*The Tenant Labor Market and Lynching in the South: A Test of Split Labor Market Theory**

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Split labor market theory was originally advanced as a general approach explaining ethnic antagonism as the result of class-based interests. In this investigation, the threat to "high-priced" (white) labor from "cheap" (black) labor within the farm tenancy system of the postbellum South is examined as an underlying cause of the lynching of blacks by whites. Supporting this interpretation, the ratio of black to white tenants in southern counties, a measure of the level of economic threat to high-priced labor, is shown to be a strong predictor of lynching rates in the Cotton South. Findings for the Non-Cotton South, however, are inconsistent with theoretical expectations. We conclude that racial violence linked to economic competition between working-class whites and blacks was limited to that part of the South dominated by the plantation system.

In most states, reliance on lynching as a mechanism of informal social control ended with the passing of the frontier and establishment of civil authority. During the period from the end of Reconstruction until the late 1930s, however, the extralegal killing of blacks by groups of whites was a distinctive feature of race relations in southern communities, although virtually absent outside the region. Between 1889 and 1918, eighty-eight percent of the lynchings recorded in the United States occurred in the South, and eighty-five percent of southern victims were black (N.A.A.C.P. 1919).

Early research on lynching attributed its prevalence in the postbellum South to regional factors, including the monotony of daily existence (Tannenbaum 1924), the impotence of local governments (Young 1928), and the race hatred of poor whites (Powdermaker 1939). More recently, studies have appeared which develop and test structural explanations of lynching derived from general theories of intergroup relations (Reed 1972; Corzine, Creech, and Corzine 1983).

The present study examines the relationship beween the lynching of blacks and the racial composition of agricultural labor markets within southern counties. Specifically, this paper develops and tests the argument that (1) the farm tenancy system of the postbellum South comprised a split labor market

divided along racial lines and (2) an important determinant of lynchings during this era was antagonism generated from strife between "high-priced" (white) and "cheap" (black) labor (Bonacich 1972).

Explanations of Lynching

Explanations for episodes of collective violence can be distinguished by their relative emphasis on "immediate precipitants" or "underlying causes" (Lieberson and Silverman 1965). Applied to lynchings, immediate precipitants are the specific events (e.g., accusations of murder or rape) which lead to the formation of a mob and the subsequent killing of one or more persons. Underlying conditions, on the other hand, are the relatively stable social and economic characteristics of a population which create or maintain a situation conducive to lynching. The logic is that the probability of a particular event resulting in violence varies with the "lynching-proneness" of a community which, in turn, is a function of its structural arrangements.

That over one-half of the blacks lynched in the South were accused of felony offenses led Young (1928) to view black criminality as the primary cause of lynchings, but neither case studies nor aggregate statistics provide much support for this explanation. Justifications for lynchings given by mob members included many noncriminal behaviors attributed to victims (e.g., blacks were accused of boasting, using offensive language, and seeking employment in a restaurant), and allegations of criminal acts were frequently unsupported by evidence (Raper 1933). Also, lynching was not an automatic response of whites to violations of criminal codes or caste taboos by blacks. Explanations for lynching rate variations may be sought in the sociocultural conditions which predisposed whites in a particular locality to define the actual or perceived acts of blacks as justifications for lethal violence. This was recognized by Raper (1933, p. 44), who noted that "(w)hile the usual immediate occasion for mob violence against the property and persons of Negroes is the report of some specific crime, the size of the mob, along with the type and extent of its lawlessness, will depend more upon the community situation than upon the type of crime reported."

Past research on the structural bases of lynching has frequently suffered from both the lack of an integrating theoretical framework and methodological difficulties. In an early study, Young (1928) found an inverse relationship between population size and lynchings in southern counties, a pattern which he attributed to inadequate law enforcement in sparsely settled regions. Hovland and Sears (1940), who found strong negative correlations between the annual number of lynchings and measures of economic well-being, argued that lynchings resulted from displaced white aggression caused by poor economic conditions. A reanalysis of their data by Mintz (1946), however, casts serious doubt on their conclusions. Inverarity's (1976) study of lynching

episodes in Louisiana has also been criticized for methodological shortcomings (Bohrnstedt 1977).

Economic and Political Threats as Causes of Lynching

A recent approach to the study of lynching has been derived from Blalock's (1967) theoretical arguments linking minority percentage to levels of discrimination. A positive association between these two variables is attributable to two types of perceived threats: competitive (economic) and power (political). When the former is present, discrimination levels rise with the minority proportion because there is an increasingly greater number of minority individuals "in direct or potential competition with a given individual in the dominant group" (Blalock 1967, p. 148). Similarly, the threat to the dominant group's political power increases with the relative size of the minority group, leading to discriminatory acts by the majority as a means of maintaining a constant advantage over the subordinate group. In a test of the power-threat hypothesis, Reed (1972) reported a positive relationship, with an increasing slope, between percent black and lynching rates in Mississippi counties. Extending Reed's analysis, Corzine et al. (1983) found this positive relationship limited to the Deep South; by contrast, an inverse relationship between black concentration and lynching rates was found in the Border South.

Focusing on the effect of minority percentage on discrimination, an important question is whether different distributions of majority and minority individuals among social positions affects discrimination apart from the minority's proportion in the population. In other words, is it the *actual* or *potential* threat from minorities which fosters the discriminatory reactions of the dominant group? Although developed independently from Blalock's propositions, split labor market theory identifies a set of structural conditions which is predicted to generate economic-based conflict between ethnic and racial groups.

Split Labor Market Theory

As defined by Bonacich (1972), a split labor market consists of two or more groups of workers whose labor-price varies for the same work. This division in the labor pool produces three groups—employers, high-priced labor, and cheap labor—each attempting to further its economic interests. Employers strive to replace high-priced labor with cheap labor to maximize profits; in response, high-priced labor attempts to eliminate or at least reduce the threat to its jobs posed by cheap labor. Cheap labor has fewer power resources than either employers or high-priced labor and usually plays a secondary role in the struggle.

Split labor market theory was developed as a materialist approach which

stresses the economic threat of cheap labor to high-priced labor as an important, although not the only, stimulus of ethnic and racial antagonism. Bonacich (1975) uses the theory to explain white workers' opposition to the extension of slavery in the antebellum period as an attempt to avoid the development of a split labor market in the free states. Later, Bonacich (1976) attributes the increase in black unemployment between the two world wars to the success of white (high-priced) labor in erecting barriers to northern employers hiring black migrants from the South. The theory has also been applied in studies of agricultural labor markets in the Southwest (Howell 1982), the comparative experiences of Japanese immigrants in Brazil and Canada (Makabe 1981) and the emergence of the racial caste system in the postbellum South (Wilson 1978).

The Southern Tenancy System

The emergence of the southern tenancy system during Reconstruction and the dynamics of its operation have been well described by social researchers (Schwartz 1976; Ransom and Sutch 1977; Mandle 1978). At its core was the interdependency of two economic classes; owners who controlled access to land and capital and workers who controlled little more than their labor. Large holdings were parcelled into tracts small enough to be farmed by one person, frequently with the help of family members, and contracted to farm laborers, or tenants, who received a percentage, or "share," of the harvested crop as payment for their labor. Vance (1929) distinguishes three types of tenants: (1) *renters* who supplied everything but land and paid for its use with cotton of a specified value after harvest, (2) *tenants* who supplied some of the means of production but obtained the use of land and other provisions on a share contract, and (3) *croppers* who owned little or nothing but their labor power and worked for shares on a less favorable basis than tenants. In practice, tenants and croppers were little more than piece-rate wage laborers, a position consistently upheld by southern courts (Vance 1929).

Blacks held a virtual monopoly in the tenant labor market in the late 1860s, but this situation soon changed because of the devastating financial difficulties that struck white farmers with modest acreage (Woodward 1951; Schwartz 1976). Faced with the dual burden of exploitative credit arrangements and unstable cotton prices, white farmers began to lose their land and descend into sharecropping in the 1870s (Vance 1935). Indeed, the percentage of tenants among southern farmers increased for every decade from 1880 through 1930. During this period, some blacks were able to rise from tenancy to become owners, yet the size of their farms rarely approached that of the established white planters.

The influx of substantial numbers of whites into the tenant class did not

result in the displacement of black laborers which would have occurred if the hiring practices of white planters had conformed to the "color line" of the southern caste system. To the contrary, there was "an almost universal preference among Black-Belt landlords for Negro tenants and workers" (Woodward 1951, p. 208). Our contention is that this preference existed because blacks comprised a cheap labor group.

Although the contract terms offered to tenants did not typically vary by race (Higgs 1977), planters found blacks to be less expensive laborers than whites. This may appear contradictory, but Bonacich (1972, p. 549) emphasizes that the total cost of labor to employers includes "not only wages, but the cost of recruitment, transportation, room and board, education, health care . . . , and the cost of labor unrest." It is this last item, labor unrest, which is essential to understanding how increased profits could be realized by hiring blacks as tenants.

In part, the basis for the cost difference between black and white tenants lay in the lack of legal protection provided blacks by southern courts. Landlords typically kept the books detailing the cost of items, including fertilizer, seed, working equipment, and food supplies, provided to tenants during the growing season and determined the interest and frequently a theoretical "cost of supervision" which were added to their bills. Often, they also sold the crops at harvest and returned the profit from the tenant's share after the credit account had been settled. This system afforded planters many opportunities to defraud tenants, and the historical evidence indicates that such cheating was common (Johnson, Embree, and Alexander 1935; Dollard 1937; Davis, Gardner, and Gardner 1941; Ransom and Sutch 1977). While white renters could challenge dishonest landlords in the courts, black tenants had no legal recourse when they were the victims of fraud. In addition, these problems were enhanced among black tenants because of their higher rate of illiteracy.

Blacks' inferior caste status made them a more profitable source of tenant labor in a second way. The use of threats or physical force by landlords to coerce tenants into compliance with their demands for extra labor or other favors was problematic when directed at white tenants, whose range of responses was not limited by caste taboos. This difficulty in coercing labor from white tenants was well recognized by white landowners. In the words of an Alabama planter, quoted by Baker (1964, p. 78):

> Give me Negroes everytime. I wouldn't have a low-down white tenant on my place. You can get work out of any Negro if you know how to handle him; but there are some white men who won't work and can't be driven, because they are white.

Black tenants who refused a planter's demands were subject to physical abuse, and those who resisted, even in self-defense, frequently had to flee or face

death (Higgs 1977). In summary, blacks were preferred as tenants, because their caste status made it possible to obtain higher profits from them, even without a racially-based wage differential.

Baker (1964), Davis et al. (1941), Dollard (1937), and others proposed that economic competition was an important cause of lower-class whites' hostility toward blacks in the rural South.[1] In our view, this hostility was, in part, generated by the existence of a split labor market, which may lead to violence between members of high-priced and cheap labor groups through two processes. First, the struggle for jobs may become a direct precipitant of violence if high-priced labor adopts physical force as a tactic to prevent deterioration of its economic position. The primary goal of the Mississippi Whitecap organizations' violent tactics, for example, was to end the local merchants' practice of placing blacks on land obtained through foreclosures on white farmers (Holmes 1969). Second, a split labor market may raise the level of "violence-proneness" in the larger community, thereby increasing the probability that non-economic disputes between members of the two labor groups will escalate into violent confrontations. In the postbellum South, incidents involving minor breaches of caste etiquette may have become magnified in significance by underlying economic tensions between working-class whites and blacks. Regardless of which process operates within a particular community, the predicted effect on measures of intergroup violence, including lynching, is positive. The following analyses test the hypothesis that the level of threat to high-priced (white) by cheap (black) labor within the tenancy system is positively related to the lynching of blacks by whites.

Data and Methods

Counties are employed as units of analysis because of their homogeneity and role as a center for community life in the postbellum South (Johnson 1941). Of special relevance to the present study, the county was also the focal point of the agricultural economy, comprising the area in which landowners contracted for tenants and conducted other business activities necessary for large-scale farming (Vance 1935).

Data on lynchings were obtained from publications of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1919; 1920–1931) which list the location of lynchings and the race of the victims from 1889 through 1931.[2] Lynchings of blacks within the eleven ex-Confederate states were assigned to the county where they occurred. Those lynchings whose locations could not be determined because of missing data, changes in county boundaries or the inability to find place-names on maps were omitted. Overall, 2,224 of the 2,556, or eighty-seven percent, of the black lynching victims were assigned to a county. Totals for independent cities were combined with

those of their original counties, and a lynching rate for each county was calculated by Reed's (1972) formula (Lynching Rate = $1000L/Np_bp_w$, where L = number of lynchings, N = total population, p_b = percent black and p_w = percent white).[3]

Because previous research based on split labor market theory has used qualitative data, there is no precedent for how to measure the level of threat to high-priced labor posed by the presence of a cheap labor group. Past studies suggest that the presence of small numbers of cheap laborers is accommodated with minimal intergroup tension, but further increases in their ranks stimulate efforts by high-priced laborers to eliminate the threat to their economic well-being (Bonacich 1975, 1976). This suggests that the size of the cheap labor pool, relative to that of high-priced labor, offers the best measurement of the threat posed by cheap labor. In this study, the magnitude of the threat to high-priced labor (Cheap Labor Threat) is operationalized as the ratio of black to white tenants (number of black tenants/number of white tenants). We recognize that this is an imperfect measure, which is insensitive to both the numbers of whites and blacks who were unable to secure positions as tenants and the availability of other jobs. Lack of adequate data precludes the measurement of either of these variables at the local level, and the results of the following analyses must be understood as tentative.

Because split labor market theory specifies contacts between members of ethnic groups *within* one segment of the working class as a cause of intergroup antagonism, the measurement for Cheap Labor Threat is, by design, insensitive to the relative economic positions of the two races. Davis (1945, p. 12), however, identifies black economic advancement as an independent cause of interracial violence, noting that, while the racial caste system defined whites as superior to blacks, "economic status does not follow color status with the well-nigh perfect correlation formed in regard to political and legal status." Based on this observation, Davis (1945, p. 14) proposes that a "tentative hypothesis might be advanced that the physical terrorization of colored people is most common in those areas where their general economic status is highest." To test for this possibility, it is necessary to introduce a variable that measures the overall economic status of blacks, relative to whies.

According to caste definitions, a "racially correct" economic system for farming areas would be one in which all whites were higher class (owners) and all blacks were lower class (tenants). This ideal type probably never existed in any county in the postbellum era, but the extent to which the racial composition of owners and tenants diverged from the caste ideal can be measured by: $f_b(f_w + t_w) + t_bt_w/(f_b + t_b)(f_w + t_w)$, where f_b = number of black owners, t_b = number of black tenants, f_w = number of white owners and t_w = number of white tenants. While cumbersome, this formula

equals the percentage of paired relationships between black and white farmers within a county in which the black is of superior or equal status to the white. Following Davis (1945), the expectation is that this variable (Black Success) will be positively related to the lynching rate.

Several other variables are included in the analyses as controls. Both Reed (1972) and Corzine et al. (1983) use percent black as a proxy variable for the level of racial competition. In the present inquiry, Cheap Labor Threat measures one source of economic-based tensions between the races, however, we include black proportion (Percent Black) as an indicator of racial tensions in the nonagricultural sector of the economy and other areas of social life, including the political (Blalock 1967). County population (Population), which was found to be significantly related to lynchings by Corzine et al. (1983) and Young (1928), is also included in the regression model. Based on Cash's (1941) assertion that lynchings were more common in the open countryside than in towns, the percent of a county's population living in cities of 2,500 of more (Percent Urban) is entered as a control. Finally, the percent of a county's white population that is illiterate (White Illiteracy Rate) is added as a proxy measure for the size of the white lower class, the segment of the dominant race frequently mentioned as most likely to participate in lynch mobs (Powdermaker 1939).

Data for the independent variables were taken from Census volumes for 1910, the midpoint of the period for which data on lynchings are available. This procedure is necessary given the nature of the dependent variable. Lynching was a prominent feature of southern race relations for several decades, but they were a rare occurrence in many areas. Therefore, the county rate for a single year or even a decade is unreliable (Johnson 1941). Fortunately, the stability of the independent variables used in the analyses was high during the postbellum period. Corzine et al. (1983) and Inverarity (1976) report the stability of black percentage and other variables used in previous research. To determine if Cheap Labor Threat and Black Success, variables introduced in this paper, were also stable, each variable was calculated for 1900, 1910, and 1920, the three census years which provide comparable data. