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THE ETHNIC VICE INDUSTRY, 1880-1944*

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Sociologists have explained the association of ethnic minorities and illegal enterprise in terms of structural blockages and opportunities, emphatically denying any ethnic contribution. A comparison of blacks and Chinese in the vice industry, 1880-1940, confirms the guiding role of American society which rewarded ethnics' participation in prostitution but restricted legal earning opportunities. Nonetheless, divergent demographic and cultural characteristics of Chinese and blacks differentially affected the internal organization of each group's vice industry as well as the process of industrial succession. This finding supports a view of illegal enterprise as a synthesis of illegal work that consumers want to buy and what disadvantaged ethnics have to offer. In general, socio-cultural characteristics of provider subgroups define the manner in which they respond to consumer demand for illegal products and services.

ILLEGAL ENTERPRISE

The major revenues of organized crime derive from the sale of illegal products and services. In this respect, organized crime is a business and has long been so acknowledged (Stone, 1926; Ogburn, 1937:10; Sellin, 1963; Haller, 1970:623; Lasswell, 1972:108; Ianni, 1974:15). The familiar term "organized crime" encompasses, however, some predatory crimes (hijacking, burglary, labor and business racketeering, etc.) as well as the demand-oriented sale of illegal products and services (Landesco, 1968:149-67; Seidman, 1938; MacMichael, 1970; Cressey, 1972:5, 8, 11, 26-7; Schelling, 1971). To designate the demand-oriented, illegal business only, Vold (1958:396-7) and Albin (1971:47) recommended the term "syndicated crime." However, they apply this term only to illegal enterprises

which encompass two or more retail outlets. "Syndicated crime" excludes small, independent, illegal businesses such as "single-action" numbers banking. Smith (1975:335) defines "illicit enterprise" as the "extension of legitimate market activities into areas normally proscribed . . . for the pursuit of profit and in response to latent illicit demand." This definition satisfactorily encompasses every form of demand-oriented, illegal business while excluding predatory crime. Unfortunately, the term "illicit" has the value connotation of impropriety. Therefore, Haller's (1970:623) term "illegal enterprise" is the most neutral designation for every type and size of business enterprise which supplies illegal products or services to willing consumers.

A large and often polemical literature has developed around the putative connection of ethnic groups and syndicated crime. This debate long revolved around the issue of whether syndicated crime is a foreign import or a product of American social conditions. Of these polarities, the

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import theory was the older. The police, Senate investigators, and vocal sectors of the American public have recurrently interpreted syndicated crime here as trans-plantation of secret organizations, cultural forms and even biological strains native to benighted parts of the world (California Department of Justice, 1973; Moore, 1974:viii, 40, 237). The import theory was a convenient vehicle for xenophobia and chauvinism, so racist, nativist and patriotic groups climbed aboard.

In reaction to the import theory, Landes (1968; cf. Haller, 1968:xiii) and subsequent sociologists have minimized any ethnic contribution to syndicated crime in this country, claiming instead that American social conditions made criminals of oppressed slum dwellers. King (1969:183) calls this issue "the key question in the continuing debate over the nature of organized crime." The sharpest, most influential attack was that of Bell (1960:127, 138) who tagged the rackets "an American Way of Life" and lampooned the "myth of the Mafia." Tyler (1962:xiii) insisted that syndicated crime here is "a product and reflection of our national culture" rather than an alien importation. More recently, Albin (1971:154) concluded that "syndicated crime in the United States has developed from within the American social structure." Albin contrasts this conclusion with "the widely held misconception" that syndicated crime is "a product of foreign evildoers" seeking to "rob the American public of its moral virginity."

Two persuasive types of evidence have supported the long-prevailing sociological view that illegal enterprise is domestic rather than alien in origin. The first depends upon the observation that illegal enterprise satisfies the demand of the American public for illegal products and services (Albin, 1971:47) including gambling, usurious loans, pornography, prostitution, narcotics and, during the Prohibition era (1919-1933), liquor. Americans buy these illegal products and services because they want them, even at the high prices typically charged. Indeed, as Sutherland and Cressey (1970:272) observe, if crime syndicates abruptly disappeared, they would be "sorely missed"

because they perform services "for which there is a great public demand." Since the syndicates cannot exist apart from the public demand they satisfy, the American public's demand for illegal services and products is, in this view, the ultimate cause of the syndicate. Demand begets supply.

The theory of ethnic succession provided a second prop for the assertion that illegal enterprise was domestic in origin rather than imported. This usage paralleled the case for ethnic succession in juvenile delinquency which Shaw and McKay (1942) documented for residential neighborhoods in central Chicago. However, in Bell's (1960) seminal formulation, organized crime offered a "queer ladder of social mobility" along which Irish, Jews and Italians had moved in sequence. Cloward and Ohlin (1960:199-202) and Glazer and Moynihan (1970:210-1) called attention to tensions between established Italian racketeers and black and Puerto Rican newcomers, exclaiming over the retarded pace of ethnic succession. More recently, Ianni (1974) has concluded that black and Spanish-speaking minorities are replacing Italians in some sectors of organized crime. "Ethnic groups move in and out of organized crime," writes Ianni (1974:14) "and their time in control comes and goes." Advancing the same idea, Albin (1971:153; but cf. 1974:119-20) also emphasized the spectrum of ethnic and racial minorities in America who have engaged in syndicated crime at one time or another. In all cases, the ethnic diversity of criminals indicated that syndicated crime was a structurally-engendered response to disadvantage rather than a cultural proclivity. Merton (1957:192-4) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960:150-3, 194-202) advanced the view that blockage of legitimate avenues of social mobility was the structural condition which engendered syndicated crime as one deviant response. Although Smith (1975) has cast the response to illegal enterprise in terms of labeling, the anomie theory is still the orthodox sociological explanation of why ethnic and racial minorities have always been disproportionately involved in illegal enterprise in America (Humphries, 1973). The anomie theory is more complex than

a simple demand theory because it identifies American cultural values (wealth) and blocked opportunities as prerequisites of illegal enterprise. Nonetheless, the anomie theory also concludes that, given these prerequisites, demand does beget supply. Demographic, cultural or social organizational characteristics of minorities play no role. The anomie theory thus rebuts and excludes the import theory, its ideological predecessor and rival.

Although the import and functionalist theories developed as ideological rivals, no necessary repugnance separates them. That is, the public's demand for illegal commodities does not preclude the possibility that cultural, organizational or demographic characteristics of ethnic groups might also affect the timing, duration, price or scale of the supply engendered. In fact, a close reading of leading criminologists reveals a largely implicit convergence around the view that illegal enterprise is neither an import nor a structural function but rather, a synthesis of ethnic characteristics and American society. For example, Cressey (1969) has been cited recurrently as the principal criminological exponent of the view that the Cosa Nostra is a confederation of Italian crime families whose origins derive from the Sicilian Mafia. Nonetheless, Cressey (1969:72) had no trouble acknowledging that the Italian crime confederation "thrives because a large minority of citizens demand the illicit goods and services it has for sale."

A critic of Cressey's (1969) interpretation of the history and formal organization of Italo-American crime syndicates in the United States, Ianni (1972) also has developed a position which implicitly reconciles the functionalist and transplantation ideas. Like others, Ianni (1972:61) concluded that organized crime "is that part of the business system operative in the illicit segment of American life." At the same time, Ianni's close observation of an Italo-American crime family led him to emphasize the importance of familism and clanship in its business operations. Rejecting Cressey's view of a bureaucratic conspiracy, Ianni (1972:155) nonetheless concluded that "the origins of this familism are Italian and not American." This con-

clusion swings Ianni into conformity with those who implicitly believe that crime syndicates in the United States are not simple products or "reflections of our national culture" but complex fusions of ethnic heritages and American society.

Why should this convergence be surprising? Insofar as illegal enterprise is really a mode of business enterprise, one expects parallels between legal and illegal enterprise. Recent studies of minority business enterprise in legal industries reveal that ethnic styles of economic organization affect the manner and extent to which minority businessmen respond to American consumers. Comparing Chinese, Japanese, native blacks and West Indian blacks, Light (1972) found that Asian and West Indian business enterprise benefited from forms of cooperation and finance derived from overseas cultural heritages. Lacking these modes of association, Southern-born blacks in the North were less active in business enterprise than other nonwhites, although their disadvantage in the general labor market was no less. Bonacich (1975) and Petersen (1972) also advance the conclusion that Japanese-American solidarity contributed to their success, especially their business success. Wong (1974) found that Chinese-American grocers in South-Central Los Angeles, a black ghetto, were more likely than black grocers in the same neighborhood to be members of a business or trade association and to employ family members in the firm. Loewen (1971) emphasized the cultural bases of Chinese business enterprise in Mississippi. Bonacich et al. (1976) probed the overrepresentation of Koreans in the business population of Los Angeles. Caudill and De Vos (1956), Hsu (1972) and Kitano (1969) also conclude that the cultural background of Asians in the United States encouraged group social mobility in general, and business enterprise in particular. Several overseas studies reach parallel conclusions. Marris and Somerset (1971) compared and contrasted the entrepreneurial styles of Africans and Hindus in Kenya, concluding that the East African family encouraged a more individualistic approach to business enterprise than the Hindu. Stokes (1974) ob-

served that white Afrikaners long eschewed business enterprise, but turned to it abruptly when business was ideologically defined as supportive of nationalistic goals.

Weber (1958) pointed out that the religious beliefs of the Protestant sectarians channeled energies of the faithful into business enterprise. Sombart (1951) claimed that exclusion of Jews from medieval trades encouraged them to turn their rationalist tradition into capitalistic endeavors. Schumpeter (1962) developed his theory of capitalism around the cultural bases of entrepreneurship in the bourgeois family. American literature (McClelland, 1967; McClelland and Winter, 1969; Miller and Swanson, 1958) has been psychological in outlook, quite overlooking structural pressures. Withal, their conclusions support the view that characteristics of groups sometimes endow them for particular modes of success.

