AN EXAMINATION OF BLACK-WHITE CRIME DIFFERENCES IN A SAMPLE OF PREVIOUSLY INCARCERATED YOUTH: DOES NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT EXPLAIN THE RACE GAP IN ADULT CRIME?

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ABSTRACT

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Past studies of the relationship between race and crime consistently find higher levels of overall offending among black adults than white adults. Interestingly, this race gap in adult crime tends to be considerably larger than the race gap in adolescent delinquency. In the present study, I examine a longitudinal sample of serious juvenile delinquents (N = 197) and attempt to explain the racial disparity in crime prevalence that exists in adulthood. In the current sample, although whites report significantly higher levels of delinquency than blacks during adolescence, this trend reverses in adulthood. I explore the extent to which social and structural factors such as employment, marriage, and criminal networks explain this shift in offending and focus, in particular, on the impact of neighborhood context on the emergence of race differences in crime during young adulthood. I also examine the possibility that neighborhood context might have different crime-causing or crime-dampening effects for blacks and whites (i.e., interactive effects).

Results of regression analyses suggest that past delinquency and involvement in criminal networks are positively related to adult crime prevalence, but adult stability factors such as marriage, relationship happiness, and employment appear to be only marginally related to adult criminality. Furthermore, while neighborhood efficacy is negatively related to adult crime prevalence, it does not explain the race-crime gap, net of other factors. Interactions between race and neighborhood variables are significant, indicating that the relationship between race and adult crime is moderated by neighborhood quality. Specifically, analyses reveal that neighborhood effects are largely significant for blacks only. Furthermore, the subset of black respondents living in sample-
average neighborhoods show no greater risk for adult crime than white respondents in similar living conditions. Crime and neighborhood dynamics are discussed regarding measurement error and sample limitations.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEORY AND PRIOR RESEARCH</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATA AND METHODS</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODELS AND HYPOTHESES</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESULTS</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Descriptive Results and Racial Comparisons</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Poisson Regression of Adult Crime on Variables Under Investigation</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neighborhood Interactions with Race: Net of Covariates</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Appendix A: A List of Criminal Offenses Used in the Current Study</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Appendix B: Zero-Order Correlation Matrix for Continuous Variables</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AN EXAMINATION OF BLACK-WHITE CRIME DIFFERENCES IN A SAMPLE OF PREVIOUSLY INCARCERATED YOUTH: DOES NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT EXPLAIN THE RACE GAP IN ADULT CRIME?

INTRODUCTION

Prior research shows a race (i.e., black-white) gap in criminal offending in adulthood, especially for serious crimes (Peterson and Krivo, 2005; Magurie and Pastore, 2004). For instance, blacks constitute approximately 12 percent of the U.S. population but represent 27 percent of all arrests. In comparison, whites represent approximately 75 percent of the U.S. population and make-up about 70 percent of all crimes (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004). The Uniform Crime Report therefore indicates that blacks are more than two times over-represented in their rates of arrest while whites are slightly under-represented. The disparity is even greater when considering more serious offense types. In the case of murder and aggravated assault, blacks constitute 48 and 54 percent of all arrests, respectively. Similar adult patterns emerge in self-report and victimization studies (Cernkovich and Giordano, 2001; Magurie and Pastore, 2004). In contrast, cross-sectional delinquency studies reveal that black and white youth have relatively similar levels of delinquency during adolescence (Cernkovich and Giordano, 1992; Cernkovich, Giordano, and Rudolph, 2000). There is evidence of a race gap for more serious kinds of delinquency (Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis, 1981), but, overall, the gap appears to be larger in adulthood than during adolescence.

In the present study, I address this discrepancy by examining a longitudinal sample of previously incarcerated black and white youth. In this sample, although whites report significantly higher levels of delinquency than blacks during adolescence, this trend reverses in adulthood; blacks report significantly higher rates of offending in adulthood than whites (Cernkovich and Giordano, 2001). The goal of this research is to
determine if differences in the social and structural experiences of whites and blacks in early adulthood help to account for these differences in adult crime. Surprisingly, there are very few existing longitudinal studies that examine racial disparities in criminal behavior (Cernkovich et al. 2000, 2001; Piquero et al. 2004, Piquero and Buka, 2002). While some researchers contend that longitudinal research is unnecessary because of the invariant nature of the age-crime relationship (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990, 2000), others find that many different criminal career trajectories exist and certain groups are at higher-risk for longer criminal careers (Moffit, 1993; Sampson and Laub 2003, Piquero, et al. 2005). Indeed, prior studies find that social and structural characteristics of emerging adulthood appear to play an important role in desistance from crime (Elder, 1985; Sampson and Laub, 1993; Horney et al. 1995; Warr, 1998; Uggen, 2000; Giordano, Cernkovich and Rudolph 2002; Giordano, Cernkovich and Holland, 2003).

Life-course criminology, as a counterpoint to age-invariant proposals (Gottfredson and Hirsch 1990, 2000), views the criminal career as an age-graded process, in that a person’s participation in deviant behavior is dependent on social status through time (Farrington, 2003). The period of young adulthood, roughly ages 18 through the mid-twenties, is acknowledged as a crucial developmental stage for possible life directions (Arnett, 2000; Giordano et al. 2002, Farrington, 2003). A common observation in life-course criminology is the norm of juvenile participation in criminal behavior that is followed by a precipitous decline in offending during adulthood (Farrington, 2003). This phenomenon is thought to occur because of the pro-social influence that adult role-taking has over criminal propensity (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Giordano et al. 2002). Since blacks are on average less likely than whites to solidify conventional adult lifestyles during this period, their ability to desist from crime after adolescence is diminished (Anderson, 1999; Wilson 1987, 1996). In fact, some studies show that, black youth are, on average, more likely than whites to persist in serious criminal activity into adulthood (Elliot, 1994; Moffit et al, 1994; Piquero and Burka, 2002). On the other hand,
a study of parolees reveals only negligible race differences in the length of criminal careers (Piquero et al, 2004). Importantly, the longitudinal design of the current study allows for an analysis of racial differences in offending taking into account within-individual variation across life-stages from adolescence to young adulthood.

In the present study, I use data from the Ohio Life-Course Study (OLS), which is an on-going project to study the adult lives of previously incarcerated juvenile delinquents and their families. I evaluate the extent to which social and structural factors such as employment, marriage, and criminal networks help to explain the racial disparity in adult criminal offending and focus, in particular, on the impact of neighborhood context on the emergence of race differences in crime in young adulthood. I also examine the possibility that neighborhood quality (e.g., levels of disorder and efficacy) might have different crime-causing or crime-dampening effects for blacks and whites (i.e., interactive effects). Indeed, research on racial segregation and social inequality shows that the color line, which often segregates white and black communities, has a detrimental effect on the well-being of residents of African American neighborhoods (Wilson, 1987, Massey and Denton, 1993).

The contributions of this research to the literature on race and crime are threefold. First, this research uses a longitudinal sample of high-risk youth to explore the changing race gap in delinquency and crime over the life-course. The longitudinal sample used in the present study does not suffer the limitations of cross-sectional and/or school-based samples that cannot account for change in behavior over time and exclude the most crime-prone youth (Sampson and Laub 1993; Cenkovich and Giordano 2001; Piquero et al. 2004). Also, the current study adds to the existing criminological literature on race and crime by assessing the race gap across a variety of crime measures including both serious and minor offenses.

Second, this study explores the extent to which differences in social milieu (i.e., neighborhood context) help to account for the divergent outcomes of black and white
youth in later life. It is possible that neighborhood efficacy and stability, which are often
times diminished in black communities in comparison to white communities (Sampson
and Wilson, 1995), act as a buffer to otherwise criminogenic social forces that encourage
criminal behavior (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Sampson, et al. 1999). Likewise, social
networks that foster attitudes favorable toward deviant behavior are typically more
prevalent in black than whites communities (Anderson, 1999; Wilson, 1996; Topalli,
2005), making them a salient factor to account for when explaining racial differences in
criminal offending.

Third, this research speaks to the findings in the literature on post-incarceration
outcomes that show that black offenders are more likely to recidivate than white
offenders (Spohn and Holleran, 2002), and offers some insight into how social and
structural disadvantages faced disproportionately by blacks vis-à-vis whites might
explain these findings. Indeed, the proximal effects of neighborhood efficacy can be
viewed as the product of more distal processes, such as racial segregation and poor
marriage and labor markets. That is, the history of racial inequality in the U.S. has
created structural barriers for a disproportion number of blacks, resulting in a lack of
pathways toward adult stability and productive community organization (Wilson, 1987,
1996).
THEORY AND PRIOR RESEARCH

Theories such as social learning, social control, routine-activities, and subculture, are useful for explaining the race gap in crime to the extent that they are viewed as nested processes that occur within a larger social context. That is, the aforementioned traditional theories tend to outline proximal causes of criminal behavior that are embedded within larger structural environs. For example, the learning of definitions favorable towards criminal behavior is dependent on the presence of norms that reinforce those definitions (Sutherland 1947; Wilson, 1996). Youth who live in neighborhoods that are rampant with crime and disorder are consequently more likely to acquire criminal means of dealing with conflict (Merton 1938; Anderson, 1999). Similarly, the absence of stable families and employment in black communities decrease sources of informal social control against crime (Hirschi, 1969; Wilson 1987). In turn, black youth vis-à-vis white youth, are more likely to live in disorganized neighborhoods, and hence, are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior (Wilson, 1987; Massey, 1995; Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Sampson et al. 1997).

