

Race/Ethnicity and Neighborhood Crime in U.S. Urban Areas: Towards an Understanding of Changes Over Time

By

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A Collaboration Begins

Examined race-specific homicide at city-level; emphasis on role of racial residential segregation

Three general findings:

- Black but not White rates of homicide higher in more racially segregated cities;
- Segregation's role due to the way it concentrates higher rates of Black Disadvantage;
- In cities where concentrated disadvantage is as low for Blacks as for Whites, Black homicide is similar to Whites and is generated by same structural conditions.

Continuing Foci of Peterson-Krivo

- Describing patterns of crime across neighborhoods with different race/ethnic compositions;
- Accounting for differences in crime rates across race-ethnic neighborhoods;
- Attention to how structural conditions reflecting the racial organization of society contribute to observed patterns; and thereby
- Determining if structurally similar, but racially-ethnically distinct neighborhoods have similar crime levels.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Calls for broad contextual approaches:

- ◆ W.E.B. Du Bois

Crime is a difficult subject to study, more difficult to analyze into its sociological elements, and most difficult to cure or suppress. It is a phenomenon that stands not alone, but rather as a symptom of countless wrong social conditions (1973/1899:241-2).]

Shaw and McKay (1942/1969)

“... it is difficult to sustain the contention that, by themselves, the factors of race, nativity, and nationality are vitally related to the problem of juvenile delinquency. ... rather, the significantly higher rates of delinquents found among the children of Negroes, the foreign born, and more recent immigrants are closely related to existing differences in their respective patterns of geographical distribution within the city. If these groups were found in the same proportion in all local areas, existing differences in the relative number ... brought into court from the various groups might be expected to be greatly reduced or to disappear entirely (1969:162-163).

Sampson and Wilson (1995)

“[T]he sources of crime [are] remarkably invariant across race and [are] rooted instead in the structural differences among communities, cities, and states in economic and family organization” (1995:41).

Krivo-Peterson's perspective draws on:

- Social disorganization (à la Shaw and McKay; Wilson; Sampson and Wilson); joined with
- Urban sociology/demography themes on role of racial residential segregation; and
- Sociology of race-ethnicity themes on racial organization of society; thereby
- Proposing why race-ethnic neighborhoods are situated as they are vis-à-vis structural conditions.

Inequality in Neighborhood Crime: A Matter of Racial Structure

- Organized to produce and reproduce a racial order with Whites privileged over others
- Structural mechanisms to maintain this order – *residential segregation*
- Residential segregation linked with patterns of inequality in social conditions across communities
- Racially patterned inequality as source of ethnoracial differentials in crime patterns

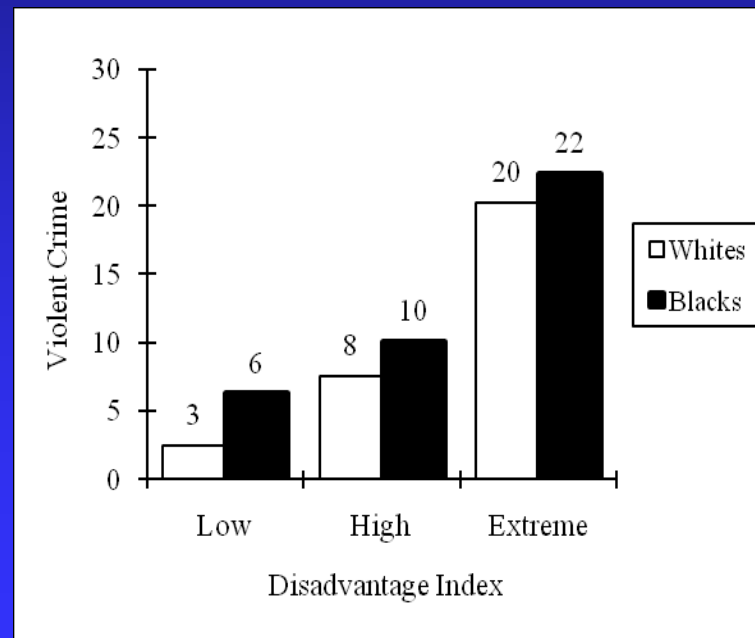
Challenges to examining neighborhood crime

- No national archive of crime data for neighborhoods
- Difficulty in obtaining a sample of racially distinct but structural similar neighborhoods for comparison due to racial structure of society