Reviewing this vast literature, Smelser (1976:126) concluded that "the market for entrepreneurial services has a demand side and a supply side." The demand side consists of "market opportunities," but socio-cultural characteristics of subgroups govern the supply side. Indeed, the sociologists must insist upon the identity of subgroups or consider whether, as Moore (1974:ix) claims, illegal enterprise be an economic rather than a sociological phenomenon. As matters stand, the outstanding critics of the cultural-structural synthesis are, in fact, economists. Recent tendencies to press the analogies between illegal and legal enterprise (Lasswell and McKenna, 1972:108) encouraged economists to make contributions to this growing literature. Their extensive writings have proceeded on the basis of the usual postulates of utilitarian individualism, producing significant illumination of the differences between illegal enterprise and syndicated crime, business and extortion, and retail and wholesale levels of illegal enterprise (Becker, 1968; Schelling 1967; 1971; Rubin, 1973). This useful literature has developed on the tacit presumption that cultural heritage and economic social organization are explanatory of the conduct of illegal enter-

prise. Yet, Anderson's (1974) economic study of a Cosa Nostra family returns to the recognition that its style of operation reflected Italian cultural origins. Thus, even some economists agree that socio-cultural characteristics of subgroups affect the manner in which they conduct illegal enterprises.

Unfortunately, the predominance of Italo-Americans in syndicated crime today has encouraged confusion between the details of Italo-American syndicates and the general problem of illegal enterprise. To escape this confusion, Ianni (1974:15-6) has recommended the comparison of Italian and non-Italian crime. This comparison is "essential to isolate the basic structure of organized crime in American society." Ianni's (1974) comparative research on blacks and Cubans has begun this effort. Helmer (1975) recently has completed a historical comparison of narcotics laws in relation to blacks, Chinese and Mexicans in the United States.

This paper approaches illegal enterprise by means of a comparison between Chinese and blacks in the vice industry between 1880 and 1944. Prostitution was the largest illegal industry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Bell, 1960:165). Indeed, until the Mann Act of 1910 put a stop to it, this business involved the international and interstate traffic in women. The contrast of blacks and Chinese in this industry is a contrast of cultural heritages in a similar social setting. Since both Chinese and blacks are visibly nonwhite, and were disadvantaged on that account, the Chinese-black comparison holds constant the otherwise distracting color difference between white and nonwhite. In addition, the black-Chinese comparison offers a sharp test of the fusion hypothesis because, unlike Southern blacks, Chinese immigrants left a society in which secret criminal organizations already existed. These organizations were lodges of the Triad Society (Schlegel, 1866; Blythe, 1969; Elegant, 1976). Therefore, the black-Chinese comparison involves one group which did not (blacks) and one which did (Chinese) have a foreign tradition of illegal enterprise from which to draw in response to the

reward system of American urban society. If ethnic heritage ever makes a difference, black-Chinese comparison ought to discover it, and provide leads to the nature of the difference.

THE ETHNIC VICE INDUSTRY, 1880-1920

Sutherland and Cressey (1970:260) attribute the turn-of-the-century prominence and subsequent decline of prostitution to the normalization of the sex ratio in the U.S. population, and the liberalization of sexual mores. The decrease in the proportion of the population single, and increase in the proportion married should be added (Table 1). Liberalization of sexual mores adversely affected prostitution because promiscuous sexual contacts reduced consumer demand. The incremental normalization of the sex ratio (Table 2) adversely affected prostitution because the surplus of able-bodied men first dwindled, then disappeared. The increasing percentage of married men adversely affected prostitution because the married have less opportunity or motive to frequent prostitutes than the single. As long as it existed, the cadre of supernumerary bachelors represented a sector of the U.S. population in which demand for commercial sex contacts was pronounced (Polsky, 1969:21). The predominance of youthful bachelors was largely a result of the sojourning new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. Foreign white immigrants commonly expected to return to their homeland after a brief, lucrative sojourn in the United States. Indeed, in the period between 1890-1910, approximately

40 percent of foreign whites admitted actually did repatriate (Petersen, 1968:268; Axelrod, 1972:32-49). Those who came to sojourn left their families behind in Europe. When World War I and then the Immigration Act of 1924 curtailed new immigration from Europe, settlers replaced sojourners in the foreign white population and, with natural increase, their numbers of males and females tended toward parity (Table 2).

These changes in the sex ratio of the United States population had special implications for blacks and Chinese in industrial cities. Disadvantaged in the general labor force, blacks and Chinese had a motive to find compensatory livelihoods in illegal industries. In the period of severest imbalance in the American sex ratio, roughly 1880-1924, a large class of white men existed who wanted to purchase sexual contacts (Chicago Vice Commission, 1911:114-6, 228). This demand encouraged blacks and Chinese to enter the vice industry. A white-patronized, ethnic-staffed vice industry thus developed in both communities for the identical reason. Naturally, blacks and Chinese continued to conduct a vice traffic for co-ethnics throughout this period. However, white demand permitted many more blacks and Chinese to find employment in the vice industry than would have been possible on the basis of co-ethnic patronage alone. White patronage probably doubled the volume of prostitution in Chinatowns and tripled it in Harlem and Bronzeville. Even so, these ethnic industries never claimed more than perhaps a third of total white vice traffic in this period.

