

Racial Bias in Case Processing: Does Victim Race Affect Police Clearance of Violent Crime Incidents?

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ABSTRACT

Prior studies have illustrated racial differences in perceptions of police legitimacy. African Americans' views, however, appear to be complex, shaped by perceptions of over-enforcement of crimes committed by African American offenders coupled with under-enforcement of crimes involving African American victims. Using data from the 2002 National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), we examine whether victim race (alone, and in combination with offender race) affects police case clearance of four types of violent criminal incidents (homicide, aggravated assault, rape, and robbery) as a potential explanation of African Americans' reduced levels of support for the police. Results suggest that the race of the victim, particularly in combination with the race of the offender, is related to police clearance of violent criminal incidents, but that this relationship is not as strong as those between agency, offense type, and situational characteristics of the incident. Implications for research and policy on police – community relations are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Tyler (2004, 2006) provides a framework illustrating the importance of “legitimacy” of the law and its enforcement agents as a key part of a functional, free, fair society. Specifically, Tyler argues that societies rely on citizens’ self-regulation to effectively accept and comply with social control efforts. When legitimacy is diminished, tensions between citizens and social control actors are heightened, compliance and cooperation decreases, and the social order is compromised. Recent studies on this topic have illustrated the decreased legitimacy of the police and resultant consequences among many African American citizens (Baumer, 2002; Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006; Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007; Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Huo, 2002).

While tensions between police and African Americans are well documented, it is unclear whether this is primarily due to a function of historical residual, current discriminatory practices, or a combination of the two. Additionally, questions remain as to whether over-enforcement of the law against African American offenders, under-enforcement of crimes with African American victims, or a combination of the two accounts for racial differences in attitudes toward the criminal justice system. For example, the use of police to subjugate African Americans and maintain social policies such as slavery and segregation has been well documented (Bass, 2001a, 2001b; Websdale, 2001; Johnson, 2003). This historical context, coupled with perceptions that police engaged in discrimination against racial/ethnic minorities (particularly in terms of over-enforcing crimes involving African American offenders), produced a deepening and longstanding sense of antipathy between law enforcement and many African American residents. Indeed, some scholars suggest that the 1960s incidents of civil unrest may be attributed to police repressive actions in an already volatile context of minority discontent (Johnson, 2003; Perez,

Berg, & Myers, 2003). Additionally, extensive media coverage of these incidents brought widespread attention to police-community tensions. These factors illustrate the importance of over-enforcement in police-community relations.

Conversely, Hawkins (1987) and Kennedy (1997) have argued that under-enforcement of the law is a more serious problem because it allows criminogenic forces to fester (see, too, Tonry, 1995). While it remains unclear whether over- or under-enforcement of the law is more problematic, the view that police treat crimes involving minorities differently may have contributed to findings of African Americans' reduced levels of trust, perceived legitimacy, and support of police relative to their white peers (see Decker, 1981; Tuch & Weitzer, 1997; and Brown & Benedict, 2002; for reviews, although, see, too, Frank, Brandl, Cullen, & Stichman, 1996). For example, African Americans are more likely than white citizens to view criminal justice interventions as unfair regardless of outcome (Engel, 2005), and these attitudinal differences may further strain the relationships between African Americans and the criminal justice system as a whole (Albrecht & Green, 1977; Tyler & Huo, 2002).

While numerous studies have examined the role of victim race in criminal justice case processing, these inquiries have generally been conducted on the later stages of the system (such as prosecutorial decisions about whether to file charges and sentencing). The relationship between the race of the victim in a crime and police clearance of criminal cases, however, has received less scholarly attention. Additionally, extant research on the topic is limited by a number of conceptual and methodological issues including a failure to fully explore the role of race in case clearance. Specifically, studies have typically focused on a single offense and have failed to examine the interaction between victim and offender race.

The current study seeks to expand the research that has examined the effect of race on

criminal justice processing and African Americans' perceptions of the legitimacy of the police. Using data from the 2002 National Incident-Based Reporting System [NIBRS] (U.S. Department of Justice 2004a), we examine the role of victim race on the likelihood that police will clear violent crimes (i.e., homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault). Using Tyler's framework, our research builds upon findings from previous studies of other system stages (i.e., filing of charges, trial and bail decisions, verdicts, and sentencing outcomes) to explore the possibility that effects of victim race on police case clearance may be conditioned by other factors (particularly offender race). We conclude with discussions of ways in which history and current practices shape perceptions of fairness and legitimacy among African Americans specifically and society generally.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PRIOR LITERATURE

African Americans generally have been found to have less favorable attitudes toward the police than whites (see Decker, 1981; Tuch & Weitzer, 1997; and Brown & Benedict, 2002; for reviews, although see, too, Frank et al., 1996). One potential issue that arises from this consistent finding involves the legitimacy of police as agents of social control in the eyes of African Americans. According to Tyler (2004, 2006), the laws and its enforcement agents must be viewed as legitimate in order to maintain social order. Perceptions of legitimacy are established through individual experiences with the criminal justice system, as well as "vicarious" experiences, whereby other individuals' experiences are transmitted between citizens through communication about those events. Experiences perceived as procedurally fair and satisfactory in outcome tend to increase perceptions of legitimacy.

Law-abiding behavior is primarily based on individual self-regulation, as "police must be able to rely on upon widespread, voluntary law-abiding behavior to allow them to concentrate

their resources on those people and situations in which compliance is difficult to maintain” (Tyler, 2004: 85). Police are also reliant upon citizen cooperation in a number of ways, such as reporting crimes, assisting in investigations, and complying with police directives. As the legally sanctioned agents of enforcing the laws and often the “first responders” to crimes, police are also the most visible agents of the criminal justice system. Thus, when the legitimacy of the police is diminished, social control is compromised, potentially disrupting the larger social order. This may take a variety of forms, including engaging in less law-abiding behavior generally, failing to report crimes when they occur, reduced satisfaction in encounters, failing to cooperate in criminal investigations, and failing to comply with police directives.

Recent research suggests that police have “lost legitimacy” among many African Americans. As Bass (2001a, 2001b) has highlighted, the police have historically been responsible for enforcing laws intended to maintain racially- and spatially-based formal and informal social order, which has created an experience unique to African Americans. For example, the history of police serving as slave patrols and enforcing Black Codes (such as anti-vagrancy and loitering ordinances) and Jim Crow laws creates an historical context in which African American relationships with the police must be understood (see, too, Websdale, 2001). Additionally, police have also been criticized for focusing predominantly on minority neighborhoods or engaging in stricter enforcement of laws prohibiting behaviors disproportionately engaged in by minorities (Hagan, 1994; Tonry, 1995). These studies illustrate the importance of police over-enforcement of the law as a partial explanation of the loss of legitimacy among many African Americans.

Focusing on over-enforcement, however, may simplify the issue. Hawkins (1987) and Kennedy (1997) have suggested that under-enforcement of the law is more common and

problematic, consistent with Tonry's (1995) proposition that the American criminal justice system operates under a model of "malign neglect" when applied to racial and ethnic minorities. Klinger (1997) has suggested that police often adjust the rigor of their enforcement of criminal laws in communities or neighborhoods based upon their view of the "normality" of deviance in those areas. Those with higher levels of deviance—often disproportionately inhabited by minority residents—receive less stringent enforcement because crime is viewed as "normal" in these areas. If true, this orientation supports the possibility that police and other criminal justice actors may under-enforce the law in crimes involving minority victims as evidenced through delays in response to calls for service, lax enforcement and investigation of criminal offenses in communities inhabited primarily by racial/ethnic minorities (and thus typically involving minority victims), and more lenient treatment of cases involving minority victims.