Problem overcome in two ways:

Examining crime for a city (Columbus, OH) with sufficient overlap in types of neighborhoods where race-ethnic groups live

Question: Does ecological dissimilarity account for race differences in neighborhood crime? (Krivo and Peterson 1996)



The National Neighborhood Crime Study (NNCS)

- 9,593 neighborhoods (tracts) in 91 U.S. cities
 - 3,291 White neighborhoods
 - 1,584 African American neighborhoods
 - 778 Latino neighborhoods
 - 3,260 Integrated neighborhoods
- Violent Crime Data: homicides, robberies, and aggravated assaults (1999-2000)
- Property Crime Data: burglaries, larcenies, motor vehicle thefts (1999-2001)

The National Neighborhood Crime Study (NNCS) *continued*

- Social and Economic data for census tracts and the cities and metropolitan in which neighborhoods are embedded: For example,

Poverty

Joblessness

Low wage jobs

female headed families

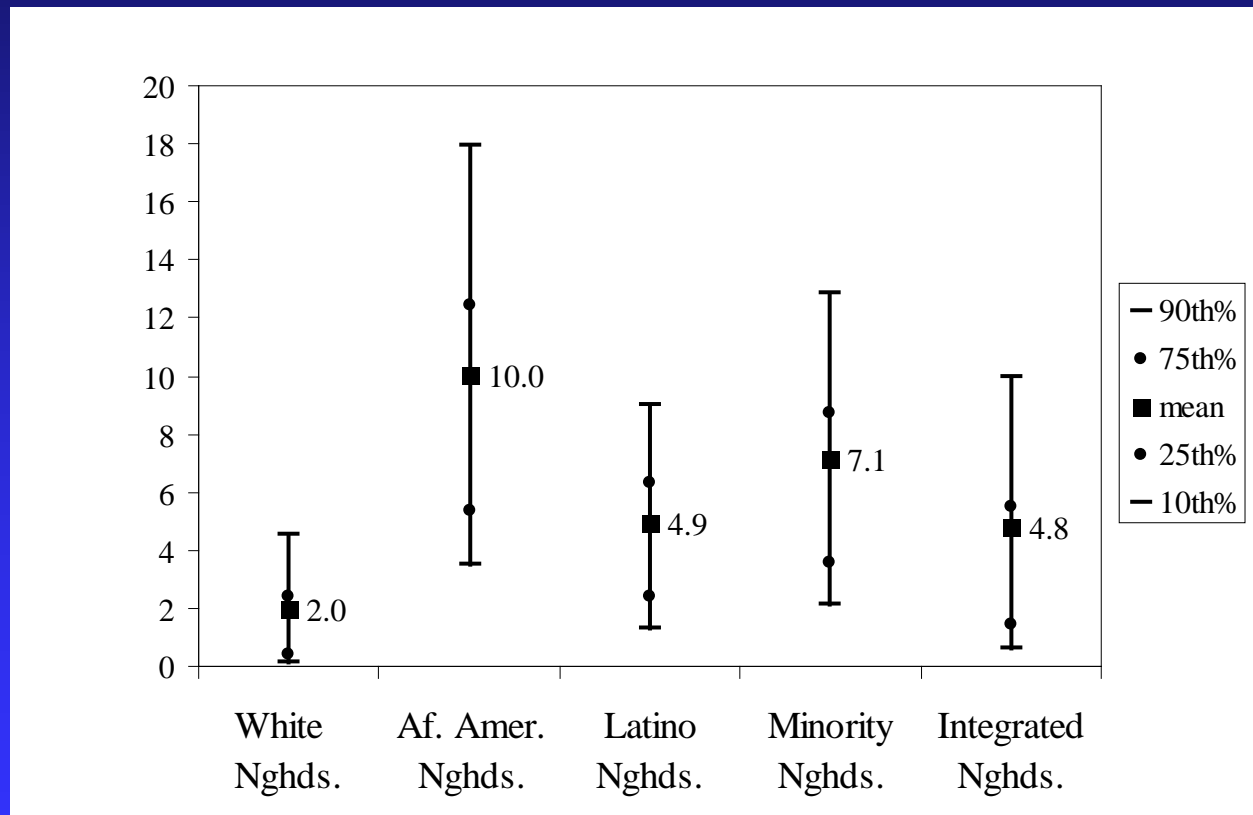
Professional workers

College graduates

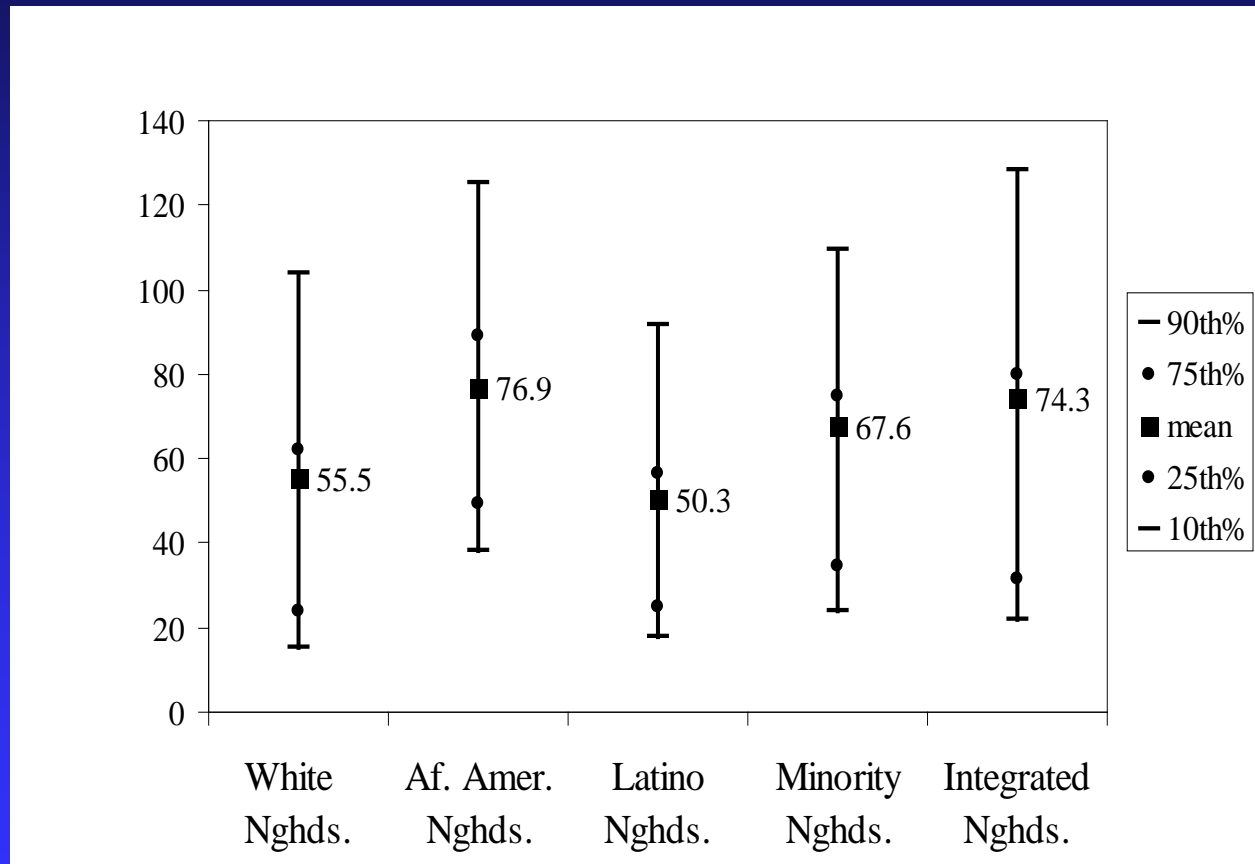
Investment dollars

Some Relevant Findings

- Violent crime levels are substantially higher for non-White than White neighborhoods in U.S. urban areas.