Furthermore, the differences in delinquency between black and white youth become exacerbated in adulthood due to the enduring effects of structural disadvantage. The poor marriage market (Messner and Sampson 2001; Walsh 2003), and scant employment opportunities (Wilson 1987, 1996), that are disproportionately present in black communities, increase the likelihood that criminal behavior will persist into adulthood (Sampson and Laub 1993; Elliot, 1994). Consequently, the diminished opportunity for blacks to take on these crucial pro-social adult roles increases the likelihood that they graduate onto more serious and violent forms of criminality (Farrington and West, 1993). While there is uncertainty if chronic offenders commit more serious offenses than those who desist from crime after adolescence, the criminal career tends to progress from minor to major offenses over time (LaBlanc and Frechette, 1989).
The disparity in criminal offending between blacks and whites is therefore likely to grow during the adult years.

The previous examples suggest a systemic view of the reasons behind the race gap in criminal offending—that is, more proximal explanations of crime derived from social learning and social control theories are themselves subsumed within more distal structural explanations found in social disorganization and ecological theories that view broader societal stratification and inequality as the ultimate root causes of crime. In the case of the black-white crime gap, evidence suggests that if black youth were to live in neighborhoods with more affluence than that of inner-city ghettos, the disparities between the two groups would disappear (Peeples and Loeber, 1994). However, the reality is that vast disparities exist between blacks and whites regarding not only crime, but also labor, marriage, and social organization (Wilson, 1996). These disparities are particularly noticeable with the existence of racially segregated ghettos in major U.S. cities. For example, in a study of U.S. cities with populations of 100,000 residents or more, not one revealed blacks living in ecological equality with whites regarding economics, marriage, and family structure (Sampson and Wilson 1995). Likewise, the worst conditions of many white neighborhoods are often times better than the average black neighborhoods (Sampson et al, 1997). Furthermore, the disadvantaged communities in which many African Americans live today are a result of a combination of historical racism, housing segregation practices (Masey and Denton, 1993) and macro-economical shifts that outsourced the manufacturing labor base of many northern cities to other countries (Wilson 1987, 1996).

Due to these distal stratification processes, blacks are consequently less likely than whites to live in communities that offer pathways toward adult stability through steady employment and marriage, as well as a collective effort to keep crime rates low in their neighborhoods (Sampson and Wilson, 1995). Structural disadvantages increase the likelihood that blacks will engage in deviant social networks that offer favorable
definitions toward crime, and decrease the likelihood that blacks will benefit from job and marriage markets that act to buffer individuals from crime.

Next, I discuss in greater detail the prior research and theoretical underpinnings of the proximal factors linked to adult criminal behavior that are examined in the present study. This discussion is organized around four major factors: juvenile delinquency, marriage and job stability, criminal peer networks, and neighborhood context.

**Juvenile Delinquency**

Life-course criminology reveals that, in general, the best predictor of future crime is past delinquency (Sampson and Laub 1993; Cernkovich and Giordano, 2001). Early childhood violence, school misconduct, and juvenile delinquency are evinced in the literature as predictors of future serious offending as well as prolonged criminal careers (Farrington, 2003). Gottfredson and Hirschi (2000) maintain that all of the aforementioned behaviors are symptoms of low-self control, and that the stability of this underlying trait obviates the need to look to social processes to explain the high correlation between juvenile delinquency and adult crime. While I agree that individuals with low-self control have a higher probability of engaging in criminal activity across the life-course than those with high self-control, there is considerable evidence that ignoring age-graded social processes greatly diminishes our ability to understand changes in crime over time (Cernkovich and Giordano 2001; Farrington, 2003) and, more importantly for the present study, to explain the race gap in criminal offending. Nonetheless, I acknowledge the importance of accounting for a wide array of deviant and criminal behaviors as a risk factor for adult offending and include youth behavior as a predictor of adult behavior in my analyses.
**Marriage and Job Stability**

The formation of salient adult bonds is also of great importance for explaining desistance from criminal offending in adolescence. Sampson and Laub (1993), in their major contribution to life-course criminology, show that white males who become attached to their spouses tend to desist from criminal offending at a faster rate than those who fail to cement these important adult relationships. Likewise, Warr (1998) shows that marriage serves to aid in the desistence process by breaking-up previous friendship networks with delinquent peers. Concerning race, marriage is a particularly salient issue due to the unbalanced marriage market in many black communities (Wilson, 1987; Anderson, 1999; Walsh 2003). In some cities, the ratio of marriageable black men to black women is extremely low, especially in comparison to whites, who are more likely to have an even sex-ratio (Messner and Sampson, 1991). This low sex-ratio problem in black communities gives rise to higher divorce rates (South and Lloyd, 1992; South and Messner, 1995) and higher levels of child illegitimacy (Guttenburg and Secord, 1983). Likewise, others contend that the disruption of the family unit is one of the root causes for social disorder in many black communities (Massey and Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1987). In total, a poor marriage market makes the pro-social influence of stable marriage less likely, especially for blacks, who on average, tend to reside in communities that lack a supply of marriageable men in comparison to whites.

Employment, like marriage, is also shown to help people desist from delinquent behavior. Sampson and Laub (1990,1993) claim that, like attachment to the spouse, job duties create salient bonds for adults, which in turn, lower the probability of criminal persistence into adulthood. Wilson (1996) points out that it is not just the earning of a pay-check that stabilizes adult life, but work itself provides regularities and discipline to life. Moreover, a recent study on the influence of stable employment on criminal offending (Uggen, 2000) shows that work is an important factor for the desistance of crime among those 27 years or older. Similarly, other research shows that the pro-social
influence of work is the strongest when risk for recidivism is the highest (Ekland-Olson et al. 1993). While some past research shows that employment during adolescence can be positively associated with crime (Wright et al. 1997), employment during adulthood is typically found to be a turning point away from crime (Sampson and Laub, 1993).

Employment is a salient issue regarding racial disparity in criminal offending. The availability of gainful employment among blacks is severely limited in comparison to most whites (Wilson, 1996). This is due to the broad transformation of U.S. inner-city labor from a manufacturing based economy to a lower-paying service-based economy. This transformation impacts black communities much more so than white communities, especially when considering that a high proportion of blacks live in urban areas where they are dependent on inner-city labor (Massey and Denton, 1993).

The lack of marriageable partners (for black women) and scant employment opportunities (for men) often co-occur in many black communities and are further exacerbated by racial segregation from white affluent areas—a phenomenon Wilson (1987) calls ‘concentrated disadvantage’. Accounting for these factors is an important step in explaining race gaps in adult criminal offending (Sampson, 1997). Although the current study can only examine concentrated disadvantage by proxy through neighborhood and race variables, it is an essential component for understanding the structural differences that create cultural variation between races (Wilson 1987, 1996, Anderson, 1999). Previous research with the OLS data shows little to no impact of a stable marriage or employment on adult crime (Cernkovich et al, 2000; Giordano et al, 2002, 2003). However, the extent to which marriage and employment act to retard crime may depend on neighborhood conditions, which have yet be evaluated. What is more, in addition to assessing the social control potentials of marriage and employment as argued for by Sampson and Laub (1993), I include education, largely as a socio-economic control, but also to investigate whether graduating from high school provides any pro-social benefit to a group of previously incarcerated juveniles. A high school diploma can
deter juvenile delinquents from committing future crime by creating social capital through which education opens the door to employment opportunities (Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998) and may serve as a social control by creating stakes in conformity to conventional life-styles (Hirschi, 1969; Sampson and Laub, 1993). Education is also a salient issue for crime and racial disparity considering the disproportionately high dropout rate among black students (Wilson, 1996).

*Criminal Networks*

Racial segregation from affluent areas not only deprives many black Americans of marriage and employment opportunities, but also tends to concentrate the most antisocial individuals in pockets of isolation away from mainstream society. Wilson (1996) describes a process of cultural transmission, in which people that reside in areas of concentrated disadvantage are disproportionately exposed to norms that support deviant and criminal behavior. He points out that this process is most clearly evident in some black communities, which in the past several decades, have endured mass outward migration of middle-class blacks to suburbs, leaving behind those with the least social mobility. Anderson (1999) describes the aftermath of these social transformations in which many black youth adopt an oppositional culture. This group of isolated urban youth learn criminal strategies to cope with the strains of their daily life (Massey 1995; Agnew, 2001). While they are not necessarily seeking the prototypical American Dream (Cernkovich et al. 2000; Topalli, 2005), they are still competing for resources, in which criminal behavior is sometimes advantageous (Anderson, 1999; Massey, 1995; Walsh, 2000). Likewise, others emphasize the importance of socialization in deviant peer groups for the explanation of criminal behavior (Warr, 1993, Giordano et al, 1986; Haynie et al. 2005). Thus, black youth, particularly in ghettoized areas, have a greater chance of being exposed to delinquent peer groups, and a smaller chance of being exposed to pro-social peer groups, in comparison to white youth.
There is also a tendency for people to engage in romantic relationship with people that live within close proximity to each other. Therefore, the delinquent peer group is the same pool from which people develop intimate partner relationships (Kruger et al. 1998; Haynie et al. 2005). Likewise, these delinquent partners continue to influence each other towards criminal behavior on into adulthood (Giordano et al, 2003). Taken together, blacks, in comparison to whites, are more likely to interact with peers and romantic partners who foster criminal tendencies as a function of geographical isolation from more mainstream society (Wilson, 1987, 1996; Anderson, 1999).