Table 1. Marital Status of Male Population 15 Years of Age and over by Color for the United States, 1890-1940

	1950	1940	1930	1920	1910	1900	1890
Percentage of Unmarried Males 15 Years and over							
All Males	26.4	33.2	34.1	35.1	38.7	40.2	41.7
Black Males							
New York City	28.5		35.5	36.0			
New York State	29.6*	35.2	35.6	36.6	41.4	45.5	
The North			32.7	35.6	39.2	44.4	
United States	28.5*	33.5*	32.2	32.6	35.4	39.2	

* Nonwhite.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1918: 247; 1935: 151; 1943a, pt. 1: 16, 17; 1943b: 60; 1953: 202, 205.

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Table 2. Males per 100 Females by National Origin and Color for the United States, 1880-1970

	All Persons	Foreign- Born Whites	Chinese	Blacks
1970	94.8		110.6	92.2
1960	97.1	103.5	133.2	93.4
1950	98.7	103.8	161.1	94.3
1940	100.8	111.5	224.4	95.1
1930	102.6	115.7	296.4	97.0
1920	104.1	121.7	465.7	99.2
1910	106.2	129.2	925.7	98.9
1900	104.6	117.3	1385.0	98.6
1890	104.9	118.7	2678.9	99.5
1880	103.5	115.9	2106.8	97.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960; A 51-8, A 59-70; 1972: T 18; 1935: 78.

The black vice industry and the Chinese vice industry were internally different. The black vice industry consisted of streetwalkers and pimps who settled quarrels with fights. The Chinese vice industry consisted of syndicated brothels which resolved severe business rivalries by gang wars, but adjudicated individual quarrels. The American public's appetite for illegal services does not explain these black-Chinese differences, although it does explain why both ethnic minorities entered the metropolitan vice industry at all. Demographic and cultural characteristics of blacks and of Chinese are needed to explain black-Chinese differences in internal organization of the vice industry.

As normalization of the American sex ratio set in (roughly, after 1914), the public's demand for vice services slackened, and ethnic-staffed vice industries found trade declining. Vice businesses then sought new employments to shore up the declining wages of sin. For the Chinese, the decline of white-patronized vice encouraged the restaurant/tourist industry in Chinatowns. This shift was largely complete by 1940. It represents a case of industrial succession in which an illegal industry disappeared and a legal one replaced it. Among blacks, the decline of white-patronized vice resorts stimulated a parallel search for alternative revenues. In the period between 1920-1944, this redeployment began to take the form of a rudimentary nightclub industry, but race riots and juvenile street crime aborted the

industrial succession after 1944. For both the Chinese and the blacks, therefore, a search for new opportunities arose in response to the declining profits of the white-oriented vice industry. But in the black case, industrial succession fizzled whereas in the Chinese case it succeeded. Cultural and demographic characteristics of the two minorities account for the black-Chinese difference in succession, but the general shift of public demand does not.

The Vice Industry, 1880-1924

Prior to the First World War, brisk public demand for prostitutes, gambling halls and drugs encouraged Chinese and blacks to enter the vice industry. In fact, American Chinatowns and urban black communities in this country were municipal vice centers throughout most of this period (Light, 1974; Frazier, 1949:645; Myrdal, 1944:332; Chicago Vice Commission, 1911:37-8; Hepler, 1972:71; Staples, 1973:81; Katzman, 1973:17; Reckless, 1925:173). Ethnic response to American demand supports the prevailing anomie theory of illegal enterprise because American society was encouraging blacks and Chinese to enter the illegal industry with financial rewards for their participation while their efforts to earn money in legal industries were rewarded much more modestly or not at all.

A massive preponderance of Chinese men existed before Chinatowns turned into municipal vice colonies (Light, 1974). Of course, this preponderance was encouraged and prolonged by the Immigration Act of 1882 and subsequent restrictive legislation. However, the drastic shortage of women in the Chinese population antedated the first restrictive legislation by three decades, thus proving that sex-ratio imbalances among Chinese were not the exclusive result of restrictive U.S. legislation (see Lyman, 1970:18). In 1890 there were 2,678.9 Chinese men for every 100 Chinese women in the United States (Table 2). Although this imbalance was much more extreme than in the case of the foreign-born whites, its origin was also a sojourning attitude among immigrant Chinese men who left their families at home.

Table 3. Males per 100 Females by Nativity and Color for Urban and Rural Areas, 1900-1940

	1940	1930	1920	1910	1900
Urban					
Foreign-Born White	106.8	111.0	115.9	118.9	106.3
Native White	94.5	96.0	96.9	97.3	97.0
Black	90.2 ^a	91.3	95.4	90.8	87.8
Rural					
Foreign-Born White	130.4	134.0	141.8	161.1	143.8
Native White	107.5	107.6	106.7	107.2	106.6
Black	103.0 ^a	101.7	101.2	102.1	102.1

^a 1940 figure is for "Nonwhite."