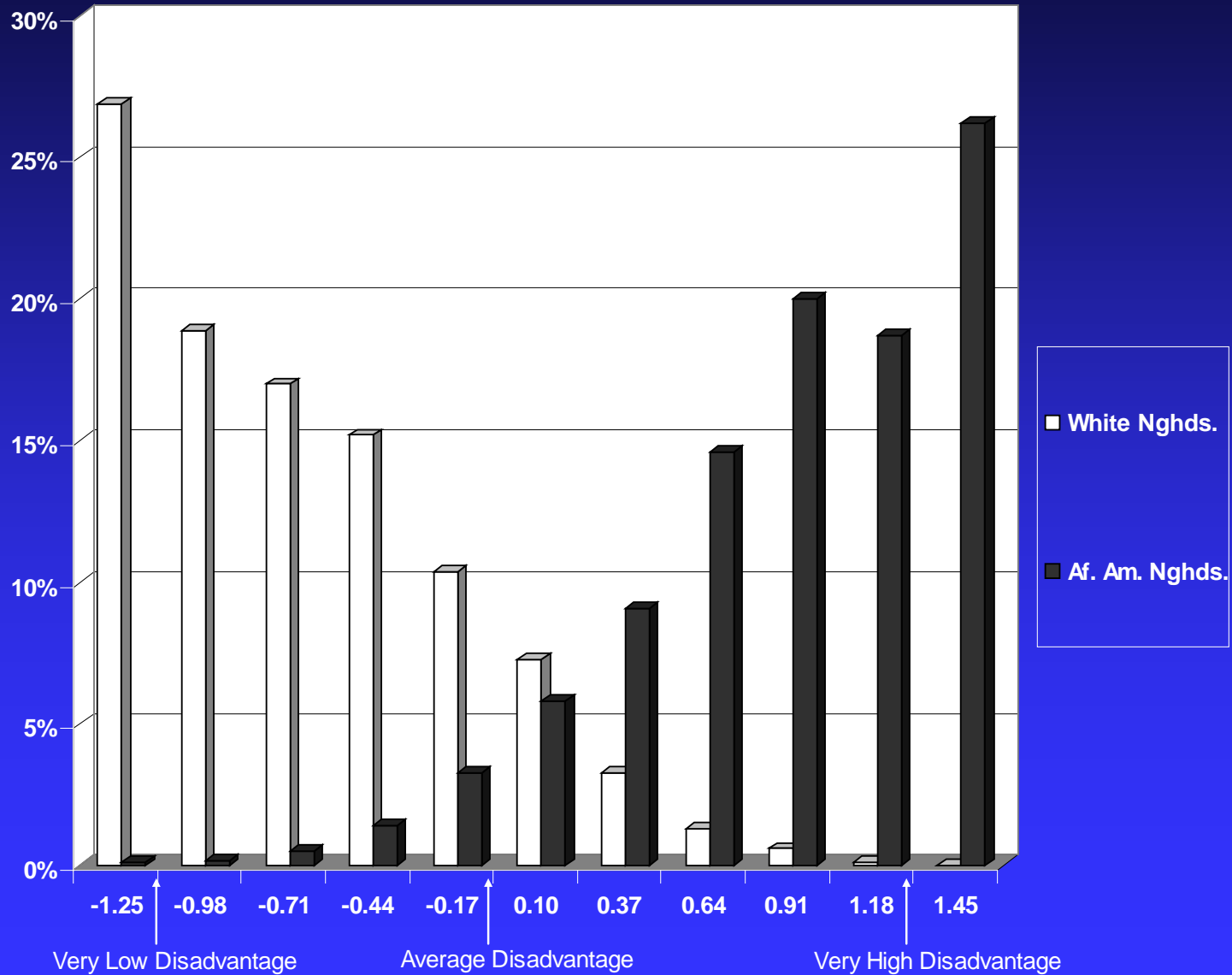
- Property crime levels are less substantially different across non-White and White neighborhoods in U.S. urban areas.



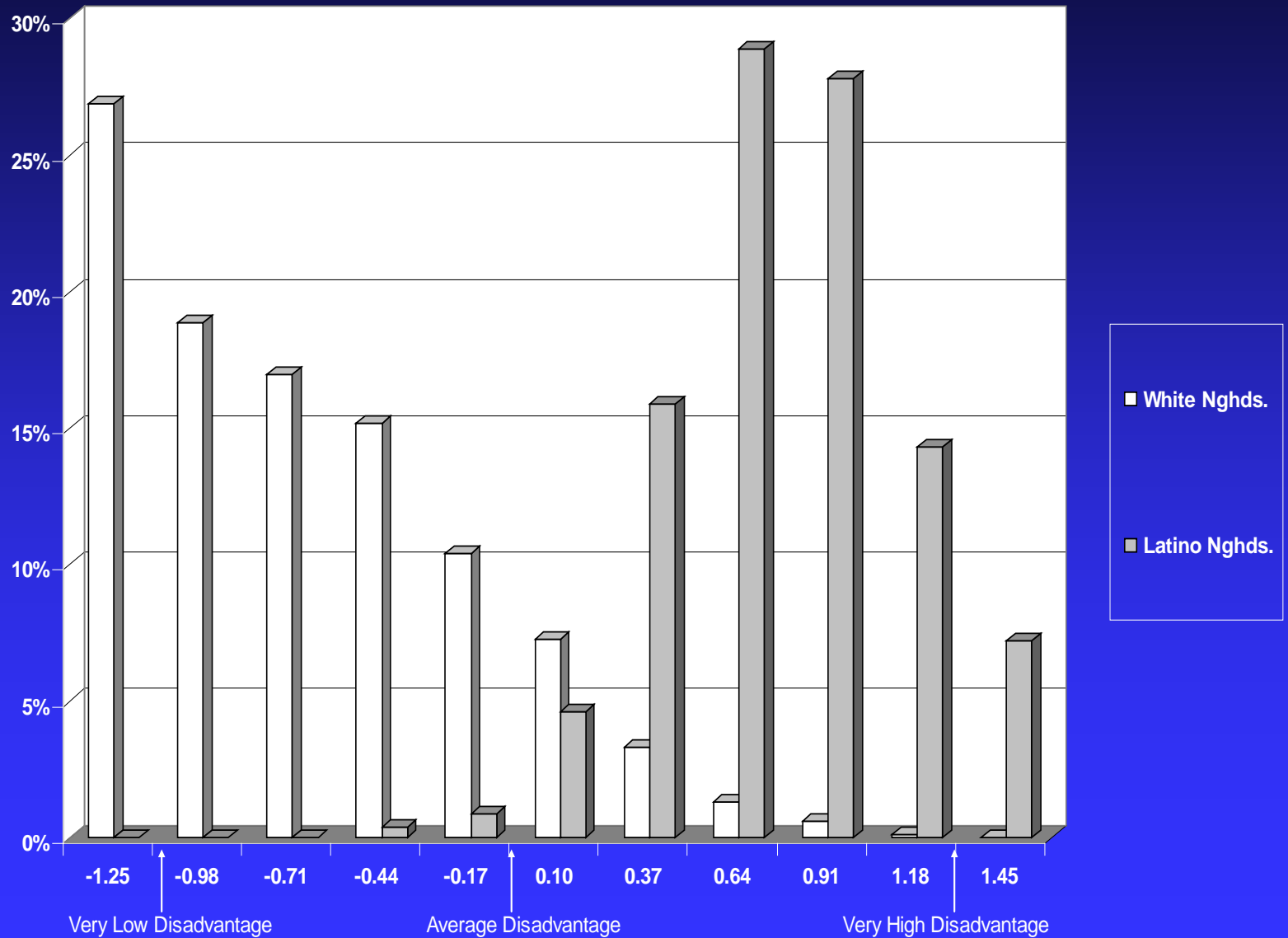
Racial structure, divergent social worlds, and crime across communities of different colors (Peterson and Krivo 2010)

How divergent are the social worlds of race-ethnic groups in U.S. urban areas?

