do not show any variables to be concerned about. A small note is that the percent of the cities affected by hyper deindustrialization is 17.4, close to a fifth of the cities in the sample.

Table 2 here

The results for black victimization rates were revealing. The natural log of the population had a small positive significant effect in model 1 (.215) but no significant effect in the other models. This suggests that population only has a rudimentary effect on black victimization and is probably caused by another aspect like economic predictors, which were introduced in the cumulative models with no significant relationship. The next variable significant was percent unemployed, yet this was significant only when evaluating the results with a one-way t test. The standardized coefficients for it in models 2 and 3 were .115 and .115 respectively, a slight effect on the victimization rate. Percent unemployed was significant in models 2 and 3 but not in the fourth model. The only new variable in model 4 was hyper deindustrialization, suggesting a relationship. This relationship is thus probably a side effect of hyper deindustrialization because hyper deindustrialization is characterized by massive job loss and this would explain for the effect of unemployment on the victimization rate. The change could also be attributed to the fact that models 2 and 3 were close to not being significant in their one-tail tests. Perhaps the inclusion of the hyper deindustrialization variable added enough variation to make the effect of unemployment nonsignificant. The strongest predictor in the analysis

was the Gini index, which was not only significant but also had the strongest standardized coefficient (.499,.499,.497) of the analysis showing its strong impact on black victimization. Manufacturing loss, which was theorized to be significant, was found not to be. This means the theory on the dependence of blacks on manufacturing work is incorrect, as well the effects of the loss of those jobs. This perhaps occurs because blacks are more suited to surviving on lower echelon jobs and the lost of the factory job is not as severe as was theorized. This coupled with the strong significance of income inequality suggests that the most important predictor in determining black victimization is the current economic inequality, supporting strain theory on black victimization rates.

Table 3 here

The white victimization results differed greatly from the black victimization results. An earlier warning though to interpreting these findings is the low R Squares. The R Squares in the 4 models range from .031 to .048, showing that only a small amount of the variation in white victimization is explained by the analysis. The first significant variable was percent youth, significant in all four models. The standardized coefficients were also moderately strong (-.165 to -.191), as much of an impact as any other significant variable in this particular analysis. The catch though is that in each of the models percent youth decreased the victimization rate. This is an odd finding; it contradicts what is a basic theory of more youths increasing crime. The plausible explanation that whites are more likely to be victims of homicide perpetrated by older offenders, that whites are not victims of homicide by young offenders. This explanation would be not be supported strongly by the strain theory but has roots in the control theory, as youths may be more likely to adhere to a strong social control like killing

someone. Income inequality had a significant effect in all four models, albeit it was not as strong as a predictor as was in the black analysis as seen by comparing the standardized coefficients. The big finding though was manufacturing loss, which had a positive significant effect on white victimization. This effect is the product of the direct effect that deindustrialization has on the white community. Much was reported earlier on the effects that deindustrialization would have the black community, but none was directed to what impacts would be on the white community. The effects of looking for better jobs and losing bonds deemed a problem for blacks, would also be a problem for whites. The nonsignificance of hyper deindustrialization also seems to support the idea that direct deindustrialization's impact on the fabric of the community is the catalyst for the results. With manufacturing loss being significant, income inequality also significant and hyper deindustrialization nonsignificant supports the idea that the effects of job downgrading and social implications as the most plausible explanation for white victimization. This is an important finding because it is a complete turn around in the racial examination of deindustrialization, that deindustrialization's racial effects should not be limited only to blacks.

Table 4 here

The results for the total victimization rate were similar to that of the black victimization analysis. Again manufacturing loss did not have a significant impact, leading to the theory that deindustrialization only has a real impact on the white community. Percent unemployed had a significant effect in all included models, suggesting that the number of unemployed in a community has an effect on the rise of victimization rates. This helps show that deindustrialization has a possible small link to

victimization rates. The most important finding though was the continued significance of income inequality in the analyses, significant now in every instance. Here again the impact of is seen through its standardized coefficients (.416,.412), both much stronger than the rest of the variables in the models. The significance of income inequality through all of the models supports strain theory that stated that income inequality would be the strongest predictor of victimization rates, not labor market instability or deindustrialization.

Discussion

This study finds mixed effects of deindustrialization on victimization rates. The first two hypotheses of this study contended that deindustrialization would have an effect on the total victimization rate and have a greater effect on the black victimization rate. Both of these hypotheses are rejected but a surprising result was found, that deindustrialization affected white victimization rates. The various reasons on why this perhaps occurred were previously explained but now need to be taken into context. The lost of manufacturing of jobs hits harder for whites probably because the aforementioned effects deindustrialization had purportedly on the black community actually affect whites. It is still true that low skilled blacks have a hard time finding jobs, but low skill whites have just as much of a problem if not more. As whites lose their manufacturing jobs and are forced to take lower echelon jobs they fall prey to the disadvantages of a lower economic status they are not accustomed to. It is perhaps these movement to a lower income situation that causes the predominate cause for white homicide victimization. The loss of manufacturing jobs puts a good portion of white factory workers into those unfamiliar and more crime prone situations. This theory suggests that homicide

victimization is strongly influenced by the economic factors on the community and not as much by racial differences.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 dealt with income inequality and both were supported; we thus fail to reject these hypotheses. The overwhelming significant impact of income inequality on total victimization supported the third hypothesis easily. This is fed off of the previous points in determining that the main predictor of victimization as a whole is economic conditions. While comparing the different victimization rates, black and total victimization both were strongly affected but the final comparisons of the standardized coefficients showed that black victimization was more affected by income inequality supporting the fourth hypothesis. Again these findings point that the most important aspect in victimization is economic in nature.

