

2. There appear to be three main types of encounters that can be used to classify homicides: (a) a situation characterized by force, (b) a situation characterized by face, and (c) a situation characterized by identity. The first type leads to felony murders and rape murders. The second type comprises challenges and counter challenges that escalate to fights and end in homicide. The third type of encounters involves disputes between persons who have a deep, intense relationship. A study is being conducted to develop a typology of homicides, but the situational differences resulting in black homicides and in white homicides has not yet been addressed.

3. Stresses in the black community differ from those in the white community. Black men must relate both to their own people and to the white community. In addition, systems that tend to reduce stress in the community—the family, recreation, education—do not operate effectively. A study to isolate and identify components of black anxiety was suggested. Just as anxiety is a common thread in mental illness, stress is a common thread in homicide. When stress becomes unbearable, either outward or inward violence results.

Reference

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Toward a Dual Labor-Market Approach to Black-on-Black Homicide

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There are many gaps in our knowledge about the root causes and the roles of factors related to black homicide. Three popular explanations for the disproportionately high black-on-black homicide rate are the handgun availability model, the deterrence model, and a social structural model. Although decreasing the availability of handguns might reduce their use in black-on-black homicides, this action would not necessarily reduce the number of homicides or the amount of physical brutality in black communities. And rather than deter homicides, capital punishment would certainly increase black mortality and probably intensify problems among the growing population of blacks in prisons.

A growing body of research shows societal variables such as unemployment, dense urban population, and low income are directly associated with black-on-black homicidal violence. Researchers have failed to isolate and separate social mediators from more basic structural causes. What is needed is research and demonstration to specify how employment-related experiences directly affect black-on-black homicide and how these effects are mediated through stress coping, economic hardship, family pressure, opportunities in the community, educational failure, and alcohol and drug abuse.

The “dual labor-market” approach to black-on-black homicide focuses on the employment-related experiences of black males as the root cause of their high rate of homicide. The approach also aims to clarify the role of key social stresses,

social support systems, and related alcohol, drug abuse, and mental health factors.

This approach was first offered to explain job-related low income and was further developed to account for various labor market problems facing blacks. In the model, employment problems of black males are a direct result of their systematic exclusion from jobs in the primary sector and their disproportionate tracking into unstable secondary sector jobs. A basic assumption is that two largely separate labor markets exist: primary sector jobs have a future, while secondary jobs are deadends. Montaga states that the primary sector offers high wages, good working conditions, advancement, equity, and employment stability (1). Jobs in the secondary sector are low paying or involve poor working conditions, limited advancement, a highly personalized relationship between workers and supervisors that is conducive to harsh work disciplines, instability, and a high turnover rate.

Researchers have documented several aspects of this dual labor market that are stressful for blacks who are overrepresented in the secondary sector and encounter hiring discrimination, isolated job contacts, and other barriers that restrict entry into primary sector jobs. Also, the growing unemployment rate among young blacks reflects the instability of secondary sector jobs and their vulnerability to technological change and economic risk. As a result, many drop out of the labor force and experience persistent economic hardship.

Despite the impact of these restraints of the dual labor market on blacks, no systematic understanding has tied the concept to black-on-black homicide or to the escalating rate of violence among black males. Are family pressures, unequal opportunity structures, and educational inequalities affected by the dual labor market experiences? Would promoting more constructive methods of coping with stress and true criminal justice reduce the prevalence of black-on-black homicide? Can homicide in black communities be reduced by strong family networks and better educational or skill development opportunities? How would the elimination of dual labor market experience altogether affect the incidence of black-on-black homicide?

The following five propositions address the research and intervention needs:

1. Direct effects of the dual labor market. If black-on-black homicide is caused primarily by destructive patterns of coping with the dual labor market, then effective intervention strategies should promote blacks' access to meaningful primary sector jobs and constructive coping experiences.

2. Indirect effects of the dual labor market. If destructive stress coping by blacks is mediated through economic hardship, coupled with family pressure, job-related stress, and educational inequalities, then economic security, legitimate opportunity structures, family support, and educational skills should be developed.

3. Direct role of alcohol and drugs. If alcohol and drug abuse often engender a destructive form of coping in black-on-black violence, then effective intervention should reduce alcohol and drug use as coping strategies.

4. Role of law enforcement activities. Given that enforcement varies systematically by race, effective intervention

should equalize the severity of enforcement, regardless of race.