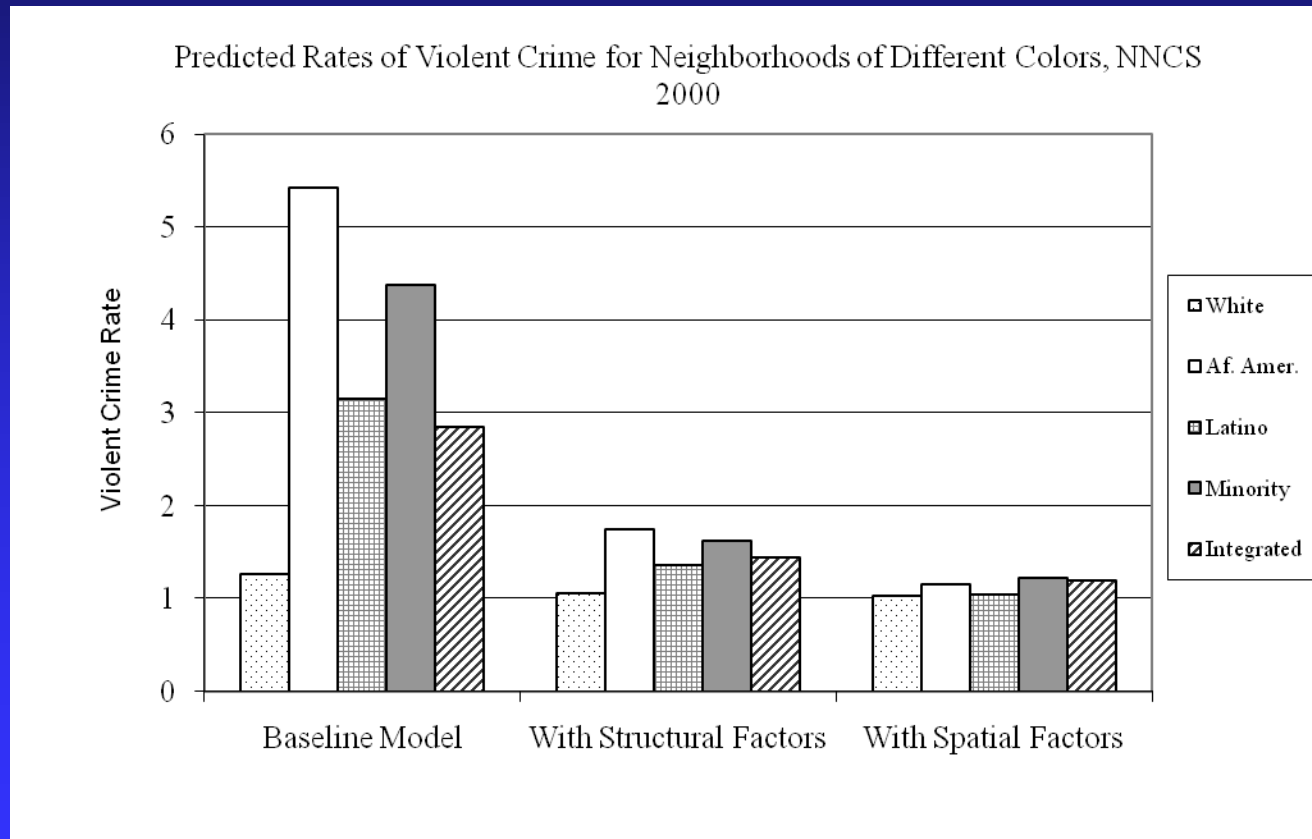
Disadvantage Distributions for White and African American Neighborhoods



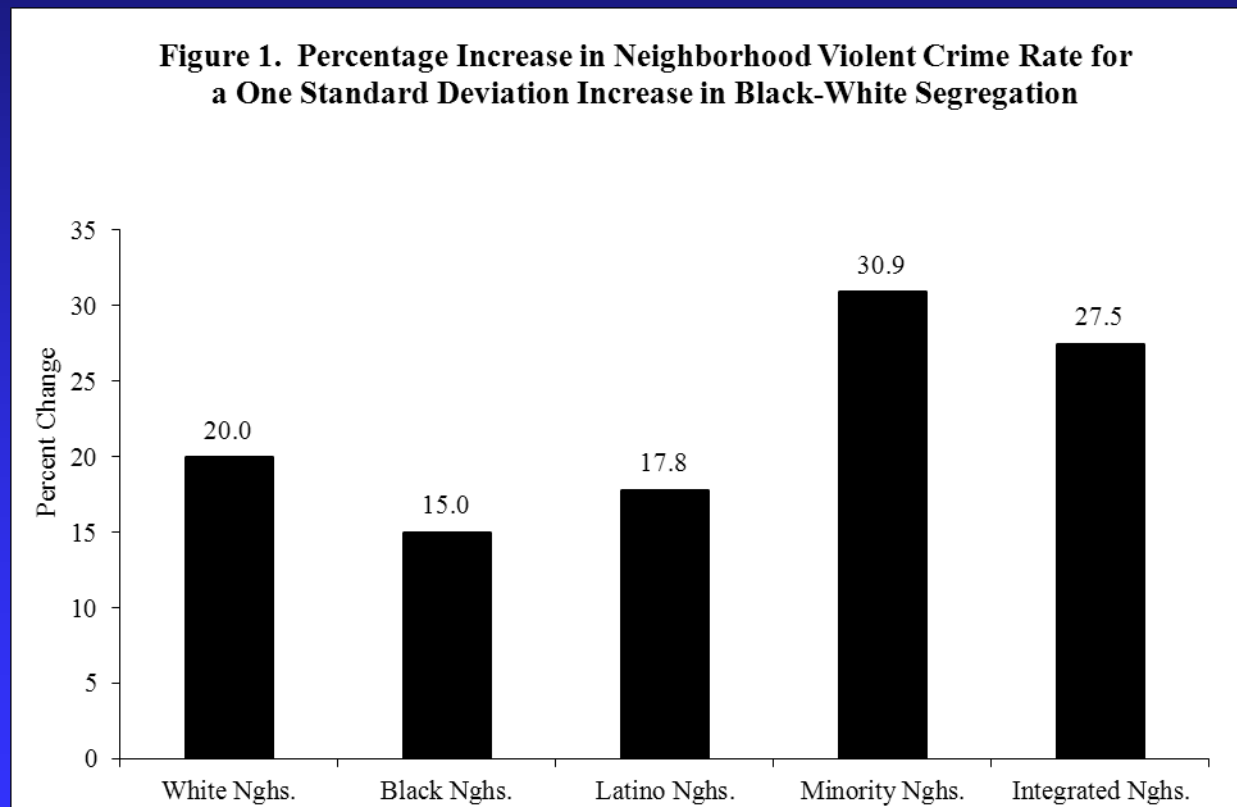
Disadvantage Distributions for White and Latino Neighborhoods