**Neighborhood Context**

Early research points out that crime tends to be concentrated in urban areas that are characterized by high levels of social disorganization (Shaw and McKay, 1942). For example, these urban areas have high levels of transience, poverty, and racial/ethnic heterogeneity, resulting in weak social ties among its members, which in turn, undermine the collective efforts of a community to combat criminal activity (Sampson and Groves, 1989). What is more, a “broken windows” theory of crime (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) asserts that petty crime and economic deterioration invites more serious criminal activity by deprecating the value of social control. Indeed, public incivilities, such as public quarreling and youth gangs, as well as physical impoverishment like dilapidated buildings and litter appear to be linked to crime rates (Land et al. 1990; Skogan, 1990; Kelling and Coles, 1996, Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999). Pro-social network ties within a community can however thwart the negative side-effects of “broken windows” through collective efforts to keep crime at bay (Sampson and Groves, 1989, Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999).

Research suggests that the proper balance of network ties in a community can give rise to a collective understanding of norms that are efficacious in discouraging crime and deviant behavior (Granovetter, 1973; Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974). Neighborhoods
that share in the collective effort to deter deviant and criminal behavior are more efficacious in their ability to keep crime levels low (Sampson et al. 1997; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999). However, there is countervailing evidence that close network ties, a typical characterization of collective efficacy, do not always result in lower crime rates (Sampson et al. 1999). Rather neighborhood efficacy is moderated by other community processes such as criminal network ties. That is, the pro-social influence of collective efficacy on crime is found to be dependent on the quality of the network ties (Browning et al. 2004). For example, if social ties in a neighborhood are based on criminal interactions (i.e. drug dealing) then the collective efforts to decrease crime are compromised and efficacy is not achieved. Organized crime for instance can discourage minor public incivilities, such as public intoxication, while maintaining drug trafficking and other illegal rackets (Pattillo, 1998). However, crime can be minimized through collective efficacy when community members participate in social controls such as monitoring youth behavior and realize shared goals of community interests against crime (Sampson et al. 1997, Wilson, 1996).

Outward migration, the loss of the manufacturing labor base (Wilson, 1987), and high rates of incarceration (Clear and Rose, 2002; Travis and Waul, 2003) also have deleterious, socially disorganizing effects on black communities. For instance, the high population turnover in some urban black areas precludes the development of pro-social networks among adult residents (Sampson and Wilson, 1995). Those with the greatest social mobility or capital, tend to migrate to the suburbs or other areas of the city that provide a better quality of life, leaving behind the poorest and most marginalized segments to manage the transient social life of the community (Wilson, 1987, Masey and Denton, 1993). Consequently, those left behind are less likely to have the capability of organizing community efforts such as crime watches, or to be politically savvy enough to get local government to allocate tax revenues for fixing-up public spaces, or constructing new properties that might attract population growth (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999).
The reciprocal link between efficacy and disorganization indicates that social disorganization begets more disorganization by giving rise to a social ecology with high moral cynicism about collective efforts to control deviant and criminal behavior (Stark, 1987) and diminished prospects for economic growth (Wilson 1996).

It is important to clarify that collective efficacy is viewed in the current study as an independent predictor of crime rather than simply an inevitable result of having a concentration of antisocial people in a single area (Sampson, 2002). That is, the problems of many black communities are a result of systemic processes (economic shifts, diminished marriage pool, criminal networks, low collective efficacy, high social disorganization) that cannot be reduced to individual level actions. Research indicates that neighborhood indices of collective efficacy and attachment to the neighborhood exert emergent, pro-social pressures on the individuals that reside there, independent of individual traits (Sampson et al, 1999; Stewart et al, 2002). Neighborhood disorder, on the other hand, characterized by the presence of physical and economic deterioration and public incivilities tend to be markers for high crime areas (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999). Consequently, black communities, in comparison to white communities, are typically characterized by lacking in collective efficacy, while being robust with criminal networks, and disorder (Sampson and Wilson, 1995). In the current study, neighborhood efficacy and disorder are expected to show negative and positive associations, respectively, with adult crime prevalence and help to explain the race gap in crime. The OLS data do not provide detailed information on the structural make-up of the respondent’s neighborhood such as the racial composition or the level of poverty. This limits my ability to fully understand the particular attributes of neighborhood quality that contribute to self-reported crime. Nonetheless, the respondent’s perceived relationship with his/her neighborhood is an important indicator of neighborhood quality and represents an accurate interpretation for the results in the current study.
DATA AND METHODS

In the present study, I use a sample derived from 254 incarcerated juveniles, who were originally interview in 1982 and then re-interviewed in 1995. The sample was drawn from several juvenile institutions in the state of Ohio. In 1995, 210 or 83 percent of the original sample was re-interviewed.\(^1\) Face-to-face interviews were conducted for the majority of the respondents (91%); mailed versions of the survey were used for the remainder. In each case, respondents filled out self-report surveys pertaining to deviant and criminal behavior, demographic characteristics, and social and psychological concepts. Due to the low number of non-black minorities in the sample, the current analyses are restricted to black (29.22%) and white (70.78%) respondents only (N= 197). The age range for the current analytic sample in 1995 is 29 to 34 years (average 29 years); 60.25% are female and 30.75% are male.\(^2\)

Dependent Variables

Adult Criminal Offending (Alpha = .82) is measured in 1995 and includes a total of 21 items ranging from misdemeanor offenses to felonies. The subject was asked “How often in the past 12 months have you done the following things?” and responded using a nine-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 9 (more than once a day). A list of the 21 items is located in Appendix A.

In the present study, I assess the prevalence of adult crime. The prevalence measure acknowledges the versatility of most criminal careers in that most juveniles and adults that participate in crime do not specialize in a particular area, but rather engage in

\(^1\) A logistic regression analysis shows that gender, race, age, and juvenile delinquency are not statistically related to respondent attrition in the 1995 sample.

\(^2\) Forty-three (22%) of the 197 respondents were in prison at the time of the second interview. While incarcerated respondents were given instructions to report on their criminal behavior and neighborhood conditions in the 12 months prior to prison entry, prison status (1 = in prison, 0 otherwise) is controlled for in each regression model (not shown in table) in the present study to account for the possible effect of incarceration.
a wide variety of illegal activities (Farrington, 2003). Likewise, an “any variety” prevalence scale is chosen over an incidence scale in an effort to minimize error in reports between black and white respondents (Hindelang et al, 1981, Piquero et al, 2002). Methodological research shows that black males in particular tend to underreport their involvement in crime (Hindelang et al, 1981), making racial comparisons for self-reported incidence of crime and delinquency difficult. In contrast, the “any variety” prevalence measure minimizes uncertainty by raising the threshold for which reporting error becomes egregious. This is done by recoding responses as dichotomous variables (1=if any, 0=otherwise). Prior research finds that prevalence measures tend to be reliable indicators of propensity towards crime (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990, 2000; Piquero et al, 2005). For criminal prevalence, the respondent is assigned a value of 1 for each item that indicates any participation in that particular criminal behavior, and a zero indicating no participation in the behavior in the past 12 months. The prevalence scale is created by summing the values, resulting in a possible range of 0 to 21.

I also examine prevalence across two subcategories of the dependent variable, adult crime. The total crime prevalence scale, which includes all 21 items, is broken into 9 serious offenses and 13 minor offenses. The decision to categorize the offenses into serious minor categories is guided by FBI index offenses and seriousness weights derived from the National Survey of Crime Severity (Wolfgang et al., 1985). Serious crime items are typically automatic felonies (drug trafficking and aggravated assault), and minor  

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3Prior research using the OLS data finds a race gap in crime using a weighted incidence measure (Cernkovich and Giordano, 2001, Cernkovich et al, 2000; Giordano et al, 2002). All regression models in the present study were estimated using both incidence and prevalence scales to ensure that results were robust and not simply an artifact of crime measurement. Model estimates for criminal incidence were produced using ordinary least squares regression and a logged version of the adult crime scale to adjust for right-skew in the distribution. While only prevalence results are reported in the present study, the results of the full models using incidence and prevalence measures of crime are very similar. In both cases, race remains a significant predictor of adult crime.
Crime items are usually misdemeanors. Subcategories are created to thoroughly evaluate the extent to which juvenile delinquency, marriage and job stability, criminal networks, and neighborhood context explain the race-crime relationship. Past research indicates that if specialization occurs, it is most likely to emerge in adulthood (Piquero et al. 1999; Farrington, 2003). Furthermore, while findings show that the adult race-crime gap is largest for felony offenses (Peterson and Krivo, 2005; Magurie and Pastore, 2004) and high neighborhood efficacy is negatively related to serious crime (Sampson et al, 1997), I investigate these issues under conditions of minor and major offenses for a better understanding of race and crime in a sample of previously incarcerated (see Appendix A for subcategory scales).