This paradox (that is, the perception that both over-enforcement and under-enforcement processes are at work) is highlighted by Brunson's (2007) study of young males residing in St. Louis. The young men interviewed expressed frustration with what they viewed as both overly aggressive (e.g., stops, searches, use of violence) and lax (e.g., slow response times, prioritization of calls for service, and a general sentiment that police were incapable of effective crime solving and prevention) police practices. Equally important in Brunson's work, young black men were found to develop their perceptions both through direct encounters with police, as well as through "vicarious experiences" relayed by friends and family members. Similarly, Rosenbaum and colleagues' (2005) examination of Chicago residents found that negative vicarious (as opposed to direct) experiences were particularly important for African Americans (relative to other racial/ethnic groups). While African Americans have also been found to have less tolerance for deviance in their communities relative to whites (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998),

it appears that a potential loss of police legitimacy may be leading to situations where African American citizens are reluctant to report crimes (Baumer, 2002; Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007). But do the perceptions of differential treatment of criminal cases represent current police practices?

Victim Race and Police Clearance

There has been a resurgence in studies examining factors affecting police clearance of criminal cases, thus providing an additional foundation for the current study. According to the FBI (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004b; see also U.S. Department of Justice, 2000), cases are considered “cleared” either through the arrest of a subject or through “exceptional” means (i.e., a suspect is identified and evidence is gathered to support an arrest, but factors beyond the control of police prohibit arrest). The under-enforcement perspective would suggest that crimes involving minority victims may be considered “lower profile” and result in less police time, energy, and resources allocated to clear these cases (Corsianos, 2003). Consequently, such cases would be less likely to be cleared than cases involving white victims. Whether such differences in case clearances exist remains to be seen, but it is clear that African Americans view under-enforcement of the law in African American communities (and thus with predominantly African American victims) as a continuing problem (Brunson, 2007).

Prior studies provide insight into the extent to which victim characteristics affect police case clearance. For example, findings by Smith and colleagues (Smith, 1987; Smith & Visher, 1981; Smith, Visher, & Davidson, 1984) have found that African American victims were denied the same degree of protection of the law offered to white victims (Smith et al., 1984) and that victim characteristics were more important than offender characteristics in police handling of violent criminal encounters (Smith, 1987). The effects of victim race, however, were found to be

less salient than factors such as seriousness of the offense, presence of evidence, use of weapons, preference of the victim, and relational distance between victims and offenders (Black, 1971; Smith, 1987; Smith & Visher, 1981; Smith et al., 1984).

With the exception of homicide research (discussed below), our search for more recent studies using NIBRS data turned up only two results remotely addressing this issue. Stolzenberg, D'Alessio, and Eitle (2004) used 2000 NIBRS data to examine macro-level processes associated with the “racial threat hypothesis” to determine whether police would make an arrest in violent crime cases in 182 cities. Their results were not supportive of the racial threat hypothesis and their primary focus was on the probability of arrest involving cases involving African-American offenders; the findings related to victim race, however, were particularly relevant to the current study. Specifically, crimes involving white victims and African-American offenders were most likely to result in an arrest in segregated cities. Expanding on this study, Eitle and colleagues (2005) used 2000 data from NIBRS, Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS), and U.S. Census, to examine how police organizational characteristics affected police clearance of assault cases. Of particular relevance for the current study, the likelihood of arrest for simple and aggravated assaults was higher for white offenders than African-American offenders, and police organizational characteristics moderated the relationship between offender race and probability of arrest for simple assaults but not aggravated assaults.

While highly prevalent, recent studies focusing on factors affecting police clearance of homicide cases have provided little support for the under-enforcement of crimes involving minority victims. They have generally found that the race of the victim has no statistically significant effect on police clearance of homicide cases (Litwin, 2003; Marche, 1994; Puckett &

Lundman, 2003; Roberts, 2007) or that cases involving African American victims are slightly more likely to be cleared than cases involving white victims (Regoeczi, Kennedy, & Silverman, 2000) once other factors are controlled. While homicides occurring in predominantly minority neighborhoods are less likely to be cleared than homicides committed in predominantly white neighborhoods, this does not appear to be the result of differential police treatment attributable to victim race (Puckett & Lundman, 2003). Rather, racial differences in case clearance has typically been explained by racial differences in factors such as witness cooperation (Litwin, 2003; Puckett & Lundman, 2003), the relationship between the victim and offender (Regoeczi et al., 2000), and/or circumstances surrounding the incident, including the type of weapon used (Puckett & Lundman, 2003), or contemporaneous crimes associated with the homicide (Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Regoeczi et al., 2000). A number of other factors have been found to affect police clearance of homicide cases including victim age (Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Regoeczi et al., 2000) and sex (Regoeczi et al., 2000), presence of evidence (Litwin, 2003; Regoeczi et al., 2000), detective caseload (Marche, 1994; Puckett & Lundman, 2003), and police organizational culture (Litwin, 2003).

Limitations of Prior Research on Police Clearance

The recent research on factors affecting police clearance of criminal cases is limited in a number of ways.¹ For instance, prior studies have generally focused exclusively on homicide (Litwin, 2003; Marche, 1994; Puckett & Lundman, 2003; Regoeczi et al., 2000; Roberts, 2007; although see Eitle et al., 2005 and Stolzenberg et al., 2004). The factors affecting homicide case clearance, however, may be different than for other crimes. Homicide cases are typically considered “high profile” crimes (Puckett & Lundman, 2003), which have been found to result in

¹ For an excellent review of the findings and limitations related to police clearance of homicide cases, see Wellford and Cronin (1999) and the May, 2007, issue of *Homicide Studies*.

greater time, energy, and resources devoted to solving the case (Corsianos, 2003). Prior research also has found that extralegal variables are more highly correlated with police case clearance in less serious incidents and those less visible to the public (Engel, Sobol, & Worden, 2000); extralegal factors are less likely to correlate with higher profile cases involving more serious and/or visible crimes. Thus, the discrepancy in case clearance between minority victims and non-minority victims may be smaller in homicide cases, compared with less serious (but more common) offenses. Additionally, homicide cases are typically handled by investigators who are evaluated solely on their ability to solve these crimes (adding incentive to clear as many homicide cases as possible), while case clearance is one of many factors used to evaluate patrol officers, who are often involved in clearing other types of crime (Puckett & Lundman, 2003).

Perhaps most importantly, studies have failed to fully explore the possibility that the effect of victim race may interact with offender race to affect police clearance of violent crimes. This is somewhat surprising given important differences found at other stages of the criminal justice system as a result of the interaction between victim and offender race. LaFree (1980), for example, found that racial composition of the case participants had no effect on the likelihood of arrest, prosecution, trial, or verdict. The victim/offender race combination, however, influenced the sentence imposed, with African American offenders convicted of victimizing whites receiving the harshest sentences and African American offenders convicted of victimizing African American victims receiving the most lenient sentences (see also, Baldus, Woolworth, & Pulaski, 1990; Bowers & Pierce, 1980; Gross & Mauro, 1984; Kingsnorth et al., 1998; Paternoster, 1984; Sorensen & Wallace, 1999; Spohn, 1994; Spohn & Spears, 1996; Walsh, 1987; Wolfgang & Riedel, 1973). Thus, prior research has illustrated the importance of the “victim-offender dyad” in examinations of criminal justice case processing.