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1918: 152; 1935: 79; 1943b: 10-4.

In general, a slight surplus of nubile women prevailed among urban blacks (Table 3). This surplus of females among urban blacks was a permanent feature of urban black populations and did not tend toward normalization. On the other hand, large cities had quite different demographic profiles, so the overall surplus of women among black urbanites concealed important city-by-city variation. New York City was an outstanding example of the general surplus of women among urban black populations (Scheiner, 1965:115; DuBois, 1903:2-3), but Chicago began the twentieth century with a surplus of black males and, over three decades, developed a surplus of women. The city-by-city complexity (Table 4) of black demography increases the difficulty of framing reliable generalizations. Coupled with unresolved historical ambiguities, this problem rendered it necessary to restrict archival research to New York City where a stronger than average surplus of black women admittedly existed. However, references to other cities are presented anyway because a surplus of black women was the master trend. Surplus-of-males cities (Detroit, Chicago) are exceptions which one might examine for confirmation of the effect of demography upon the organization of prostitution. In all cases, however, effective public demand for prostitutes was regional, rather than municipal in scope because transients were preponderant consumers of vice services (Chicago Vice Commission, 1911:114-6, 228). Relative to foreign-white or Chinese populations of their regions, even the most pronouncedly male, urban black populations (Table 4) were

generously endowed with needy females.

The contrasting sex ratios of Chinese (surplus of men) and urban blacks (surplus of women) had divergent effects upon the white-patronized, ethnic-staffed vice industries both developed. The shortage of women in Chinatowns encouraged brothel prostitution and eliminated streetwalking. All Chinese prostitutes were full-time professionals and worked in brothels. On the other hand, the abundance of women in most black enclaves encouraged streetwalkers rather than professionally-staffed brothels. Quite unlike Chinatowns, urban black enclaves conducted prostitution in three distinct and mutually competitive modes. The least organized but largest class of black prostitutes was independent streetwalkers. In nearly all cases, these were unemployed women who turned to prostitution until marriage or a regular job

Table 4a. White Males per 100 Females, by Nativity and Region in U.S., 1930

Region	Total	Native	Foreign-Born
United States	102.7	101.1	115.1
South	102.5	102.0	130.2
North	102.1	100.2	112.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1935: 79, 85.

Table 4b. Black Males per 100 Females in U.S. Cities with 10,000 or More Black Population, by Region, 1930, 1920 and 1910

Region	1930	1920	1910
South	86.8	90.5	86.6
North and West	97.8	103.5	96.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1935: 79, 85.

provided alternative support. Their number waxed and waned with the business cycle (Waterman, 1932:118). The next rung up the ladder of organization was the pimp system. Gun-toting black pimps maintained "strings" of 1-15 black and nonblack prostitutes who solicited business on streets and in saloons (Haller, 1970:220-1). In a few cases, pimps claimed a regular territory within which they exercised a monopoly, excluding all competition by threat of violence. However, most pimps were content to let prostitutes fend for themselves, insisting only upon a share of the gain in return for social-emotional support and a modicum of physical-legal protection (Slim, 1967; 1969). Black enclaves also contained syndicated brothels in which 3-100 prostitutes worked and resided. A brothel syndicate consisted of 2-15 brothels, each of which operated under a "franchise" from a common management (Reckless, 1933:70-1). As in Chinatowns, the franchising management provided personnel, corruption, and protection for resorts in its syndicate. Some syndicated brothels were expensive and elegant; others were cheap and dilapidated (Drake and Cayton, 1962:1, 55). In general, however, brothel prostitutes charged higher prices than streetwalking prostitutes and these, in turn, charged higher prices than the unemployed women of the ghetto.

In nearly all cases, syndicated brothels in black enclaves were under the management of white businessmen, although prostitutes were both black and nonblack (Landesco, 1968:27; Katzman, 1973:191).¹ Deliberate racial policy and high prices restricted these brothels to white customers. On the other hand, black men were the only pimps in black neighborhoods. Pimps had both black and nonblack prostitutes (Haller, 1972:221), and many grew wealthy in the business, but they rarely moved beyond pimping to brothel operation or from brothels to syndication. The

three levels of organization (brothels, pimps, streetwalkers) competed with one another for customers. Since white syndicates had political influence, they recurrently employed police to drive away price-cutting streetwalkers, but evicted blacks doggedly returned (Landesco, 1968:34, 42n; Reckless, 1933:69-70). The see-saw battle between streetwalking blacks and white-controlled brothels cast the pimps in the role of champions of their underdog race in competition with faceless white vice-lords (cf. Staples, 1973:92).

Black pimps relied upon their reputation for violent prowess to intimidate workers and rival pimps. Maintaining one's reputation required frequent dueling, and beatings or murders of prostitutes (Light, 1976). However, this ubiquitous violence never triggered wars between rival gangs in local, much less national federations. There is no record of inter-syndicate warfare for control of vice in black enclaves, although brothel syndicates made repeated, but ultimately futile efforts to eliminate price-cutting competitors. Here the situation in black vice districts forms a sharp contrast with the situation in Chinatowns. The black enclaves had high homicide rates, but no gang wars. Streetwalkers and their confederates frequently robbed their customers and, occasionally, robberies eventuated in killings (Asbury, 1940:127-8; Light, 1976). Chinatowns had low homicide rates, rampant gang wars, but no record of street robberies of visiting men. The implication is that the syndication of vice in Chinatowns prevented petty robberies and unregulated conflicts among individuals, but encouraged collective struggles for business advantage. On the other hand, the free market organization of vice in black enclaves permitted individualistic killings and petty crime, but eliminated gang warfare.

Although the surplus of women in the urban black population encouraged streetwalking rather than brothels, the presence of white-owned brothel syndicates in black enclaves prior to World War I proves that the abundance of needy black women did not altogether preclude brothel syndication. However, the strik-

¹ An exception was Mrs. Vina Fields, "a colored woman who has one of the largest houses in the city. During the [Chicago World's] Fair she had over 60 girls in her house, all colored, but all for white men" (Stead, 1894:247). Robert H. Spriggs, a Negro, also operated "several disreputable resorts" in New York's black ghetto in 1906 (Light, 1976).

ing shortage of black-owned brothel syndicates suggests that contrasting cultural heritages contributed to black-Chinese differences in organization of the ethnic vice industry. In the Chinese case, the vice industry consisted entirely of resorts owned by or affiliated with a Chinese secret society. These societies (*tongs*) traced their parentage in ritual to the Triad Society of South China and its Chee Kung Tong affiliate in San Francisco (Light, 1974). These historic origins have occasioned confusion because all Chinese tongs in this country trace an "affiliation" to the Triad Society through the Chee Kung Tong. However, most tongs were business, fraternal or political in character, and only a minority of "fighting tongs" licensed illegal businesses. Since complex alliances knit the nation's fighting tongs together, a purely local dispute could and often did precipitate a fight between affiliates and their allies in every U.S. Chinatown.

Lacking the Triad Society or any functional equivalent, black migrants of the lower class did not arrive with a culturally-provided framework around which to organize a syndicated vice industry. On the contrary, conditions of black life in the South (Jim Crow, free enterprise, police laxity) had encouraged the emergence of the lower-class cultural ideal of the "bad nigger," epitomized by the Stackolee legend (Johnson, 1941:99, 102, 103; Botkin, 1944:122-30). This legendary bully derived his fearsome reputation from violent prowess rather than from organizational affiliations. In the municipal vice industry, this cultural tradition evidently encouraged a free market organization around an internally competitive cadre of pimps. Additionally, the father-absent pattern in the black lower class placed primary earnings responsibilities upon black women heads of households with meager chances in industrial labor (Scheiner, 1965:57-8). Reinforcing the demographic abundance of these women, burdensome earning responsibilities naturally encouraged prostitution as supplementary or interim income. The resulting large class of part-time prostitutes constituted the major organizational barrier to professional monopoly in black-

controlled prostitution. If the Stackolee tradition offered scant support for monopolization, the ubiquity of inexpensive prostitutes additionally impeded it.

The intriguing problem of the demographic versus cultural origins of black-Chinese differences in the organization of the ethnic vice industry is inconsequential for the restricted purposes of this paper. Whether demographic or cultural in origin, or some combination of the two, the black-Chinese contrast in organization of the vice industry always reflected ethnic differences. Admittedly, American society encouraged both groups to sell vice services, but the demand of American buyers does not account for the contrasting organization of the supply. Therefore, a structural explanation of black and Chinese participation in the vice industry cannot fully account for the phenomena and requires supplementation by close review of contributory characteristics, demographic and socio-cultural, of sub-groups.

Industrial Succession, 1915-1940

The erosion of public demand for vice occasioned a search for alternative earning opportunities in Chinatowns as well as in urban black enclaves. However, cultural and demographic differences in black and Chinese populations also affected the outcome of this redirection, which was not simply a mechanical readjustment to market forces. For the Chinese, a restaurant-based tourist industry slowly supplanted the older vice industry (Light, 1974). Like its predecessor, the tourist industry depended upon patronage by non-Chinese. However, the tourist industry catered to women as well as to men, and even permitted the accommodation of children. In these respects, the developing tourist industry reflected the normalization of the sex ratio in American society, the growth of husband-wife families, and the increase in children. Although the transition from vice to tourism provided the occasion for a flurry of conflict at the turn of the century between opposing industrial interests within the Chinese communities, the basis for the conflict evaporated when fighting tongs

discovered the profitability of tourist enterprises. Fighting tongs actually opened restaurants on premises previously occupied by brothels and gambling halls.

In Northern black communities, the interwar years (1919-1939) also saw the development of an incipient tourist-entertainment industry catering to white outsiders (Reckless, 1925:278; Chicago Commission on Race Relations, 1922:202, 323-5; Light, 1976). These began as speakeasies in the Prohibition period and, like the brothels of the pre-Prohibition decades, were usually owned by white racketeers affiliated with outside crime syndicates (Waterman, 1932:128-9; McKay, 1940:200-1; Landesco, 1968:33). Speakeasies attracted white couples rather than single men; their entertainment consisted of suggestive revues and jazz music (Hobson, 1939: 214) rather than gambling or prostitution. Numerous restaurants purveying "soul" cuisine also opened to accommodate the gustatory curiosity of whites. These restaurants attracted favorable attention in the general news media (Light, 1976; James, 1931:248; Osofsky, 1963:32-3). Naturally, the interwar development of black communities as legitimate but risqué musical, entertainment, and restaurant attractions for affluent whites did not supplant the black neighborhoods' older attraction—prostitution (Waterman, 1932:128; Myrdal, 1944:977-8). This illicit business continued to attract white customers although the syndicated brothels disappeared, their white proprietors often shifting capital into cabarets and speakeasies. What is crucial in this interwar period, however, is the incipient separation of entertainment and vice, each industry attracting a different clientele (Guilds' Committee, 1939:257-63). The vice industry attracted unmarried men alone or in groups (Committee of Fourteen, 1928:22). They came to patronize vice resorts. The tourist industry attracted both men and women as couples, married as well as unmarried, and those who came were typically of middle or upper social status (Strong, 1940:100-1; Committee of Fourteen, 1930:21; Committee of Fourteen, 1927). The purpose of the tourists was to thrill to the depravity of nearby vice resorts, to

experience a "Negro" atmosphere, and to patronize jazz cabarets and "soul" restaurants (Osofsky, 1963:151; Reckless, 1925:88, 278). However contrived and superficial, the emergent tourist industry in Harlem, Chicago's South Side and most other metropolitan black enclaves authentically reflected a new public appreciation of black cultural forms, especially jazz music (Huggins, 1971:118). Indeed, jazz music was originally called "whorehouse" music in recognition of the setting in which its originators performed. The acceptance of jazz by respectable whites was a reflection of the underlying change in economic function of the black neighborhoods in the intervening half-century (Leonard, 1962:36, 50-1).

Yet, despite this substantial beginning, white tourism collapsed after 1944 and never recovered. Why did this industry collapse? One contributor was the Great Depression. The Depression had a deflationary impact upon the nightclub industry in general, and the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 was a specific shock for black belt speakeasies which could no longer rely upon police corruption to protect them from outside competition (Guilds' Committee, 1939:262). However, black belt clubs were among the most resilient of any in the nightclub industry, many reports indicating that they continued to operate "at full blast" throughout the Depression (Light, 1975; 1976).

Street robberies by juvenile criminals ("muggers")—not the Great Depression—finally killed the incipient tourist-entertainment industry in Harlem and other black neighborhoods. Of course, these robberies had always occurred in metropolitan vice districts (Scheiner, 1965:120; DuBois, 1899:238, 249, 252; Reckless, 1925:71). Riis (1892:221), Thrasher (1933:138) and Shaw (1930) all reported that "jackrolling" drunks and bawdy-house patrons was a typical apprenticeship in crime for adult offenders, and black men and boys were pronouncedly active in this form of robbery—an association which is hardly surprising in view of their residential proximity to centers of prostitution. Naturally, robberies and beatings reduced the volume of trade in a red-light district. In-

deed, a major recommendation of the more expensive, syndicated brothels was the customers' assurance of personal safety in them.

However, a tourist district required higher standards of street safety than a red-light district (Walker, 1933:252), and the proprietors of cabarets, dance palaces and other tourist attractions did, in fact, make strenuous efforts to protect tourists against thugs (Light, 1976). However, these efforts proved insufficient because of a sharp increase in the volume of juvenile delinquency in black neighborhoods beginning in the mid-1930s. The contemporary black and white press was acutely aware of this increase (Light, 1975, 1976) attributing it to Depression-spawned unemployment, and the constantly growing number and proportion of young blacks among the urban population (Table 5). Also, during the Second World War, when military personnel on liberty attempted to find "girls" in urban black neighborhoods, they came into conflict with local youths. The ensuing fights and race riots aggravated an already delicate situation, and wartime black neighborhoods acquired a reputation for danger which kept tourists at home (Lait and Mortimer, 1950:44, 46-7).

The mugging problem in black neighborhoods requires additional explanation because Chinatowns did not have this problem. It is a temptation to credit the Confucian family for suppressing juvenile delinquency, thus encouraging the tourist

industry in Chinatowns (President's Commission, 1967:74). However, this popular view assigns credit to the Chinese family when, as Lyman (1974:113) has observed, a safer explanation lies with the absence of families (no women) and, thus, of juveniles in Chinatown. In addition, Light and Wong (1975) have called attention to the growth in juvenile delinquency in American Chinatowns since the resumption of mass immigration following the Naturalization and Immigration Act of 1965. This abrupt increase raises additional doubt about the allegedly delinquency-resistant Confucian family.