**Independent Variables**

*Prior juvenile delinquency,* measured in 1982, is a 19-item scale of delinquency prevalence that includes all of the items in the adult crime scales except questions pertaining to adult targeted items such as fraud and embezzlement (Cronbach’s alpha=.87). This scale uses the same coding scheme as is used for adult crime.

I include two measures of employment stability and a single measure of educational achievement. *Job stability* is tapped with an item asking the respondent, “What is the longest period of time in which you had any single job?” The variable is coded (1) less than 6 months, to (8) more than 10 years. Also, *current employment* is measured using a dummy-coded item that asks whether the respondent is currently employed (1=employed, 0=not employed). *Educational achievement* is measured with a
dummy variable indicating high school completion or its equivalent (1=12 yrs or more of education, 0=otherwise).

The prosocial impact of close, romantic relationships is measured with two questions. A question about relationship happiness asks respondents how happy they are with their current romantic partner, whether a spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend. Responses range from 1 (extremely unhappy) to 7 (perfect).\(^4\) Whether the respondent is currently married is also measured using a dummy coded variable asking whether the respondent is married (1=yes, 0=no).

I use two scales to measure criminal networks in the present study. Deviant friends, measured in 1995, is a scale that includes 9 items asking the respondent “How many of your friends have done the following in the past 12 months: used marijuana, used hard drugs, stole something worth <5 or >50 dollars, broken into a building, sold drugs, suggested you do something against the law, gotten drunk, been paid to have sex with someone, hit someone?” Originally coded (0) none of them to (4) all of them, each item is recoded as a (0) or (1) for a prevalence measure of friends’ deviance. The scale is constructed by taking the sum of all the item values (alpha=.87). Partner deviance, measured in 1995, is a scale that includes 23 items asking respondents “How often has your partner done the following in the past 12 months?” Items in the partner deviance scale are identical to the adult crime scale expect for an additional item on alcohol consumption. This scale uses the same coding scheme as adult crime (alpha=.88).

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\(^4\) Approximately 8 percent of the analytic sample has missing data for relationship happiness and partner deviance. Mean imputation is used for the missing cases and a dummy variable indicating relationship status (1= no relationship, 0 otherwise) is entered into the regression models (not shown in the tables). Mean imputation is also used for all other cases with missing data.
Neighborhood context is measured using two scales. *Neighborhood efficacy* is operationalized as a five-item measure of the respondent’s attitudes and perceptions of the neighborhood area in which they currently live. In keeping with past research on benchmarks for neighborhood efficacy, this scale includes questions pertaining to informal social control (Sampson et al., 2002). These items indicate the degree to which people in a neighborhood intervene to stop crime and the extent to which people monitor the behavior of children (Land et al., 1990; Coleman, 1988). The three items relating to neighborhood surveillance are “People in my neighborhood watch out for each other,” “If someone attacked me on the street, one of my neighbors would come try to help me,” and “Many kids in the neighborhood run wild with nobody watching them.” Past research also indicates that attachment to the neighborhood and social networking are also important for low crime rates (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974; Sampson et al. 1997). The following two items attempt to capture these concepts: “I enjoy visiting with my neighborhoods” and “If I could afford to, I would move out of this neighborhood.” All five items are coded on a five-point scale from (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree. The items are recoded such that higher values indicate higher levels of neighborhood efficacy. A scale is created by taking the mean across all of the items (alpha=.77).

*Neighborhood disorder* is measured using a seven-item scale. Each item is measured as (0) “not a problem,” (1) “somewhat of a problem,” and (2) “a big problem.” Neighborhood “problems” include high unemployment, litter or trash in the street, vacant or abandon buildings, poorly kept homes and lawns, quarrels in which someone is badly hurt, drug use or dealing in the open, and youth gangs. Items in the scale serve to gauge the level of physical and social disorder present in the respondent’s community (Sampson
and Raudenbush, 1999). The neighborhood disorder scale is created by taking the sum of responses across all 7 items to produce an overall index of neighborhood disorder or problems typically associated with crime-ridden environments (alpha=.92).

Control variables for age (in years), gender, and race (white/black) are included in all analyses.

Analytic Strategy

In the present study, I attempt to explain the emergence of racial differences in adult criminal offending in a sample of previously incarcerated youth. I examine the impact of factors such as employment, marriage, and criminal networks on black and white crime, but focus primarily on the whether neighborhood context explains the race gap in crime in young adulthood. Not only do I explore the extent to which the race-crime relationship is mediated by these social and structural factors (i.e., main effects), I also explore the possibility these social and structural factors my have different impacts on crime for blacks and whites (i.e., interaction effects).

First, I present descriptive statistics of the independent and dependent variables for the total sample and the sample partitioned by race. I perform a series of t-tests to determine what zero-order racial differences exist in the sample. Second, I attempt to explain the race gap in criminal offending by regressing crime on several independent variables, most importantly juvenile delinquency, marital and job stability, criminal networks, and neighborhood context. The general hypothesis is that the race gap in criminal offending can be accounted for by neighborhood context in the full model.
Third, I perform separate analyses examining total crime as well as subcategories of minor and serious crime.

Due to the small number of respondents in the analytic sample (N=197), the threshold for determining statistical significance is p<.10. While p<.05 is the conventional threshold for two-tailed tests, small scale studies, such as this one, do not have the large degrees of freedom to account for error. A lower threshold is employed, however, especially for directional hypotheses, for which one-tailed tests can arguably be used.

A general Poisson model is used for estimates of adult crime prevalence. The Poisson model is preferred over ordinary least squares regression because of the right-skewed nature of the distribution of adult crime. Skewness is especially great for measures of more serious adult crime. Ordinary least squares regression assumes a normal distribution of errors around the mean which in this sample is violated and would produce biased estimates if not corrected for by the Poisson model (King, 1988; DeMaris, 2004)\(^5\). Recent methodological research also suggests that the Poisson distribution is a good fit for estimating the rate of adult offending after controlling for juvenile delinquency (Piquero et al, 2005).

\(^5\) Approximately 45 percent of the respondents report zero prevalence of serious crime, while 10 percent report zero prevalence of total and minor crime. Nonetheless, total and minor crime show a right-skewed distribution. The normality assumption is checked with the Shapiro and Wilk test (1965), in which the null hypothesis states that there is no significant departure from normality in the distribution of residuals. Results show a significant W statistic (p<.01) for all crime prevalence measures, indicating that ordinary least squares may produce inaccurate regression estimates. Negative Binomial models were also run using SAS version 8.1, but the algorithm failed to converge.
MODELS AND HYPOTHESES

My regression analysis contains five nested regression models: (model 1) a baseline model with demographics and juvenile delinquency, (model 2) model 1 plus adult stability, (model 3) model 2 plus criminal networks, and (model 4) model 3 plus neighborhood context. A fifth model (model 5) includes all of the variables from model 4 plus race-neighborhood interaction terms. Each of three dependent variables, prevalence of total adult crime, serious crime, and minor crime, are regressed on the series of nested models.

The *Baseline Model* (model 1) contains the variables: age, race, gender, and juvenile delinquency. The stability of prior delinquency as a predictor of future crime is a vital control when assessing mechanisms involved in the criminal life-course (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Cernkovich and Giordano, 2001; Gottfredson and Hirsch 1990; Farrington, 2003). Consistent with this past research, I control for a wide array of delinquent behaviors in adolescence to account for stability in antisocial behavior across the life-course.

*Hypothesis 1*: Juvenile delinquency will predict adult offending, but not explain the race gap in the dependent variable.

The *Adult Stability Model* (model 2) contains all previous variables plus current employment, job stability, education, marital status, and relationship happiness. Past research indicates that, for the most part, married and employed adults are insulated from risk for involvement in serious criminal offending (Sampson and Laub, 1993, Uggen,
Sampson and Laub (1990, 1993) argue that the “good marriage effect” is actually a reflection of salient adult bonds that provide a pathway toward desistance. Relationship happiness therefore constitutes a proxy for the intensity of the romantic partner bond. Likewise, prior research using OLS data shows that respondents who report having a “complete package” in terms of being married and employed are less likely to be involved in adult crime than single and jobless respondents (Giordano et al. 2002).

**Hypothesis 2:** A current job and marriage are negatively related to criminal offending, as are job stability and relationship happiness.

The *Criminal Network Model* (model 3) contains previous variables plus deviant friends and partners. Research indicates that the level of crime and deviance present in a person’s peer group and intimate partner relationship are indictors of both self-selection into antisocial groups and influential pressures related to involvement in self-reported crime (Matsueda and Anderson, 1998). Nearly 92 percent of the sample reports an intimate partner with which they are currently involved. Consequently, controlling for partner deviance is just as important in this sample as friend’s deviance. As noted earlier, the apparent “good marriage effect” might result from involvement with less delinquent peers (Warr, 1998) or it could be a function of partners’ level of delinquency (Giordano et al, 2003; Haynie et al. 2005). Moreover, accounting for the variation in these predictors is critical for evaluating the independent effects of neighborhood efficacy and disorder above and beyond peer and partner differential association.
Hypothesis 3: A criminal network, as indicated by a highly deviant peer group and/or romantic partner, is positively related to criminal offending.

The Neighborhood Context Model (model 4) contains previous measures plus neighborhood efficacy and disorder. The current study attempts to tap socio-ecological variation through indicators of neighborhood quality (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999). Neighborhood quality varies in terms of efficacy and disorder, of which a high quality neighborhood is operationalized in the current study by high efficacy and low disorder, while a low quality neighborhood is the inverse. Research indicates that accounting for the quality of the neighborhood in which individuals reside is an important variable for sociological studies (Sampson et al. 2002). This has particular importance when researchers are attempting to account for the race gap in criminal offending, because a disproportionate number of blacks live in disorganized communities that lack solidarity among their members (Sampson and Wilson, 1995; Anderson, 1999). Specifically, this model attempts to account for the variation in neighborhood quality with efficacy and disorder scales. It is important to consider the impact that larger social forces such as neighborhood collective efficacy have on criminal behavior. Indeed, a more complete understanding of the causes of crime requires that we acknowledge that criminal behavior does not occur in a vacuum and that the informal social control of one’s neighborhood may play an important independent role in the criminal careers of individuals (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Stewart et al, 2002; Sampson et al. 1997; Sampson, 2002).
Hypothesis 4: High neighborhood efficacy is negatively related to adult crime, while neighborhood disorder is positively related, net of all other controls. Introduction of these variables to the model will account for the race gap in criminal offending.

The Interaction Model (model 5) examines the possibility that the race-crime gap depends on neighborhood quality. Past research suggests that certain cross-sections of black Americans live in a sub-culture of violence, which is a difficult construct to measure with structural variables such as marriage and employment (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967; Anderson, 1999). In other words, the higher levels of adult crime among African Americans may represent an endogenous aspect of life in predominately black neighborhoods that fosters a criminal lifestyle, of which the predictors in the current study are not sufficient to capture. Although some of the cultural or ecological differences may be controlled for by the neighborhood context and criminal network measures, the variables are not likely to completely capture the complex dynamics that make the average black community different than the average white community. The positive association between black race and adult crime may be moderated by the ecological differences between black and white communities (Sampson and Wilson, 1995; Wilson 1987, 1996; Anderson 1999). That is, the structural disadvantages (i.e., poor marriage and labor markets, high crime rates) that are disproportionately present in black communities warrant an exploration of race-dependent effects of neighborhood context on adult crime.

Many prior studies use “percent black” as a proxy for social disorganization (see Land et al, 1990 for a review). This is not to say that a high black population density
inexorably leads to high crime rates, but rather that a high percentage of blacks in a geographic area serves as an indicator of social inequality and ecological differences that in turn may lead to crime (Wilson, 1987; Massey and Denton, 1993; Sampson and Wilson, 1995). In an attempt to account for incomplete information about black-white ecological differences, I use race as an indicator and create race-neighborhood interaction terms. Underlying the race-neighborhood interaction terms is an assumption that the identifier for race captures ecological differences unmeasured in the regression model. I also make the assumption that black respondents live in predominately black-populated neighborhoods, which is not unreasonable considering the high levels of black-white segregation present in many neighborhoods (Massey and Denton, 1993). High levels of poverty (Wilson, 1996) and sub-cultural norms supportive of criminal behavior (Anderson, 1999; Topalli, 2005) tend to cluster more densely in black than white neighborhoods, a social phenomenon also likely present in the current study. Since it is likely that black neighborhoods are qualitatively different from white neighborhoods, and these differences are not included in the neighborhood measures for the current study, the interaction between race and neighborhood context may reveal emergent properties independent of the other predictors. However imperfect this method may be, a significant race-neighborhood interaction informs us of the importance of considering the context in which data are collected (Abbot, 1997).

**Hypothesis 5:** Neighborhood efficacy and disorder moderates the effect of black race on criminal prevalence.
RESULTS

First, I present descriptive statistics of the independent and dependent variables for the total sample and the sample partitioned by race. Second, I test several hypotheses and report the main effect findings of multivariate analyses that attempt to account for the race gap in criminal offending by regressing crime on several independent variables, most importantly juvenile delinquency, marital and job stability, criminal networks, and neighborhood context. The general hypothesis is that the race gap in criminal offending can be accounted for by neighborhood context in the full model. Third, I present results from regression models that examine the interactive effects of race and neighborhood context on crime.
Table 1: Descriptive Results and Racial Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=197</td>
<td>N=132</td>
<td>N=65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Prevalence of Adult Crime in 1995</strong></td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>6.83**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 0 to 21</td>
<td>(4.75)</td>
<td>(3.91)</td>
<td>(5.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serious Offenses</strong></td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>2.56***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 0 to 9</td>
<td>(2.00)</td>
<td>(1.58)</td>
<td>(2.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minor Offenses</strong></td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 0 to 12</td>
<td>(2.83)</td>
<td>(2.69)</td>
<td>(3.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Juvenile Delinquency</strong></td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>11.62***</td>
<td>9.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 0 to 18</td>
<td>(4.26)</td>
<td>(4.29)</td>
<td>(3.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% <strong>Graduated from High School</strong></td>
<td>30.46%</td>
<td>34.09%</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% <strong>Currently Employed in 1995</strong></td>
<td>58.88%</td>
<td>65.91%***</td>
<td>44.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Stability in 1995</strong></td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.72***</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 1 to 8</td>
<td>(1.71)</td>
<td>(1.66)</td>
<td>(1.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% <strong>Currently Married in 1995</strong></td>
<td>21.83%</td>
<td>27.27%***</td>
<td>10.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship Happiness in 1995</strong></td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>4.38**</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 1 to 7</td>
<td>(1.35)</td>
<td>(1.39)</td>
<td>(1.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deviant Friends in 1995</strong></td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 0 to 9</td>
<td>(2.64)</td>
<td>(2.52)</td>
<td>(2.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deviant Partner in 1995</strong></td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 0 to 22</td>
<td>(4.05)</td>
<td>(3.40)</td>
<td>(5.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood Efficacy in 1995</strong></td>
<td>16.11</td>
<td>16.69***</td>
<td>14.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 6 to 25</td>
<td>(3.70)</td>
<td>(3.65)</td>
<td>(3.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood Disorder in 1995</strong></td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>6.85***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 0 to 14</td>
<td>(4.46)</td>
<td>(3.80)</td>
<td>(8.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender:Male/Female</td>
<td>42.21/57.79%</td>
<td>50.76/49.24%</td>
<td>40.00/60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in 1995</td>
<td>29.30</td>
<td>29.29</td>
<td>28.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 25 to 34 years</td>
<td>(1.38)</td>
<td>(1.41)</td>
<td>(1.33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For values that are significantly higher by race *P<.10
**P<.05 ***P<.01
Standard deviations are in parentheses

**Descriptive Statistics**

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the total sample as well as for the white and black subgroups (see Appendix B for correlation matrix). Statistically significant black-white differences in the dependent and independent variables also are noted. Looking first at the dependent variables measuring adult crime prevalence, blacks engage in
significantly more criminal behavior than whites. While blacks commit almost 7 of the 21 offenses, whites commit only about 5 offenses. Disaggregating total crime by seriousness, I find that it is involvement in serious crime that accounts for the overall race difference in total crime. That is, the race difference in serious adult crime is statistically significant, but the race difference in minor adult crime is not.

In contrast, I find that whites report higher levels of juvenile delinquency than blacks. Upon closer examination of individual survey items for juvenile delinquency, whites report a statistically higher prevalence for criminal behaviors at all levels of seriousness from illicit drug use and vandalism to burglary and rape (results not shown). In other words, the higher prevalence of white juvenile delinquency in comparison to blacks is not restricted to only a range of minor offenses. In fact, the only offense in which black juveniles have a higher prevalence than whites is prostitution.

Comparatively, the only offenses for which whites are more prevalent than blacks are public intoxication and exceeding the driving speed limit by 20 mph or more.

Importantly, these findings do not support the age invariance hypothesis set forth by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) in their general theory of crime that posits a stable propensity towards criminal behavior from adolescence to early adulthood. Disaggregating the sample by race reveals a cross-over pattern in crime prevalence from adolescence to adulthood. That is, even for the most serious offenses, black respondents tend to persist in criminal offending during adulthood, while whites are more likely to

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6 The finding of higher delinquency among white youth relative to black youth in the current sample is somewhat at odds with the race findings of many past studies that examine delinquency based on community samples (Piquero and Burka, 2002). It is possible that the black youth in the current study underreport delinquent involvement (Hindelang et al., 1981).

7 The current study’s focus on prevalence sacrifices measurement sensitivity in exchange for a higher threshold against error in race-crime comparisons. Cernkovich, Giordano, and Pugh (1985) for example find in the OLS data that black youth report a higher incidence of violent offenses than white youth.
desist from crime in the early adult years. Both races show a significant decline in criminal offending from adolescence to adulthood (results not shown), but the decline in crime prevalence is more than two and a half times greater for whites than blacks (white mean difference = 6.76 vs. black mean difference = 2.54).