The current study extends research examining police clearance of criminal cases as one potential explanation of African Americans' less favorable attitudes towards the police. Our primary question of interest is: Does the race of the victim in a criminal case affect the likelihood that it will be cleared by police? Our inquiry improves on prior research in three ways. First, our research question and findings are couched within the larger context of African Americans' experiences with and attitudes towards the police. Secondly, we examine four types of crime, varying in severity. Finally, we draw from research focused on other stages of the criminal justice system to more specifically examine the interaction between offender and victim race, thereby providing a more nuanced examination of the role of victim race on police case clearance.

METHODOLOGY

Data Source

Data used in the current study were collected from law enforcement agencies as part of the 2002 National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which is publicly available at the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2004a). The NIBRS program was conceptualized in 1984 to meet the needs of local law enforcement agencies, with incident-level data being collected by the end of the 1980s on 22 Group A offenses (encompassing 46 specific crimes) and 11 Group B offenses (FBI, 2004b). The NIBRS data are unique because they contain information about offenders, victims, situational characteristics involved in the incident, and police arrest/clearance² status. Thus,

² According to FBI, crimes may be "cleared" through an arrest or through "exceptional means." Specifically, "[a]n offense is cleared by arrest, or solved for crime reporting purposes, when at least one person is (1) arrested, (2) charged with the commission of the offense, and (3) turned over to the court for prosecution (whether following arrest, court summons, or police notice)" (FBI, 2004b: 79). Additionally, "[g]enerally, an offense can be exceptionally cleared when it falls into one of the following categories...1) Suicide of the offender..., 2) Double murder..., 3) Deathbed confession..., 4) Offender is killed by police or citizen..., 5) Confession by an offender who is already in law enforcement custody or serving a sentence..., 6) Offender is prosecuted by state or local authorities

NIBRS data provide a promising approach to the study of crime for both researchers and practitioners (Faggiani & McLaughlin, 1999; Maxfield, 1999). As of 2002, the NIBRS data collected information from law enforcement agencies in 23 states. While the NIBRS data are not a nationally-representative sample of law enforcement agencies or criminal incidents and do not capture crimes that fail to come to the attention of law enforcement agencies (Maxfield, 1999), they are one of the few multi-jurisdictional data sources available allowing for a rigorous, quantitative assessment of the role that incident-level characteristics play in the clearance of crime by police. Additionally, recent examinations by Chilton and Jarvis (1999), Rantalla and Edwards (2000), and Addington (2004a) of NIBRS data relative to other sources of crime data have generally found that NIBRS present a suitable complement to more commonly utilized sources such as the NCVS, UCR, and SHR³

Data File Structure

in another city for a different offense or is prosecuted in another city or state by the federal government for an offense which may be the same..., 7) Extradition denied, 8) Victim refuses to cooperate in the prosecution..., 9) Warrant is outstanding for felon but before being arrested the offender dies..., 10) The handling of a juvenile offender either orally or by written notice to parents in instances involving minor offenses such as petty larceny; no referral is made to juvenile court as a matter of publicly accepted law enforcement policy...” (FBI, 2004b: 80-81). Since crimes cleared through “exceptional means” rarely result from law enforcement intervention, NIBRS researchers (e.g., Litwin, 2003) have typically focused on crimes cleared by arrest. We follow these prior works by focusing on crimes cleared through arrest, but use the terms “crimes cleared through arrest” and “clearance” interchangeably, while acknowledging the technical differences in the methods of clearance.

³ We acknowledge, however, that problems associated with the quality of data collected by law enforcement agencies remains an important concern (O’Brien, 1985) remain. For example, Davies (2007) presents evidence that FBI-collected homicide data continue to be shaped by the local political environment (e.g., media attention, mayoral and city council priorities, police resources and practices, and prosecutorial practices and climate). The effects of these factors were muted, however, in Davies’ quantitative analyses. Additionally, Neapolitan’s (2005) examination of the quality of race-specific data collected by the FBI in terms of reporting cards presented by local agencies to the FBI and information contained in the Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) remain inconsistent across agencies. While NIBRS was intended to increase data quality and consistency, Addington’s (2004b, 2006) description of NIBRS data collection procedures and comparisons with the SHR illustrate that despite the increased rigor associated with NIBRS participation, problems associated with missing data (particularly those associated with circumstances and victim-offender relationships) remain. We encourage future researchers to continue exploring different sources of data with different sets of limitations, while also examining data quality issues associated with each source.

As publicly released, the NIBRS data are divided into 13 separate data segments. We recreated a full rectangular data structure following instructions provided by the codebook (FBI, 2004a: 12) provided with the archived data and the procedures outlined by Akiyama and Nolan (1999)⁴. After the full NIBRS file was reconstructed, a smaller “working file” including only incidents involving single victims and single offenders in communities with more than 100,000 residents was created for analyses.⁵ This analysis file included a total of 49,639 observations spanning 39 individual agencies.

Variable Description

The dependent variable in this study is *police case clearance* (1=case cleared; 0=case not cleared). *Victim race* was restricted to two categories (1=African American; 0=white). The

⁴ This was carried out in a series of steps. First, we linked the three batch headers using the ORI (i.e., reporting agency) variable. Next, we added the administrative segment using the ORI and Incident Number. Third, we added the offense segment using the ORI, Incident Number, and UCR Offense Code. Fourth, we added the property segment using the ORI, Incident Number, Type of Property Loss, and Property Description. Fifth, we added the victim segment using the ORI, Incident Number, and Victim Sequence Number. Sixth, we added the offender segment using the ORI, Incident Number, and Offender Sequence Number. Seventh, we added the arrestee segment using the ORI, Incident Number, and Arrestee Sequence Number. We excluded the three “windows” segments—incident, property, and arrestee—as information included in these segments generally contain “updates” to the files originally submitted to the FBI (FBI, 2004a: 11). This resulted in a merged data file with a total of 6,436,004 incidents.

⁵ As police practices affecting case clearance may be different in urban and rural areas (Weisheit, Falcone, & Wells, 1999; Weisheit, Wells, & Falcone, 1994) and have been found to vary across regions (Maguire, 2002; Maguire, Kuhns, Uchida, & Cox, 1997; Maguire & Mastrofski, 2000), we restricted the analyses to cities larger than 100,000 resulting in 1,448,269 observations. The data were also restricted to incidents involving one or more of the following offenses: murder/non-negligent manslaughter, negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Each of these offenses is a serious violent crime typically involving face-to-face interaction between offenders and victims. As they are often classified as “high profile” (Corsianos, 1993; Puckett & Lundman, 2003), they will typically receive more attention from police (Corsianos, 1993) potentially resulting in a higher likelihood that police will clear the case. These offenses are, however, still heterogeneous enough to provide important variation in seriousness according to both public perception (Wolfgang, Figlio, Tracy, & Singer, 1985) and criminal statutes, allowing us to examine the possibility that factors affecting police case clearance will be conditioned by the offense itself. The offense-type restriction resulted in a file with 95,046 observations. A criminal incident may have a single victim and a single offender but there also is the possibility of multiple offenders and/or victims. Given that prior research has illustrated the unique nature of crimes involving multiple offenders and multiple victims (Short & Strodbeck, 1965), we restricted the analytical file to include only those cases involving a single offender and a single victim. A total of 49,639 observations met these restrictions.

same restriction and coding scheme were used for *offender race*.⁶ Racial characteristics were examined independently and in combination (i.e., African American victim/African American offender, white victim/white offender, African American victim/white offender, white victim/African American offender). We also focused on four *offense types*: murder, aggravated assault, rape, and robbery.⁷ A number of additional variables identified as correlating with other decision points in the criminal justice system were also examined. *Victim age* and *offender age* are included as controls. The *victim-offender relationship* is represented across three categories: stranger, acquaintance, and unknown.⁸ *Type of injury* is organized into three categories: no injury, minor injury, and major injuries.⁹ *Type of weapon* used in the incident includes no

⁶ The restriction to white and African American individuals was due to representation of each race category in the data file. We recognize this is a significant limitation in the current study. We also agree with Martinez (2007) that Latinos' experiences are notably sparse in the literature and that future studies should be more inclusive in their examinations. We note, however, prior works illustrating the unique historical experiences between African Americans and the police (Bass, 2001a, 2001b; Johnson, 2003; Websdale, 2001) may produce different findings for different racial/ethnic groups within the United States.