5. Role of the correctional system. If criminal socialization in correctional settings perpetuates educational underachievement and opportunities for illegal activities among inmates or rechannels them into the secondary labor market, then rehabilitation that increases educational skills, expands legitimate opportunities, and offers meaningful postprison jobs should be developed.

These research and intervention propositions are consistent with recent policy statements by ADAMHA. Some research projects partially support the basic propositions, but the following additional studies should provide the basis for intervention activities.

1. Clarify the impact of experience with the dual labor market on destructive stress coping among a national sample of black males between the ages of 14 and 24 years. Using data from the National Survey of Black Americans, this study should include multivariate analyses of the operation of differential opportunity, economic status, family networks, and educational experiences as both mediators and buffers against unemployment-related distress.

2. Document the effects of plant closings and layoffs on destructive stress coping of black males in areas like Detroit. Show how community mental health agencies must intervene through demonstrations.

3. A longitudinal research program could be initiated in a juvenile correctional setting to clarify the role of employment-related factors on (a) the occurrence of violent delinquent crimes, (b) the effectiveness in juvenile rehabilitation, and (c) repeat violent offenses. Data collected from records and a sample survey could provide a unique insight into the role of employment and related antecedents in the occurrence of violent juvenile crimes, with a particular focus on black-on-black homicide. Experimental groups receiving structured employment-related experiences could be compared with control groups to examine the effects of such experiences on measures of adjustment, especially assaultive behavior. Finally, youths placed in meaningful jobs through a post-release program could be compared with control groups to investigate the effects of such employment on repeat violent offenses. Such a research-action "demonstration" would be particularly timely, since a significant portion of the black-on-black homicide in the future will involve repeat offenders whose contacts with juvenile "rehabilitation" facilities have not been fruitful.

ADAMHA needs to approach all its functions—whether related to prevention, services, demonstrations, or research—with a full understanding of how black-on-black homicide is exacerbated by destructive ways of coping with stress and by drug abuse, educational failure, family pressures, and illegal limitations on employment opportunity. Besides trying to reduce the role of these psychological and social agents in black-on-black homicide through direct services, the agency needs to give high priority to advocacy and research. For example, ADAMHA should collaborate with other Federal agencies such as the Department of Labor to reduce the

stressful employment-related conditions that nourish assaultive behavior and homicidal violence in black communities. Also, although scattered research projects have pointed up the role that conditions in the labor market play in black-on-black homicide, preventive measures will become effective only when they are mounted on the firmer knowledge that additional studies can provide.

Reference

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Social Costs to Families and Communities

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Homicidal violence can be viewed as the tip of the iceberg in relation to other forms of violence and social disorganization. Violence breeds pathological conditions, and social pathology in turn breeds more violence. Homicidal violence affects the lives of perpetrators as well as victims, the lives of their families, and the life of the community.

In the Meharry Medical College's ongoing study "Profile: Black Male at Risk to Low Life Expectancy," the target group was composed of 502 black males ages 18 to 34; the median age was 25. One group consisted of 167 homicide perpetrators who had been incarcerated in Tennessee for periods of 3 months to 1 year. A second group consisted of 130 assault victims—emergency room patients of two Nashville hospitals—who served as proxies for homicide victims. These people had serious knife or gunshot wounds, and many required intensive care. The third group consisted of 205 non-institutionalized young black males from a random sample of households representing various classes in Nashville.

Via a social background questionnaire of multichoice and open-ended questions, information was obtained on the personal, family, social, and community lives of the subjects. Questions concerned income, residential mobility, recreation patterns, education, personal goals, role models, substance abuse, contact with the law, parental punishment, attitudes toward self, and participation in violent behavior, and so forth. This approach reflects the fact that significant life events or stresses may occur at different stages of growth or awareness. Psychological tests were also given.

A panel of community representatives; clinical, educational, religious, and correctional experts; and political leaders helped analyze data and provided guidance on the project. The "Profile: Black Male at Risk to Low Life Expectancy" that emerges is expected to indicate possible interventions.

Some rapid role changes occurred among approximately 20 percent of the subjects. Some control subjects became prisoners before the data collection stages were completed. However, such role reversals occurred more frequently among the group of assault victims and the prison group. Yet some characteristics differentiating these two groups were identi-