Turning to the adult stability factors that might explain the race difference in crime, whites are more likely to be currently married and are happier with their romantic relationships than blacks. For example, whites (27%) are about 2.5 times more likely to be currently married than their black counterparts (11%). And, whites are more likely to be currently employed and have greater job stability than blacks. The level of current employment among blacks (45%) is about twenty percentage points lower than among whites (66%). Also, whites (34%) are more likely to have graduated from high school than blacks (23%). Overall, the picture that emerges is that blacks experience significantly greater instability in their work and home lives than whites.

I find no significant race differences in friend or partner deviance. This finding is unexpected for a couple of reasons. First, past research shows that variation in individual criminal offending is partially explained by differences in exposure to criminogenic social networks (Warr, 1993, Giordano et al, 1986; Haynie et al. 2005). Second, some prior studies find that blacks have a higher risk of exposure to criminal social networks than do whites (Anderson 1999; Wilson, 1996). The similar degree of black and white criminal networks in the current study may indicate that black respondents are under-reporting the level of friend and partner deviance (Hindelang et al, 1981), or it may suggest that mechanisms other than differential association are responsible for the significantly higher prevalence of crime reported by black respondents.
Turning to neighborhood context, blacks report lower levels of collective efficacy and higher levels of disorder in their neighborhoods than whites. That whites report living in better quality neighborhoods than blacks in terms of public civility, physical and social indicators of economic viability, as well as community sharing efforts is consistent with past research (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999; Sampson and Wilson, 1995).
## Table 2: Poisson Regression of Adult Crime on Variables Under Investigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models for Total Crime Prevalence:</th>
<th>Baseline Model</th>
<th>Adult Stability</th>
<th>Criminal Network</th>
<th>Neighborhood Context</th>
<th>Full Model For Serious Crime</th>
<th>Full Model For Minor Crime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exp(b)</td>
<td>Exp(b)</td>
<td>Exp(b)</td>
<td>Exp(b)</td>
<td>Exp(b)</td>
<td>Exp(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (Black = 1, White = 0)</td>
<td>1.51***</td>
<td>1.52***</td>
<td>1.46***</td>
<td>1.45***</td>
<td>2.16***</td>
<td>1.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Female = 1, Male = 0)</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.88†</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.03</td>
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<td>1.01</td>
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<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.02</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Delinquency</td>
<td>1.06***</td>
<td>1.06***</td>
<td>1.05***</td>
<td>1.05***</td>
<td>1.06***</td>
<td>1.04***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduated High School (Yes =1, No = 0)</td>
<td>0.75***</td>
<td>0.83*</td>
<td>0.82*</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.82*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Currently Employed (Yes =1, No = 0)</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.15†</td>
<td>0.99</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
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<td>Currently Married (Yes = 1, No = 0)</td>
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<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.99</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Happiness</td>
<td>0.96*</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.01</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
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<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
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<td>Job Stability</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td>0.99</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.98</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviant Friends</td>
<td>1.11***</td>
<td>1.11***</td>
<td>1.15***</td>
<td>1.09***</td>
<td>1.09***</td>
<td>1.09***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviant Partner</td>
<td>1.06***</td>
<td>1.05***</td>
<td>1.07***</td>
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N = 197, †P<.10, *P<.05, **P<.01, P<.001.
Main Effects

Table 2 presents the results of multivariate analyses in the form of Poisson regression models. The exponentiated form of the covariate estimates are shown to allow for a unit impact interpretation per level of the variable (DeMaris, 2004). The table is partitioned such that the left-hand side shows the nested models of regressing total crime on the baseline, adult stability, criminal network, and neighborhood context variables. The right-hand side shows only the full models for serious and minor adult crime. The nested models are not displayed for serious and minor crime because there are few appreciable differences between the results for total crime and the two crime subcategories.8

Turning to my regression results, I find support for Hypothesis 1 that juvenile delinquency will predict adult offending, but not explain the race gap in crime. Notably, the baseline model indicates that black adults engage in 51% more crime than white adults even after controlling for prior juvenile delinquency and other controls. Reinforced here is the notion that criminal propensity during adolescence is a reliable predictor of offending later in life—a finding replicated in other criminological studies (Sampson and Laub, 1993, Gottfredson and Hirchi, 1990, Cernkovich and Giordano, 2001), although the effect size is not large.

Hypothesis 2, that stable employment and a happy intimate relationship are negatively related to criminal offending, receives mixed support. While adults with at least a high school diploma and those with higher levels of relationship happiness report lower levels of crime, current employment, job stability, and current marriage are not

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8 There is only one coefficient that is statistically different in the full model for serious crime compared to the full model for minor crime. The race gap is greater for serious crime than for minor crime. Otherwise, the effects of social, structural, and contextual factors are very similar across the two models. Hence, I only discuss the regression findings for the total crime models.
statistically related to crime prevalence. For instance, looking at the adult stability model, respondents with at least a high school education have crime prevalence levels that are 25 percent lower than respondents who did not finish high school. The education effect diminishes slightly after accounting for criminal networks (model 3) and neighborhood context (model 4), but remains statistically significant. In contrast, relationship happiness reduces to nonsignificance once these other factors are considered. In sum, bonds to work and intimate partners appear to have little impact on adult crime in this sample of serious juvenile delinquents. This finding is at odds with some previous life-course research (Sampson and Laub; 1990, 1993). Furthermore, despite lower levels of adult stability among blacks relative to whites, controlling for these factors fails to explain the race gap in criminal offending.

Looking at the results of the criminal network model (model 3), I find that having deviant friends or a deviant partner is positively related to adult crime. Hence, I find strong support for Hypothesis 3. A unit increase in friend or partner deviance is associated with an 11 and 6 percent increase in adult crime, respectively. These results are similar to findings from prior examinations of juvenile peer groups that show that delinquent involvement is in part based on the shared behaviors and attitudes among the individuals within a network of friends and romantic partners (Warr, 1993, Giordano et al, 1986; Haynie et al. 2005, Giordano et al, 2003). In this case, adults, like juveniles, share a common criminal thread with friends and romantic partners. However, accounting for the variation in criminal networks fails to reduce or explain the race gap in crime, which retains a larger effect size than either of the network variables.
Turning to the examination of neighborhood context, I test Hypothesis 4 that states that neighborhood efficacy is negatively related to adult crime, neighborhood disorder is positively related to adult crime, and that these neighborhood factors (along with all other variables) will account for the race gap in criminal offending. My hypothesis receives only partial support. Neighborhood efficacy has a statistically significant negative relationship with adult crime, but neighborhood disorder is unrelated to adult crime. Also, the race gap in crime in the full model (45% black-white difference) remains relatively unchanged in comparison to the baseline model (51% black-white difference). That is, controlling for neighborhood context, criminal networks, adult stability, and past delinquency, the race gap in adult crime remains considerably large.

Nonetheless, an interesting finding (not shown in Table 2) is that when the measures of neighborhood efficacy and disorder are entered into model 1 (i.e., without deviant networks or adult stability measures), the effect of efficacy is negative and statistically significant and the effect of disorder is positive and marginally significant.\(^9\) Entering criminal network variables greatly reduces the effect size of neighborhood efficacy and reduces the effect of neighborhood disorder to statistical non-significance. This finding suggests that the effects of neighborhood context on adult crime are mediated by the influence of smaller, more intimate peer and partner networks.

In sum, neighborhood efficacy remains a salient factor for individual self-reports of criminal prevalence, net of controlling for demographic differences and variability in

---

\(^9\) Total crime estimates for model 1, plus the neighborhood measures show the following results: neighborhood efficacy exp(b) = .97, p<.01; neighborhood disorder exp(b) = 1.02, p<.10. Entering criminal network variables shows a negative sign for the disorder coefficient: exp(b) = .99, p>.10. Because controlling for criminal networks distorts the estimate of neighborhood disorder to the extent of reversing the coefficient sign from positive to negative, the respondents’ perception of neighborhood disorder as social problems appears to be influenced by proximal factors such as friend and partner relationships (Sampson et al, 1999; Browning et al. 2004).
criminal networks. And, neighborhood efficacy appears to have an indirect effect on crime through deviant social networks that exist within the community. These findings also indicate that public incivilities and physical deterioration, informed by the neighborhood disorder scale, are not predictors of crime after efficacy is accounted for. Consequently, neighborhood efficacy emerges as a more salient factor than disorder for explaining criminal behavior. This finding is consistent with past neighborhood-crime research (Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson and Earls, 1997).

Interaction Effects

The next step is to evaluate if the effect of race on crime depends on neighborhood context. The rationale for testing the neighborhood-dependent effects of race is a lack of sensitivity on the part of the survey instrument to completely account for the ecological differences between black and white communities. Table 3 displays models that simultaneously test both for two-way interaction effects between race and neighborhood disorder as well as race and neighborhood efficacy. The table is partitioned such that the top section shows the effect of ‘black’ at average levels of the neighborhood covariates, the two middle sections show the effect of the neighborhood covariates, separately for black and white respondents, and the bottom section shows the interaction coefficients.10

10 Collinearity diagnostics in the interaction models (not in table) show that variance inflation factors (VIF) are less than 10 for each covariate, indicating that multi-collinearity is not interfering with estimates. Neighborhood variables are also centered in the interaction models, making the mean value for efficacy and disorder equal to zero. The effect of neighborhood covariates among black respondents is evaluated by changing the reference category of race to ‘black’ and creating white x neighborhood interaction terms. For more details on this method see DeMaris (2004).
Table 3. Neighborhood Interactions with Race: Net of Covariates

<table>
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<tr>
<th>At Average Levels of Total Crime</th>
<th>Serious Crime</th>
<th>Minor Crime</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Exp(b)</td>
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The Effect of Neighborhood Covariates for

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<th>.91**</th>
<th>.94**</th>
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The Effect of Neighborhood Covariates for

**Whites:**

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**Interaction Effects:**

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<th>0.89**</th>
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</thead>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>0.92**</th>
<th>0.97</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
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</table>

†P<.10, *P<.05, **P<.01, ***P<.001

Standard Error in Parenthesis
I find support for Hypothesis 5 that states that neighborhood efficacy and disorder moderate the effect of race on criminal prevalence. I observe a negative significant interaction between race and both neighborhood context variables. At sample average levels of neighborhood context, the effect of race is no longer statistically significant, however, for blacks but not whites, the impact of neighborhood context on crime is significant.\textsuperscript{11} A possible explanation for the significant race-neighborhood interaction terms is that blacks, in comparison to whites, have less access to pro-social outlets. Access to stable employment, education, martial partners, and social networks comprised of adults living conventional lifestyles are all the more prevalent within white communities than black communities (Wilson, 1987, 1996). These pro-social outlets provide social capital by which individuals navigate their way out of juvenile delinquency and into adult stability (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Portes, 1998). Since these forms of social capital are diminished in many black communities, social control as exercised by the neighborhood, may be more salient for deterring crime among blacks than whites. Disorder, however, shows a negative moderating effect among black respondents and a marginally positive moderating effect for serious crime among whites. It is possible that due to normalcy of neighborhood disorder in some black communities, its impact on individual behavior is not as great when compared to the whites in the sample. The unique ecological niches occupied by blacks may foster coping mechanisms in order to deal with crime and disorder (Sampson and Wilson, 1995). It is also likely that high scores in disorder among black respondents represent a level of fear or concern.

\textsuperscript{11} Zero-order correlations between neighborhood variables and adult crime show that neighborhood disorder is positively and significantly related to crime among whites ($r = .26$, $p < .01$), but not blacks. Likewise, the neighborhood efficacy is negatively and significantly related to crime among blacks ($r = -.25$, $p < .01$), but not whites. The correlation between disorder and efficacy is negative and significant for both races (whites: $r = -.50$, blacks = -.49, $p < .01$).
about crime in their neighborhood (Skogan, 1990; Kelling and Coles, 1996). Following this logic, the more concerned a respondent is about crime and disorder in their neighborhood, the less likely they are engaging in criminal offenses.

These findings indicate that the prevalence of crime among blacks depends on neighborhood context and lend support to my theoretical argument that the variable “race” encompasses unmeasured social differences between black and white neighborhoods. Furthermore, the significant interaction terms give credence to the notion of race-specific neighborhood problems not captured in the main effects, such as hyper-segregation (Massey and Denton, 1993) and concentrated disadvantage (Wilson, 1987), as well as the issues of social capital and the concerns about crime discussed above. Thus, efficacy and disorder operate differently for blacks and whites perhaps because of disparate social ecological niches that each race tends to occupy.
DISCUSSION

In the present study, I examine the extent and causes of racial disparity in criminal offending over the life-course with a sample of serious juvenile delinquents. I examine whether differences in prior delinquency, adult stability, criminal networks, and neighborhood quality explain race differences in adult crime prevalence. I also investigate the possibility that the effect of race on crime in adulthood depends on neighborhood quality. I discuss here the most notable findings of the present study.

First, I find that the prevalence of juvenile offending is consistently related to crime in adulthood even after controlling for a variety of social, structural, and contextual factors in the adult years. Also notable is that the delinquent/criminal behavior of blacks and whites crosses over between adolescence and adulthood. Although blacks report lower levels of delinquency than whites in adolescence, blacks have higher levels of criminal conduct than whites in adulthood. This finding is inconsistent with a stable-trait theory regarding criminal propensity (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990, 2000). Instead, the data suggest that the patterns of criminal onset and desistance for blacks and whites are not the same and that social, structural, and neighborhood factors likely play different roles in the criminal careers of blacks and whites (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Sampson and Wilson, 1995; Cernkovich and Giordano, 2001; Farrington, 2003).

Second, I show that adult stability factors related to employment and marriage have a very limited impact on adult crime in the present sample. The most robust predictor in the adult stability model is education with high school graduates reporting lower levels of crime in comparison to those who dropped out of school. However, relationship happiness, current marriage, current employment, and job stability have no
real impact on crime after controlling for other factors. It is possible that this unexpected finding may be a function of the composition of the sample. This sample of adults, who were highly delinquent as youth, show lower levels of relationship and job stability than a community-based sample (Cernkovich et al, 2000; Cernkovich and Giordano, 2001). Nonetheless, this finding is informative in that it suggests that highly deviant subgroups, such as former prisoners, may benefit little from what are normally considered to be pro-social outlets. Instead, because the reality is that few of these respondents are in positions to benefit from these outlets, other strategies for reducing future crime may be more fruitful. The present research suggests that deviant networks and neighborhood factors may play more important roles in desistance from criminal behavior.

Third, I find that criminal networks are strongly related to adult criminal offending. This reemphasizes other research that shows people tend to share intimate social relationships with those similar in behaviors and attitudes (Giordano et al, 1986; Warr, 1993; Haynie et al. 2005). Furthermore, I find that peer and partner networks explain some of the variation in adult crime, although they do not account for the race gap in crime.

Fourth, neighborhood efficacy, but not neighborhood disorder, is negatively related to crime prevalence in the sample. This counter-intuitive finding for disorder is better understood after reducing the model to only neighborhood variables. A reduced model, with model 1 variables plus neighborhood factors, reveals a negative relationship for efficacy and positive relationship for disorder, as hypothesized. However, I find after entering criminal network variables into the new model, the sign for neighborhood disorder reverses. This suggests a dynamic relationship between identifying public
incivilities as problems and the level of friend and partner deviance reported by the respondents. In other words, one can imagine if he/she were a drug dealer or a gang member, as are some of the respondents and their peers, he/she may be reluctant to identify these behaviors as problems in their neighborhood. The recognition of these kinds of “problems” may be self-deprecating and subsequently result in responses indicating low levels of crime and disorder despite an actual high level of crime and disorder in the neighborhood.

An alternative explanation for the counter-intuitive finding is based on normalcy; if the respondent has lived in a disorganized neighborhood for the majority of his/her life, a question about whether or not poorly kept homes or litter in streets is a problem may not be sensitive to norms established for the respondent. A third explanation is that the neighborhood disorder scale does not actually measure disorder. Past research in the area of neighborhoods and crime suggests that when respondents report disorder in their communities, they are actually communicating a level of concern about crime (Skogan, 1990; Kelling and Coles, 1996). This phenomenon could also be occurring in the present study.

Regardless, neighborhood efficacy and disorder has an impact on crime among blacks even after controlling for the quality of intimate social relationships, martial and employment status, past delinquency, and demographics. These findings speak to research on the wider influence of social forces beyond the most immediate and intimate relationships (Hunter, 1985; Bursik and Grismack, 1993; Giordano 1995; Sampson et al, 2002), and race-specific issues brought forth by previous authors (Wilson, 1987, 1996; Sampson and Wilson, 1995; Massey and Denton, 1993). Furthermore, it adds to the
growing body of research that positions neighborhood context as an ecological social force, independent of more proximal factors such as adult bonds (Sampson, 2002).

The significant association between race and adult criminal offending is moderated to non-significance at average levels of neighborhood disorder and efficacy. This finding suggests that black respondents living in average quality neighborhoods are no more criminal than the white respondents residing in similar communities (Peeples and Loeber, 1994). While this finding may indicate that the mechanisms underlying efficacy and disorder function differently for blacks than whites, it just as likely shows insensitivity on the part of the survey instrument to completely capture the ecological differences between black and white respondents.

The first interpretation of the interaction effect is guided by subcultural theories of crime, such as Anderson’s (1999) ethnographic observations or Wolfgang and Ferracuti’s classic study (1967). Subcultural explanations suggest that efficacy operates differently in black communities because of social norms that foster criminal pride. Although interesting and informative to criminological research, cultural theories are largely descriptive but fail to address the underlying mechanisms behind race and neighborhood quality. Alternatively, a broader ecological perspective on black and white inequality attempts to discover and evaluate the socio-structural factors that constitute cultural expression (Sampson et al, 2002; Sampson 2002). The ecological interpretation for interaction effects suggests that race is not only a measure of respondent identity, but also acts as a proxy for the social and physical differences between black and white communities not overtly present in the regression model. Unfortunately, the current study can only assume that race is a surrogate for unmeasured social differences, and similarly,
does not allow for a more thorough test of ecological-stratification due to non-independent neighborhood observations, failure to control for concentrated disadvantage, small sample size, and other limitations discussed below.