These findings help suggest where future research into deindustrialization's effect on violent crime should look, economic factors. By focusing mainly on the economic effects of deindustrialization in a community, research should be able to pinpoint the best findings. Future research should also focus on more specific measures of deindustrialization in forms of more accurate job losses, especially looking at what type of whites lose their jobs at factories. By examining the skill levels of these whites and their probable new jobs, it can be determined if they really are taking a huge drop off in a lower income situation which would facilitate the findings found here. Also it would be beneficial to incorporate more in depth economic measures to again examine if deindustrialization has any other economic impacts that could be the cause of this effect.

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Results

Table 1: Descriptives

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	N
Log population	12.353	.781	161
Log percent black	2.407	1.238	161
Percent youth	.1157	.286	161
Percent unemployed	.044	.021	161
Gini index	.403	.036	161
Manufacturing loss	.036	.077	161
Hyper deindustrialization	.174	.38	161
Log of black victimization rate per 100,00	1.332	1.10	161
White victimization rate per 100,000	3.841	2.614	161
Total victimization rate per 100,000	9.861	9.773	161

*Table 2: Multivariate Regression Results for the Natural Log of Black Victimization**Rates per 100,000 in U.S. cities over 100,000 people in 2000.*

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	-1.774	-6.779***	-6.782***	-6.638***
Log Population	.215 (.153)*	.135 (.096)	.135 (.096)	.129 (.091)
Log percent black	.114 (.129)	.025 (.029)	.025 (.029)	.030 (.034)
Percent youth	.015 (.04)	-.01 (-.027)	-.01 (-.027)	-.011 (-.03)
Percent unemployed	---	6.159 (.115)*	6.159 (.115)*	6.030 (.113)
Gini index	---	15.473 (.499)***	15.48 (.499)***	15.396 (.497)***
Manufacturing loss 1990-2000	---	---	.016 (.001)	.927 (.065)
Hyper deindustrialization	---	---	---	-.311 (-.108)
Adjusted R Square	.029	.277	.272	.275
N	161	161	161	161

Numbers in parenthesis are standardized coefficients (betas).

*Sig. Percent <.05

**Sig. Percent <.01

***Sig. Percent <.001.

Table 3: Multivariate Regression Results for White Victimization Rates per 100,000 in U.S. cities over 100,000 people in 2000.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	-.078	-2.292	-3.241	-2.839
Log Population	.462 (.138)	.419 (.125)	.412 (.123)	.393 (.117)
Log percent black	-.02 (-.009)	-.034 (-.16)	-.070 (-.033)	-.058 (-.027)
Percent youth	-.15 (-.165)*	-.174 (-.191)*	-.159 (-.174)*	-.162 (-.177)*
Percent unemployed	---	-6.521 (-.51)	-6.445 (-.051)	-6.806 (-.054)
Gini index	---	8.271 (.112)*	10.216 (.138)*	9.983 (.135)*
Manufacturing loss 1990-2000	---	---	4.568 (.134)*	7.11 (.209)*
Hyper deindustrialization	---	---	---	-.867 (-.126)
Adjusted R Square	.031	.032	.044	.048
N	161	161	161	161

Numbers in parenthesis are standardized coefficients (betas).

*Sig. Percent <.05

**Sig. Percent <.01

***Sig. Percent<.001.

Table 4: Multivariate Regression Results for Total Victimization Rates per 100,000 in U.S. cities over 100,000 people in 2000.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	-6.951	-44.545**	-45.128**	-43.471**
Log Population	1.227 (.098)	.644 (.051)	.639 (.051)	.561 (.045)
Log percent black	.961 (.122)	.249 (.032)	.227 (.029)	.278 (.035)
Percent youth	-.057 (-.017)	-.229 (-.067)	-.220 (-.064)	-.23 (-.067)
Percent unemployed	---	63.467 (.133)*	63.514 (.134)*	62.028 (.13)*
Gini index	---	113.583 (.411)***	114.78 (.416)***	113.819 (.412)***
Manufacturing loss 1990-2000	---	---	2.81 (.022)	13.291 (.104)
Hyper deindustrialization	---	---	---	-3.574 (-.139)
Adjusted R Square	.009	.184	.18	.187
N	161	161	161	161

Numbers in parenthesis are standardized coefficients (betas).

*Sig. Percent <.05

**Sig. Percent <.01

***Sig. Percent <.001.