⁷ As noted by one anonymous reviewer, each of these four offenses is a serious felony for which clearance is in agencies' "best interests." We agree that clearing serious felonies is, indeed, in the best interest of police departments. We suggest that these four offenses do, however, present differential degrees of "seriousness," thus presenting leeway in the way offenses are handled. The quandary, however, is that police records of less serious offenses have been found to have questionable reliability and validity (O'Brien, 1985). We would expect that less serious offenses would present more divergence in clearance than the four offenses examined herein. After all, the history of law suggests that many of these least serious offenses (such as vagrancy and loitering) were developed to exert social control over African Americans presence in public spaces (Bass, 2001a, 2001b). Additionally, these offenses provide officers/agencies the greatest discretion in how they are addressed. We restricted our analyses to serious felonies (ranging in degree of seriousness) based on three assumptions: 1) that the most serious offenses are the ones with which citizens are generally most concerned; 2) the quality of police data is better for serious offenses as opposed to less serious offenses; and 3) if differences were detected in these most serious offenses (where officers/agencies have the least discretion), the strength of the under-enforcement and/or over-enforcement perspectives would have particularly important implications. We acknowledge that our choice of offenses presents a conservative estimate of differences in under- or over-enforcement and encourage future research to examine differences in clearances of less serious incidents, such as simple assault and enforcement of city ordinances.

⁸ Stranger and unknown relationship types are designated as such in the NIBRS codebook. Cases involving acquaintances in this study include the relationship types in the NIBRS codebook grouped as "Within the family" and "Outside the family but known to victim".

⁹ No injury and minor injury are coded as such from the NIBRS codebook. Major injuries in this study consist of apparent broken bones, other major injuries, possible internal injury, loss of teeth, severe laceration, and unconsciousness.

weapon, personal weapon, gun, knife, or other weapon.¹⁰ *Regional variations* are examined by grouping agencies into one of four regions within the United States: West (i.e., Colorado, Idaho, and Utah), Northeast (i.e., Connecticut and Massachusetts), Midwest (i.e., Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, and Ohio), and South (i.e., South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia).

Unit of Analysis and Sample Description

The unit of analysis in the current study is the criminal case (i.e., incident). As presented in Table 1, these included 508 murders (1% of sample), 26,615 aggravated assaults (53.6%), 3,835 rapes (7.7%), and 18,681 robberies (37.6%) Forty-eight percent of the incidents involved African-American victims and 57 percent involved male victims. Sixty-seven percent involved an African-American offender and 85 percent involved a male offender. Forty-eight percent involved someone known to the victim, and approximately 31 percent involved strangers; the victim-offender relationship was unknown in approximately 21 percent of the incidents. Weapons were present in approximately 95% of all incidents, with guns being the most common (32%), followed by personal weapons (29%), and knives (16%). Slightly less than one-half (46.5%) of all incidents resulted in some sort of injury to the victim, with minor injuries more common than serious injuries. Overall, approximately 66 percent of these incidents occurred in the South, and approximately 29 percent of all offenses in the analysis sample were cleared.

<Insert Table 1 About Here>

Differences between offense types on the key variables are readily apparent. Clearance rates varied from a high of 72.6 percent of murder incidents to a low of 16.8 percent of rape incidents. The characteristics associated with different offense types can also clearly be seen. Offense types differed in terms of the race, sex, and age of offenders and victims. Additionally,

¹⁰ Personal weapons, according to the NIBRS codebook, consists of “hands, feet, teeth, etc.” Other weapons include “other weapons” and “blunt objects”. Gun consists of “firearm”, “handgun”, “rifle”, “shotgun”, and “other firearm”.

situational characteristics such as the victim-offender relationship, presence and type of weapons used, and severity of injury also varied by offense type. Finally, regional differences also exist, with an overwhelming majority of incidents occurring in the South. Thus, it is important to examine offenses separately in addition to an overall examination of crime incidents.

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the results of cross-tabulations of police clearance by victim race and offense type. The strength of the relationship between police case clearance and victim race for all offenses and individually, as determined by the value of Cramér's V , is weak.^{11,12} For all offense types combined, the differences observed in police case clearance across white victims (29.5%) and African-American victims (28.1%) is less than 2 percent. The smallest percentage difference, not surprisingly, exists for the offense of murder; police case clearance is nearly uniform for white victims and African-American victims, while the clearance of rape and robbery differ by a maximum of two percent. The relationship between clearance and victim race for aggravated assault cases, however, indicates nearly a six percent advantage of police clearance for white victims over African-American victims.

<Insert Table 2 About Here>

To examine whether victim race and offender race interact in police case clearance, cross-tabulations for police clearance by victim race and offender race for all offenses combined

¹¹ Cramér's V is a symmetric measure of nominal by nominal association. In 2 x 2 tables, $-1 \leq V \leq 1$ where V is obtained by: $(n_{11}n_{22} - n_{12}n_{21}) / (rm_1rm_2cm_1cm_2)^{1/2}$ where "rm" and "cm" denote the row marginal and column marginal respectively. When the dimensionality exceeds 2 x 2, $0 \leq V \leq 1$ where V is obtained by: $\{(\chi^2/n) / \min(I-1, J-1)\}^{1/2}$ where "I" and "J" denote the number of rows and columns respectively (see StataCorp 2005:392).

¹² The probability value associated with each obtained Pearson Chi-Square Test of Independence statistic is not reported in this study as the data used in this study were selected in a nonrandom manner. The use of the probability value associated with the Pearson Chi-Square Test of Independence statistic assumes random sampling (see e.g., Mattson, 1984:169-170).

and individually are also explored (see Table 3). For all offenses and for each individual offense other than aggravated assault, cases involving an African-American offender and a white victim have the lowest police case clearance. Conversely, for all offenses and for aggravated assault, robbery, and murder, cases involving a white offender and a white victim have the highest police case clearance. These analyses illustrate larger percentage differences across the groups than when examining victim race without controlling for offender race. For example, overall incidents involving white offenders and white victims were 16 percent more likely to be cleared than offenses involving African American offenders and white victims. For each separate offense type, however, the differences across groups were less pronounced (7.8% for aggravated assault, 6.1% for rape, 9.9% for robbery, and 9.2% for murder).

<Insert Table 3 About Here>

Table 4 features binary logistic regression estimates for police clearance for the offenses of aggravated assault, rape, and robbery in the aggregate.^{13,14} The dependent variable is a dichotomous variable indicating whether a case is cleared (no/yes). Victim race, particularly as it is related to offender race, is the variable in which we are most interested. Three columns of data

¹³ The offense of murder was excluded on the basis of insufficient data representation and variability. We refer readers to Roberts (2007) for a specific examination of the effects of victim race on homicide case clearance.

¹⁴ The estimation sample was constructed on the basis of sufficient data representation by reporting agency (i.e., ORI). Some agencies lacked adequate variability and/or representation. The following agencies, grouped by crime type, comprise the aggregated estimation sample: Aggravated Assault (CO0010100;CO0210100;CO0210100;CT0009300;IA0570100;IA0770300;KS0460500;KS0460600;MA0071800;MA0146000;MI2539800;MI4143600;MI5076500;MI5080600;OH0570200;OH0770100;OHCIP0000;SC0400100;TN0190100;TN0330100;TN0470100;TN0630100;TNMPD0000;TX1880100;TX2270100;UT0180300;VA0990000;VA1030000;VA1110000;VA1160000;VA1170000;VA1200000;VA1220000 VA1280000) . Rape (CO0010100;CO0210100;CO0300400;CT0009300;IA0570100;MA0071800;MI2539800;MI5080600;OH0570200;OH0770100;OHCIP0000;SC0400100;TN0190100;TN0330100;TN0470100;TN0630100;TNMPD0000;TX1880100;TX2270100;UT0180300;VA1030000;VA1110000;VA1160000;VA1170000;VA1200000;VA1220000;VA1280000. Robbery (CO0010100;CO0210100;CT0009300;IA0570100;IA0770300;KS0460600;MA0071800;MA0146000;MI2539800;MI4143600;MI5080600;OH0570200;OH0770100;OHCIP0000;SC0400100;TN0190100;TN0330100;TN0470100;TN0630100;TNMPD0000;TX1880100;TX2270100;UT0180300;VA0990000;VA1030000;VA1110000;VA1160000;VA1170000;VA1200000;VA1220000;VA1280000.

are presented in the regression tables: the unstandardized logistic regression coefficient, the odds ratio, and the difference in predicted probability.¹⁵

The regression estimates indicate that, with the exception of victim's age, victim characteristics exert a minimal influence on the probability of police clearance. The differences in predicted probabilities in police clearance between victims within the 25th and 75th percentiles are quite small. Modest effects are observed for offender characteristics. Interestingly, incidents involving African-American offenders are nearly four percent less likely than incidents involving white offenders to be cleared, and incidents involving male offenders are nearly five percent less likely than incidents involving female offenders to be cleared. Incidents among acquaintances are slightly more than six percent more likely than incidents involving strangers to be cleared. We also included the type of weapon used in the incident as a control variable. Those involving guns are nearly nine percent less likely than incidents involving no weapon to result in clearance.

The most noticeable effects involve type of offense and region. Aggravated assault incidents are a little more than 17 percent more likely than rape cases to be cleared and a little more than 11 percent more likely than robbery incidents to be cleared. The clearance in aggravated assault is likely explained by the fact that more than 76 percent of aggravated assaults involved acquaintances. Region produced the largest effects in the regression equation. Agencies located in the Southern United States are least likely to clear incidents. The largest difference is observed between the Northeastern and Southern regions. Agencies in the Northeastern United

¹⁵ In a departure from previous NIBRS studies, the standard error and the *p*-value associated with each parameter estimate are not reported. The omission of the standard errors and *p*-values is motivated by the fact that the selection of the cases in the NIBRS sample is nonrandom. That is, it is first not possible to know the probability of NIBRS reporting by the agency. Second, even if the probability of reporting at the agency level were known, this study employs a restricted analytical sample to accommodate exploration of the research question regarding victim race and clearance. Standard errors and *p*-values of regression estimates play no role in a nonrandom sample. The emphasis here is the magnitude of the relationship between each regressor and police case clearance. The magnitude of the relationship is determined via the odds ratio and the percentage difference in the predicted probability.

States are more than 20 percent more likely than those in the South to clear incidents.

<Insert Table 4 About Here>

Table 5 illustrates the effect of the victim/offender race dyad on police clearance rates for all offenses combined.¹⁶ These results again show small effects of victim characteristics on police case clearance. Compared with violent crime incidents involving African American victims and African American offenders, cases involving white victims and white offenders were approximately four percent more likely to be cleared. Offender characteristics were also weakly associated with case clearance, with cases involving male offenders and older offenders less likely to be cleared. Region again showed the strongest relation to police case clearance, with incidents in the Northeast and West more than 20 and eight percent more likely to be cleared than incidents in the South, respectively.

The relationships between offense characteristics on police clearance were slightly reduced when victim and offender race were considered in combination. Rapes and robberies were approximately eight percent and three percent less likely to be cleared than aggravated assaults. Additionally, incidents involving no injuries (relative to those involving serious injuries) and incidents involving guns (relative to incidents not involving weapons) were slightly less likely to be cleared. Finally, cases involving acquaintances were approximately six percent more likely to be cleared than cases involving strangers.¹⁷

<Insert Table 5 About Here>

Table 6 features binary logistic regression estimates disaggregated by offense type (aggravated assault, rape, and robbery incidents). Given that victim race had a modest effect on

¹⁶ The offense of murder was again excluded on the basis of insufficient data representation and variability.

¹⁷ Cases where the victim-offender relationship was unknown were approximately three percent less likely to be cleared than cases involving strangers.

police clearance in the cross-tabulation tables, it is not surprising that it exerts little influence on police clearance in the regression models.¹⁸ Other noteworthy findings, however, emerge from these estimates. Offender race exhibits modest effects for aggravated assault and robbery incidents, with aggravated assaults involving African American offenders approximately three percent less likely to be cleared than those involving white offenders, and rapes involving African American offenders approximately five percent less likely to be cleared than those involving white offenders. Rape incidents involving younger victims are more likely to be cleared than incidents involving older victims. Not surprisingly, incidents involving an acquaintance are more likely than those involving strangers to result in a clearance for all three crimes. A completed act of rape is nearly ten percent more likely to be cleared than an attempted rape. Again, region exhibits the largest effects with incidents in the Northeastern United States approximately 20 percent more likely to be cleared than incidents in the South. The difference between the Midwestern and Southern regions in rape clearance, however, is negligible.

<Insert Table 6 About Here>

DISCUSSION

Police-community relations have received substantial attention in academic circles, as well as the popular press. As Tyler and colleagues (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2004, 2006; Tyler & Huo, 2002) have illustrated, perceptions of legitimacy and fair procedures in the criminal justice system have important implications for society. As visible maintainers of the social order, police must be viewed as “legitimate” within the eyes of the citizens in order to gain cooperation and compliance. This is best accomplished through a process of individual self-

¹⁸ We do not report victim/offender race interactions in these analyses due to the low number of interracial incidents when disaggregated by offense type.

regulation, where cooperation with the law and its agents of enforcement is based upon feelings of responsibility and obligation.

While citizens generally have been found to hold positive attitudes toward the police, African American citizens' perceptions have consistently been found to be less favorable than those of whites (see Decker, 1981; Tuch & Weitzer, 1997; and Brown & Benedict, 2002; for reviews), potentially fostering distrust in the criminal justice system more generally (Albrecht & Green, 1977; Tyler & Huo, 2002). This is perhaps not surprising given the long history of tensions between police and African Americans in the U.S. (Bass, 2001a, 2001b; Johnson, 2003; Websdale, 2001). This tenuous history, coupled with perceptions of continued injustice (whether based upon over-enforcement or under-enforcement of the law), has decreased the legitimacy of police among many African American residents. For urban African Americans, the perceived legitimacy of the police has been found to be particularly strained (Brunson, 2007; Tyler & Huo, 2002), possibility resulting in behavioral changes such as reductions in reporting crimes or calling for service (Baumer, 2002; Carr et al., 2007).