A clear limitation in the current study is the small sample size in comparison to other life-course research (see Sampson and Laub 1990, 1993; Moffit, 1993). While the rarity of the sample as an ethnically diverse study of male and female juvenile delinquents clearly bolsters its importance to criminological research (Cernkovich and Giordano, 2001), the small number of cases restricts the kinds of analyses that can be pursued. For example, the small sample precludes the partitioning of the sample by gender and race. Methodological research indicates that measurement error for delinquency varies by gender and race (Hindelang et al 1981; Piquero et al, 2002). For a sample with only 197 observations, partitioning by race and gender would reduce statistical power and result in unstable estimates for each disaggregated group. However, as a post-hoc effort to better understand the race-crime gap in the sample, a t-test for mean differences in adult crime was conducted when the sample is partitioned by gender. Results indicate that the significant disparity in adult crime prevalence is primarily among the females in the sample, although black males report significantly higher serious crime prevalence than white males. Moreover, black and white females have more similar levels of juvenile delinquency than black and white males. This information informs that, in general, black and white respondents of both genders declined in criminal prevalence from adolescence to adulthood, but the white male group desisted the most.

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12 T-test for mean differences in adult crime between races show that black females report significantly higher prevalence for all three crime categories, total, serious and minor: \( t = 2.43, p < .05; 2.88, p < .01; 1.88, p < .10 \) respectively. Black males differ from whites for serious crime only \( t = 2.71, p < .05 \). Black female delinquency is only slightly lower than white females \( t = 1.66, p < .10 \). Black male delinquency in comparison is much lower than white male delinquency \( t = 3.40, p < .001 \).
while the black male group desisted the least.\textsuperscript{13} Consequently, because of the small sample and the issue of low statistical power that comes with it, multivariate analyses were not pursued for the gender-disaggregated groups.

Another limitation is the incomplete survey of factors related to neighborhood context and the measure, or possible mismeasure, of neighborhood efficacy and disorder. The neighborhood measures in the current study do not necessarily encapsulate concentrated disadvantage, such as the high proportion of unemployed males and single-mothers, hyper-segregation of ethnic minorities, limited access to pro-social adult networks, and low sex-ratio present in many black communities (Massey and Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1987, 1996). The distal influence of legally enforced discrimination and housing segregation through-out much of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the fall out of the manufacturing sector in the 1970’s and 80’s and subsequent middle class out-migration from urban areas, as well as the unbalanced marriage market systemically led to the ecological deterioration of many formerly-promising African American metropolitan areas (Massey and Denton 1993; Wilson 1987, 1996; Guttenberg and Secord, 1983). Unfortunately, the inability of the current study to take these factors into account renders a less than complete understanding of the impact of neighborhood quality on crime.

In addition, respondents are asked to rank how problematic issues of crime and disorder are in their neighborhood. This is not a precise measure because it assumes that people have an adequate understanding of crime and disorder in their community, and

\textsuperscript{13} Paired T-tests are used to measure desistance in terms of the ‘change score’ in crime prevalence from adolescence to adulthood. Black males desisted the least ($t=1.71$, $p=.10$), white male desisted the most ($t=12.21$, $p<.001$), and the black and white females varied in between ($t=3.16$, $p<.01$; $t=11.09$, $p<.001$, respectively). ANOVA, is used in conjuncture with Tukey tests for mean differences in crime ‘change scores’ for each race-gender disaggregated group. Results show that black ‘change scores’ are significantly smaller ($p<.05$) than white ‘change scores’ regardless of gender, however, there is no significant difference is ‘change score’ within race, between gender groups.
that they appraise the issue in a uniform manner despite differences in the quality of neighborhoods in which they reside. Other researchers have commented on the importance of considering the social context from which data are gathered, where by the varying degree of measurement error in response to neighborhood questions is influenced by the respective social and ecological backgrounds across individual cases (Abbot, 1997). For example, a person living in a “good” neighborhood may not respond similarly to issues of unemployment as someone who is accustomed to crime and disorder. Even if we assume that respondents have equal knowledge about unemployment in their communities, this does mean that they assess the situation through an objective lens (i.e. that higher unemployment is a bigger problem). Neighborhood context is therefore likely to influence responses to questions about disorder and efficacy through social-psychological mechanisms not accounted for in the present study.

Germane to the topic above is the fact that the neighborhood measures available in the OLS data are not independent of the respondents. I already discussed how the perception of neighborhood disorder can influence the interpretation of the response, such as higher reports of disorder may equate high fear of crime (Skogan, 1990; Kelling and Coles, 1996). There is also a possibility that the neighborhood items indicate agentic mechanisms that are the joint function of individual and environmental variation (Walsh, 2000). Individual variation in self-control (Gottfredson and Hirsch, 1990), neurological deficits (Moffit, 1993), and subjective strain (Agnew, 2001), create a reciprocal relationship between the individual and their environment. It is reasonable that the most criminally-driven respondents report, on average, low efficacy with his/her neighbors through provocation of their own actions. Neighbors may be disinclined to provide
assistance to a known criminal, even if the neighbor is the victim (Sampson and Groves, 1989). Likewise, the subjective experience of disorder may have a differential impact on criminal propensity given that individuals vary in their capacity to cope with environmental strain (Agnew, 2001). Coupled with neighbor ties entrenched in drug-trafficking, prostitution, and chemical dependency, the reciprocal link between self and environment exacerbates the risk for a persistent criminal lifestyle.

Finally, incarceration rates, which are disproportionately high in black communities, are another ecological influence that is not accounted for in the current study. Going to prison is such a common event for some black communities that the young males treat the ordeal as a rite of passage into adulthood (Anderson, 1999). Community crime research suggests that residents tend to attribute little value to formal (police) and informal (peer networks) mechanisms of social control when they report knowing friends and neighborhoods who have been incarcerated (Clear and Rose, 1999). The removal of young black men through long terms of incarceration also adds to ecological deterioration by depleting the already low supply of marriageable bachelors amongst black communities (Wilson, 1996). Little is known about the unintended consequences of mass incarceration on communities, however, from what has already been observed, it would appear that prisons can impact neighborhood context just as crime rates and unemployment do (Travis and Waul, 2003).
CONCLUSION

This study supports prior research on the life-course of crime, in that stability and change co-occur with regards to criminal propensity (Cernkovich and Giordano, 2001; Farrington, 2003) and that neighborhood context matters (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999; Sampson et al, 2002) even among a group of high-risk juvenile offenders. I examined the race-crime gap in a sample of serious juvenile delinquents during adolescence and adulthood. Juvenile delinquency is an important predictor of adult offending, lending to the notion of stability in criminal propensity over the life-course (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990, 2000; Farrington, 2003). The race-crime dynamics observed in the present study do not, however, support the assumptions made by static trait theories. Black respondents report lower crime prevalence in adolescences while higher rates emerge in adulthood, in comparison to the white respondents. Although black and white respondents report lower rates of criminal offending from adolescence to adulthood, white respondents indicate a much steeper decline. These findings suggest that offense trajectories vary across cases, in particularly for the current study, race separates the chronic desisters from the criminally incorrigible. Past research generally supports the conclusion that people desist at differential rates (Sampson and Laub, 2003, Piquero et al, 2005), but not all studies find that race matters in terms of criminal career length (Piquero et al, 2004). More research is needed to better understand why race is sometimes a factor in the criminal career. Neighborhood context, and the social ecology in which it is embedded, is hinted at in the current study as a possible explanation, although, the quality of the respondents community in terms of disorder and efficacy failed to account for the wide gap between criminal prevalence. This may because of limited ecology data, as
suggested by the significant interaction terms, or social psychological mechanisms not accounted for in the models.
REFERENCES


Farrington, David P. 2003 “Developmental and Life-Course Criminology: Key Theoretical and Empirical Issues – The 2002 Sutherland Award Address.” *Criminology* 41: 221-255.


APPENDIX A: A List of Criminal Offenses Used in the Current Study

“How often in the past 12 months have you done the following things?”:

Minor Offenses: Damage property on purpose, Steal something with less than 5 dollars, Took something from work, Took something from work worth more than 50 dollars, Drive 20 miles per hour over the speed limit, Got drunk in public, Used drugs to get high, Carried a hidden weapon, other than a plain pocket knife, Hit or threaten to hit someone, Embezzled money, Used someone’s credit cards without permission, Cheat on taxes?

Serious Offenses: Took something worth more than 50 dollars, Steal or tried to steal an automobile, Get involved in gang fights, Attack someone with the idea of seriously hurting him/her, Use force or threat to get money or other things, Sell marijuana or hash, Sell hard drugs like cocaine, heroine, or LSD, Have (or tried to have) sexual relations with someone against their will, Break into a vehicle or building (or tried to break in) to steal something or just look around?

1 Never
2 once or twice a year
3 once every 2-3 months
4 once a month
5 once every 2-3 weeks
6 once a week
7 2-3 times a week
8 Once a day
9 More than once a day
0 Missing/Refused
### Appendix B. Zero-Order Correlation Matrix for Continuous Variables

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<th>3</th>
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