Unlike Chinatowns, of course, urban black enclaves had always had an abundance of women of childbearing age. Largely because of rapid natural increase, the proportion of black juveniles to the urban juvenile population continuously increased, variously exceeding the general proportion of blacks between 1930 and 1950 (Table 5). This demographic process alone was enough to increase the incidence of juvenile crime in black neighborhoods. In contrast, the protracted shortage of women in the Chinese population retarded natural increase in population and, therewith, the delinquency problem in Chinatowns. Insofar as the father-absent cultural pattern in lower-class black families exacerbated delinquency and the Confucian family minimized it, black-Chinese cultural differences accentuated discrepancies in rates of delinquency which black-Chinese demo-

Table 5. Black Population by Age for the United States, Chicago and New York City, 1910-1950

	Percent Black				
	1950	1940	1930	1920	1910
Urban, U.S. ^a					
Age 10-19	11.78	9.17	7.14	6.60	
All urban	10.41	8.60	7.53	6.55
Chicago ^b					
Age 10-19	15.63	8.22	5.07	3.08	1.20
City	14.06	7.70	6.92	4.05	2.01
New York City ^c					
Age 10-19	10.29	6.18	3.38	1.85	1.26
City	9.49	6.40	4.72	2.71	1.92

^a U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1953:1-91; 1935: 93.

^b U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1952a: 80; 1943a, Pt. 2: 610; 1935: 127; 1922: 248; 1913: 439.

^c U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1952b: 195; 1943a, Pt. 3: 663; 1935: 133; 1922: 681; 1913: 141.

graphic contrasts engendered (McCord, 1968:91; Short, 1968:77). Withal, pronounced black-Chinese differences in rates of delinquency had a severe impact upon the developing tourist industry, for a tourist industry could not exist where delinquency was uncontrollable. Therefore, industrial succession (vice-tourism) took place in one case, but not in the other; and cultural and demographic characteristics of subgroups are required to explain the divergence.

CONCLUSION: DEMAND DOES NOT
EXPLAIN SUPPLY

This historical comparison of blacks and Chinese confirms the claim that American society channelled disadvantaged minorities into illegal industries. But a close review also shows that no purely demand theory can account entirely for style, organization or succession in illegal enterprise because socio-cultural and demographic characteristics of minorities also affected these outcomes. Indeed, a shift in public demand (less vice, more tourism) had sharply contrasting consequences in Harlem and in Chinatowns because of contrasting demographic and sociocultural characteristics of inhabitants. So powerful were these demographic and sociocultural characteristics that a lucrative demand (tourism) had to abandon Harlem as well as other metropolitan black enclaves.

These anomalies point up a weakness of prevailing sociological analysis of illegal enterprise: the assumption that, given a demand schedule, disadvantage in the labor market is the only or, at least, the only substantial determinant of supply. In fact, even given a public demand and a high level of disadvantage, the quantity and quality of the supply of vice engendered still depended upon demographic, cultural and social organizational characteristics of blacks and Chinese. Indeed, some economic demands (tourism) produced no supply because of street crime engendered by adverse demographic and socio-cultural characteristics among potential suppliers.

Neither the old-fashioned import theory

nor the anomie theory alone can explain these results. This finding strengthens the hypothesis that illegal enterprise represents a fusion between what the American public wanted to buy (demand) and what, and how much disadvantaged subgroups (supply) have been willing or able to sell. True, providers can only sell what customers will buy. But, given a consumer demand for illegal products or services, the manner in which providers respond depends upon socio-cultural and demographic characteristics closely linked to ethnicity. Demand does not, therefore, explain supply because provider culture, social organization and demography intervene.

Although this conceptual adjustment is simple, its implications are uncharted. For example, sociologists acknowledge the importance of entrepreneurship in business so why not criminal entrepreneurship? The concept of criminal entrepreneurship enormously complicates the analysis of illegal enterprise because it implies that endowed groups can exploit niggling opportunities whereas others may flub Heaven-sent opportunities for illegal gain. Breaking the one-to-one correspondence of structural disadvantage and illegal enterprise, the concept of criminal entrepreneurship compels an analyst to inquire how groups are exploiting the illegal opportunities around them. Successful exploitation of illegal opportunities raises the cost of redirecting providers into legal occupations because only highly remunerated occupations can match or equal the livelihood illegal enterprise offers.

But what constitutes criminal entrepreneurship? Ordinary business skills contribute, but presumably do not exhaust the role. For example, Quakers are well endowed for business and have prospered in trade, but their religion precludes violence. Hence Quakers are unendowed for illegal enterprise even though highly endowed for business. In most cases, also, syndication in illegal enterprise requires the exclusion of small fry in the interest of maximum profit for the excluding in-group. Thus, when entrepreneurship is naively identified with scale of operation, the most entrepreneurial groups become

those who restrict participation the most—an obvious irony.

These ruminations merely illustrate the problems which the new direction implies. Admittedly, this horizon is stormy, but what is the alternative? Clinging to the time-honored theory of structural disadvantage is impossible because empirical objections are too easy to substantiate. A more mature view begins with the insistence that American society thrusts opportunities for lucrative deviance upon the disadvantaged, but acknowledges that socio-cultural and demographic characteristics determine the manner in which providers respond. The sociology of the problem then revolves around framing empirically-grounded generalizations to fit the diverse articulations between illegal industries and provider subgroups.

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