Does the racial-spatial divide in structural context account for differential ethnoracial neighborhood crime?



Do the consequences of racial residential segregation for neighborhood crime transcend race/ethnic composition?



Few studies explore changes in neighborhood crime/criminal inequality over time

- Krivo-Peterson agenda has not included assessing trends in neighborhood crime/criminal inequality and their determinants.
- Few other studies have taken up this issue due to
 - Lack of availability of neighborhood crime data nationally
 - Non-comparability of neighborhood types for race-ethnic groups in cities with available data

Initiation of the National Neighborhood Crime Study 2 (NNCS2)

- Krivo, Velez and Lyons have undertaken the NNCS2.
- NNCS2 will allow for a panel study of neighborhood crime in U.S. urban areas for circa 2000 and circa 2010.

Features of the NNCS2

- 9,593 neighborhoods (tracts) in 91 U.S. cities
- Violent and Property Crime data for 2010-2013
- Social and Economic data for census tracts and the cities and metropolitan areas in which they are embedded for circa 2010
- Linked with NNCS data for circa 2000

Broad Goals of the NNCS2

- The NNCS2 seeks to answer questions about the dynamic relationships between social structural conditions and neighborhood crime/criminal inequality.
- Specific Questions
 - How have *social transformations* since 2000 shaped neighborhood criminal inequality?
 - To what extent are changing city and neighborhood conditions both sources and consequences of evolving crime patterns?

Potential reasons to anticipate change in relationships

- Great Recession may have reordered inequality in social conditions and consequently crime
- Recent demographic shifts (e.g., immigration, racial and economic segregation) may have affected ethnoracial neighborhood diversity
- Changing spatial arrangements could have affected who/what is close together
- Changes in characteristics of cities/metropolitan areas may have enhanced/diminished the influence of changing neighborhood conditions

PIs expect to examine changes in influence of numerous factors in four broad categories

- Neighborhood socioeconomic and housing conditions
- Demographic composition of neighborhoods
- Nearby socioeconomic, housing, and demographic conditions
- City and Metropolitan level social, economic, and political changes

NNCS2 will also permit PIs to address:

Changing neighborhood characteristics as causes *and* consequences of changes in neighborhood crime

Answering this causal order question is central to understanding the relationship between societal conditions and crime

Parting Thoughts

NNCS2 Project will provide much needed assessments of the dynamic relationships between social structural conditions and neighborhood crime.

Undoubtedly, we will gain much more precise knowledge about how, to what extent, and under what circumstances certain relationships hold.

Yet, some conclusions will likely stand e.g., a racial-ethnic hierarchy of neighborhood crime; and strong influence of such factors as segregation and disadvantage.