The current study examined the influence of victim race on the likelihood that police would clear cases involving incidents of serious violent crime as one potential explanation of African Americans' relatively less favorable perceptions of police. Using data from the 2002 NIBRS, we analyzed approximately 50,000 single-offender, single-victim incidents involving four types of serious crime, varying in severity—murder/non-negligent manslaughter, aggravated assault, robbery, and rape—in the largest cities participating in the NIBRS program. While differences in the likelihood that police would clear crimes were apparent across offense type, results of our analyses suggest that victim race had a minimal relationship with the likelihood that serious violent criminal cases are cleared by police, relative to other factors. Incidents

involving African-American offenders were slightly less likely to be cleared than incidents involving white offenders overall, and for aggravated assault and robbery (but not rape). When results were disaggregated by victim and offender race, cases involving African American offenders and white victims were the *least* likely to be cleared and cases involving white victims and white offenders were the *most* likely to be cleared.

While racial differences in case clearance were quite modest, we are reminded of Huff's (2002) ASC Presidential Address on wrongful convictions. He estimates that even a conservative estimate (0.5%) of cases resulting in wrongful convictions for index crimes in 2000 would result in 7,500 individuals convicted when they should not have been (Huff, 2002: 2). Our bivariate estimates show that cases involving African American victims were 1.4% less likely than whites to be cleared for all offenses, 5.9% for aggravated assault, and 2.4% for rape; these differences were enhanced when the race of both the victim and offender were considered in combination. Multivariate results show that cases involving African American victims were approximately 0.6% less likely to be cleared than cases involving white victims for all crimes combined, 0.35% for robberies, and 1.5% for aggravated assault. While the intra-racial nature of the cases precluded an examination of the victim-offender dyad disaggregated by offense type, when the race of the victim and offender were considered simultaneously for all offenses combined, cases involving African American offenders and African American victims were 3.9% less likely to be cleared than similar cases involving white victims and white offenders. Thus, we note that the *pure number* of cases where victim race, particularly in combination with offender race, may be obscured through an emphasis on percentage differences. Additionally, it is important to note that each of these cases affect not only the individuals directly involved, but also their family members, friends, employers, neighbors, and others close to them. Put simply,

our results suggest that racial disparities in police clearance of violent criminal cases remain troublesome.

Given recent findings that African Americans are particularly apt to develop their attitudes towards police specifically and the criminal justice system generally through both direct and vicarious experiences (Brunson, 2007; Rosenbaum et al., 2005), it is essential for criminal justice agents and agencies to recognize and address real and/or perceived disparities in case processing. Even modest disparities in actual case processing have the potential of a greater reduction in the perceived legitimacy of authorities, particularly among African Americans, as assessments of government institutions are likely to change over time through an incremental, additive learning process where actual and vicarious experiences with the criminal justice system drive changes in attitudes (Tyler, Casper, & Fisher, 1989). An absence of procedural fairness (in direct experiences) and/or a presence of continuous and widespread negative information regarding treatment of minorities by the police (through awareness of historical racism and accumulated vicarious experiences with incidents of racism) has the potential of reducing perceptions of legitimacy even more. These processes make the police function more difficult, but also potentially contribute to decay in urban African American communities where criminogenic forces may fester without interference of formal social control (Hawkins, 1987; Kennedy, 1997; Tonry, 1995).

So how can we change this to increase perceptions of legitimacy, strengthen police – community ties, and protect communities from danger and decay, in a fundamentally fair manner? Bass (2001a: 172-173) offers a number of recommendations for changing police organizations:

Police must work toward building an organizational framework that supports diversity within the organization and recognizes the challenges of serving a diverse population. For example, an organization committed to diversity would develop organizational measures for evaluating progress. Standard measures would include the number of racial minority and women officers, the quantity of cultural diversity training hours, and community surveys. Departments would develop measures for assessing recruitment and retention programs, officer attitudes and departmental climate, and complaints from Internal Affairs, and also set up a citizen review body and document and analyze field interrogation, Terry stop, and traffic stop data. Further, departments would not solely rely on managerial staff or in-house analysts to review this data. Rather, the department could establish a diversity community council made up of community members who would review the department's progress and issue annual diversity report cards. Collecting and analyzing these types of qualitative and quantitative measurements would more accurately assess how a department was performing with regard to diversity. Moreover, it would send a strong message that respect for diversity within the organization and the broader community was supported at the highest levels of the department.

Clearly, though, change extends well beyond the police to the criminal justice system more broadly. For example, Zatz (1987; 2000) illustrates that small disparities at each stage have the potential to accumulate into much larger cumulative effects. Many of the suggestions outlined by Bass (2001a) could be implemented at other system stages, as well. For example, collecting qualitative and quantitative data and encouraging analysis by outside scholars is

possible at most stages of the system. Through a collaborative process, scholars and practitioners could work together to identify and develop responses to issues that arise. This collaborative process should be multi-disciplinary in approach, representing a diversity of perspectives and potential remedies. Empirical-based practices should be implemented with considerable fidelity, and rigorously evaluated through process and outcome evaluations. True partnerships between agencies with varying but related missions (e.g., schools, treatment providers, social service agencies) must be incorporated more thoroughly throughout the criminal justice system (Bass, 2001a; Stewart, 2007).

In order for true change to occur, however, much more sweeping changes may be required. The vestiges of historical inequality must continue to be recognized and addressed. A movement away from segregated housing projects to scattered site housing and a thorough restructuring of the system of funding municipal agencies and public schools, coupled with a renewed emphasis on integration, is advised (Massey and Denton, 1993). Focusing on enhancing informal social bonds, communication, and control (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997) in integrated neighborhoods is crucial. Broader policies—drug treatment instead of incarceration, enhancing community capacities and economic development, job training, and programs encouraging healthy living and development—are also mechanisms of forwarding social justice ends (Bass, 2001a: 172) and potentially enhancing legitimacy. To wit, Frank and colleagues (1996) study of Detroit residents found that African Americans' perceptions of the police were actually *more* favorable than those of white, a situation they attributed to the representation of African Americans' in visible governmental positions in the city.

Having said this, our results suggest that the relationship between victim race (alone, or in combination with offender race) has a less salient effect on police clearance of violent

criminal incidents than a number of other factors. The type of offense was important, as rape and robbery incidents were less likely to be cleared than aggravated assault incidents. Situational characteristics such as the relationship between the victim and offender, presence and type of weapon used, and presence and severity of injury resulting from the incident were also salient. Finally, clearance rates varied substantially by region of the country.¹⁹ We hope that future research continues to examine these important factors.

Limitations and Future Directions

A number of limitations of the current study are apparent. First, while the NIBRS data provide the richest source of information on criminal incidents, the scope of the program is not representative of all law enforcement agencies. One glaring issue is the lack of coverage of large cities. This poses a number of limitations to the explanatory power of our findings. First, the most serious violent offenses are typically found in large cities (indeed, clustered within neighborhoods of large cities) not included in the NIBRS program. A second problem involves the issue of racial diversity within the NIBRS-participating agencies. Larger cities are more likely to be racially diverse, while the predominance of smaller jurisdictions participating in the NIBRS program includes a disproportionate amount of racial homogeneity. In fact, the lack of inter-racial murder incidents in the sample precluded us from examining these incidents in a multivariate sense. This is a significant limitation of the NIBRS program and can only be resolved with greater participation of agencies. Additionally, while providing a rich source for incident-level data, there are key factors which are not included. Specifically, the lack of solid

¹⁹ As raised by an anonymous reviewer, the differences in clearance across offense types and jurisdictions may be due to differences in police expertise and/or resources. We agree that this is a plausible explanation worthy of additional study. Since the purpose of the current study is primarily descriptive in its examination of the effect of victim race on police clearance as a potential explanation of African Americans' relatively unfavorable view of the police, we do not specifically focus on reasons for regional variations or some of the other control variables. We hope that future research tackles this and other related topics.

measures of evidence related to the criminal incidents poses problems for examinations of police clearance. Finally, as with all law-enforcement based data, these data are limited to criminal incidents which come to the attention of authorities, which may or may not be representative of all criminal incidents which occur. Specifically, the findings of prior studies illustrating the reluctance of African Americans to report crimes to the police (Baumer, 2002; Carr et al., 2007) poses a host of potential problems for scholars examining racial differences in studies relying upon official statistics.

A separate limitation which must be considered is the exclusive focus on the four serious offenses in the current study. When examining law enforcement data, it is generally agreed that the most serious offenses provide the most valid data (O'Brien, 1985). The most serious offenses, however, are often the ones allowing officers (and other criminal justice practitioners) the least latitude in how cases are handled and adjudicated. In this sense, it is perhaps not surprising that victim race was found to exert little influence on police clearance of these types of offenses. Policing research has consistently demonstrated that factors such as seriousness of the offense, presence of evidence, presence of weapons, and relational distance are typically the most important determinants of whether an arrest occurs (see, for example, Black, 1971; Smith, 1987; Smith & Visser, 1981; Smith et al., 1984). Our findings are generally consistent with those of extant research on the topic. This convergence in findings is important, as much of the prior research on policing has focused on large, urban areas.

Despite these limitations, we feel that our study presents an important contribution to understanding racial differences in criminal justice processing and citizens' perceptions of the police. While our findings suggest relatively small effects of victim race on police case clearance, these differences were enhanced when the victim-offender race dyad was examined.

Additionally, while racial differences were virtually non-existent in homicide case clearance, they were more apparent in less serious felonies. We hope that future research continues this line of inquiry, as well.

CONCLUSIONS

Examining racial/ethnic issues related to policing must be continued, as Harris (2007: 6) states, “to make these issues salient and illuminate them to both police officers and police institutions.” The tension between African Americans and the police has a long, troublesome history (Bass, 2001a, 200b; Johnson, 2003; Websdale, 2001), making community policing efforts to improve police-community relations a formidable and difficult task (Jones-Brown, 2007; Stewart, 2007). Indeed, Brunson’s (2007) recent research highlights the tension between how perceptions of over-enforcement of crimes involving African American offenders and under-enforcement of crimes involving African American victims affect citizens’ perceptions of police officers and police activities. Additionally, given the importance of both direct and vicarious encounters with police in shaping attitudes, particularly among African Americans (Brunson, 2007; Rosenbaum et al., 2005), small differences in case processing may take on a much larger role in shaping perceptions of legitimacy of the criminal justice system. It may take innovative strategies, such as partnerships between police and other community stakeholders (e.g., residents, churches, schools) to improve police-community relations in minority neighborhoods (Bass, 2001a; Stewart, 2007).

We remain cognizant that other studies, such as those of Stolzenberg and colleagues (2004), illustrate that aggregate patterns such as those examined herein may mask effects at other levels, such as the neighborhood or individual. There is, after all, reason to expect that police practices vary by neighborhood (Klinger, 1997). We hope that future researchers continue to

examine issues related to race, ethnicity, and policing, particularly through the use of different methodologies and in varying social contexts, as evidence of racial disparities are often difficult to detect and interpret (Bass, 2001a; Weitzer, 1996; Zatz, 1987, 2000). Such approaches are unquestionably fruitful in determining variations in communities and police agencies and practices. We also hope, however, that this is not done to the exclusion of “big picture” studies, which provide an important context of their own. As Stewart (2007:128) reminds us: “It [is] paramount for us as citizens, police officials, researchers, and policy makers to work toward a goal of cooperation, support, and fair and unbiased treatment.”

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Table 1. Sample Characteristics

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Murder</u>	<u>Agg. Asst.</u>	<u>Rape</u>	<u>Robbery</u>
White Victim	25,795	167	12,726	2,297	10,605
%	52.0	32.9	47.8	59.9	56.8
African American Victim	23,844	341	13,889	1,538	8,076
%	48.0	67.1	52.2	40.1	43.2
Male Victim	28,378	392	15,568	31	12,387
%	57.2	77.3	58.5	0.8	66.4
Female Victim	21,234	115	11,034	3,804	6,281
%	42.8	77.3	41.5	99.2	33.6
Victim Age (mn)	31.22	30.97	30.27	22.18	34.44
White Offender	16,376	132	10,892	1,695	3,657
%	33.0	26.0	40.9	44.2	19.6
African American Offender	33,263	376	15,723	2,140	15,024
%	67.0	74.0	59.1	55.8	80.4
Male Offender	42,243	457	20,318	3,812	17,656
%	85.1	90	76.3	99.4	94.5
Female Offender	7,396	51	6,297	23	1,025
%	14.9	10	23.7	0.6	5.5
Offender Age (mn)	27.81	28.95	29.20	28.07	25.44
Acquaintance	23,823	243	18,261	2,590	3,089
%	48.5	47.8	69.0	67.6	16.6
Stranger	15,150	65	4,390	684	5,552
%	30.9	12.8	16.6	17.8	29.8
Unknown Rel.	10,123	200	3,812	559	10,011
%	20.6	39.4	14.4	14.6	53.7
No Injury	26,149	---	10,834	2,637	12,676
%	53.5		41.0	68.8	70.0
Minor Injury	14,372	---	8,771	905	4,694
%	29.4		33.2	23.6	25.2
Severe Injury	8,399	---	6,815	290	1,279

%	17.2		25.8	7.6	6.9
No Weapon	2,450	0	427	589	1,404
%	5.2	0.0	1.8	16.4	7.9
Pers. Weapon	13,346	56	4,691	2,615	5,984
%	28.9	12.0	19.3	72.8	33.5
Gun	14,579	329	6,031	129	8,090
%	31.6	70.8	24.9	3.6	45.3
Knife	7,560	59	6,013	133	1,355
%	16.4	12.7	24.8	3.7	7.6
Other Weapon	8,253	21	7,087	125	1,020
%	17.9	4.5	29.2	3.5	5.7
South	32,263	363	17,457	2,056	12,787
%	65.5	71.5	65.6	53.6	68.4
West	4,643	37	2,571	695	1,340
%	9.4	7.3	9.7	18.1	7.2
Midwest	9,120	91	4,187	948	3,894
%	18.4	17.9	15.7	24.7	20.8
Northeast	3,213	17	2,400	136	660
%	6.5	3.3	9.0	3.5	3.5
Cleared	14,334	369	10,116	705	3,144
%	28.9	72.6	38.0	18.4	16.8
<i>N</i>	49,639	508	26,615	3,835	18,681

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of police case clearance by victim race and offense type

	All Offenses			Aggravated Assault			Rape			Robbery			Murder		
	Not Cleared	Cleared	Total	Not Cleared	Cleared	Total	Not Cleared	Cleared	Total	Not Cleared	Cleared	Total	Not Cleared	Cleared	Total
Afr. Am. Victim %	17,093 71.9	6,669 28.1	23,762 100	8,976 64.9	4,850 35.1	13,826 100	1,232 80.2	304 19.8	1,536 100	6,792 84.3	1,268 15.7	8,060 100	93 27.4	247 72.7	340 100
White Victim %	18,104 70.5	7,563 29.5	25,667 100	7,445 59.0	5,179 41.0	12,624 100	1,897 82.6	400 17.4	2,297 100	8,716 82.4	1,863 17.6	10,579 100	46 27.5	121 72.5	167 100
Pearson Chi-Square	11.796			99.115			3.470			11.548			.002		
Cramér's V	.015			.061			-.030			.025			.002		

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of Police Case Clearance by Victim Race, Offender Race, and Offense Type

	All Offenses			Aggravated Assault			Rape			Robbery			Murder		
	Not Cleared	Cleared	Total	Not Cleared	Cleared	Total	Not Cleared	Cleared	Total	Not Cleared	Cleared	Total	Not Cleared	Cleared	Total
Afr. Am Offender / Afr. Am. Victim %	16,133 72.3	6,194 27.7	22,237 100	8,364 65.2	4,464 34.8	12,828 100	1,164 80.0	291 20.0	1,455 100	6,516 84.4	1,203 15.6	7,719 100	89 27.4	236 72.6	325 100
White Offender / Afr. Am. Victim %	960 66.9	475 33.1	1,435 100	612 61.3	386 38.7	998 100	68 84.0	13 16.1	81 100	276 80.9	65 19.1	341 100	4 26.7	11 73.3	15 100
Afr. Am. Offender / White Victim %	8,634 79.8	2,191 20.2	10,825 100	1,813 64.3	1,006 35.7	2,819 100	588 86.1	95 13.9	683 100	6,216 85.5	1,057 14.5	7,273 100	17 34.0	33 66.0	50 100
White Offender / White Victim %	9,470 63.8	5,372 36.2	14,842 100	5,632 57.4	4,173 42.6	9,805 100	1,309 81.1	305 18.9	1,614 100	2,500 75.6	806 24.4	3,306 100	29 24.8	88 75.2	117 100
Pearson Chi-Square	807.820			148.976			12.233			172.047			1.500		
Cramér's V	.128			.075			.056			.096			.054		

Table 4. Binary Logistic Regression Estimates of Police Clearance for All Offenses (n=44,711)

	b	e ^b	Prob Diff
African American Victim (Ref=White Victim)	-.003	.997	-.06
African American Offender (Ref=White Offender)	-.198	.821	-3.82
Male Victim (Ref=Female Victim)	-.009	.991	-.16
Male Offender (Ref=Female Offender)	-.233	.792	-4.62
Victim Age	-.005	.995	-1.79
Offender Age	.028	1.028	7.51
Acquaintance (Ref=Stranger)	.327	1.387	6.33
Unknown Relationship	-.160	.852	-2.73
No Injury (Ref=Major Injury)	-.161	.851	-3.11
Minor Injury	-.065	.937	-1.28
Guns (Ref=No Weapons)	-.450	.637	-8.65
Knives	.004	1.004	.09
Personal Weapons	-.157	.855	-3.22
Other Weapons	-.336	.714	-6.64
Rape (Ref=Aggravated Assault)	-1.009	.365	-17.28
Robbery	-.580	.560	-11.11
West (Ref=South)	.417	1.518	8.24
Midwest	.164	1.179	3.06
Northeast	.950	2.585	20.66
Intercept	-.855		

Notes: The difference in predicted probabilities (Prob Diff) for offender age and victim age represent the difference between the predicted probabilities at the 25th and 75th percentiles. The differenced in predicted probabilities for all design variables have been computed with the predicted probability for the reference category as the baseline.

Table 5. Binary Logistic Regression Estimates of Police Clearance for All Offenses, Disaggregated by Victim and Offender Race (n=44,711)

	B	e ^b	Prob Diff
White Offender/Afr. Am. Victim (Ref=Afr. Am. victim/Afr. Am. Offender)	.165	1.179	3.2
African American Offender/White Victim	-.005	0.995	-0.1
White Offender/White Victim	.201	1.223	3.9
Male Victim (Ref=Female Victim)	-.008	0.992	-0.1
Male Offender (Ref=Female Offender)	-.233	0.792	-4.6
Victim Age	-.005	0.995	1.8
Offender Age	.028	1.028	-7.5
Acquaintance (Ref=Stranger)	.325	1.384	6.3
Unknown Relationship	-.161	0.851	-2.7
No Injury (Ref=Major Injury)	-.161	0.851	-3.1
Minor Injury	-.065	0.937	-4.0
Guns (Ref=No Weapons)	-.451	0.637	-4.4
Knives	.005	1.005	4.3
Personal Weapons	-.157	0.855	-1.0
Other Weapons	-.336	0.715	-2.4
Rape (Ref=Aggravated Assault)	-1.009	0.365	-7.9
Robbery	-.580	0.560	-3.2
West (Ref=South)	.417	1.518	8.2
Midwest	.165	1.179	3.0
Northeast	.951	2.587	20.7
Intercept	-1.053		

Notes: The difference in predicted probabilities (Prob Diff) for offender age and victim age represent the difference between the predicted probabilities at the 25th and 75th percentiles. The differenced in predicted probabilities for all design variables have been computed with the predicted probability for the reference category as the baseline.

Table 6. Binary Logistic Regression Estimates of Police Clearance Disaggregated by Offense Type

	Aggravated Assault			Rape			Robbery		
	<i>b</i>	<i>e^b</i>	<i>Prob Diff</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>e^b</i>	<i>Prob Diff</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>e^b</i>	<i>Prob Diff</i>
African American Victim (Ref=White Victim)	-.065	.937	-1.51	.227	1.255	3.36	-.028	.972	-.35
African American Offender (Ref=White Offender)	-.116	.891	-2.71	-.053	.948	-.79	-.402	.669	-5.44
Male Victim (Ref=Female Victim)	-.022	.978	-.53	Females Only			.010	1.010	.12
Male Offender (Ref=Female Offender)	-.210	.811	-4.96	Males Only			Males Only		
Victim Age	-.002	.998	-.73	-.021	.979	-5.60	-.006	.994	-1.43
Offender Age	.026	1.026	8.26	.018	1.018	3.66	.035	1.036	6.91
Attempted (Ref=Completed)	---	---	---	-.585	.557	-9.94	.112	1.118	1.34
Acquaintance (Ref=Stranger)	.303	1.353	6.99	.311	1.365	4.48	.464	1.591	6.67
Unknown Relationship	-.141	.869	-3.03	-.173	.841	-2.11	-.189	.828	-2.16
No Injury (Ref=Major Injury)	-.145	.865	-3.36	-.439	.645	-6.83	-.220	.803	-2.98
Minor Injury	.017	1.017	.40	-.049	.952	-.85	-.354	.702	-4.58
Guns (Ref=No Weapons)	-.421	.656	-9.64	-.509	.601	-6.22	-.423	.655	-5.72
Knives	.159	1.172	3.89	.227	1.255	3.55	-.434	.648	-5.85
Personal Weapons	-.034	.966	-.82	.034	1.034	.50	-.282	.754	-3.99
Other Weapons	-.259	.772	-6.07	.018	1.018	.27	-.256	.774	-3.65
West (Ref=South)	.669	1.952	16.09	.419	1.521	6.59	-.272	.762	-2.91
Midwest	.148	1.159	3.37	.017	1.017	.23	.228	1.255	2.91
Northeast	.901	2.461	21.86	.920	2.509	16.61	1.105	3.020	18.67
Intercept	-1.038			-1.041			-1.580		
<i>n</i>	44,711			3,404			16,739		

Notes: The difference in predicted probabilities (Prob Diff) for offender age and victim age represent the difference between the predicted probabilities at the 25th and 75th percentiles. The differenced in predicted probabilities for all design variables have been computed with the predicted probability for the reference category as the baseline.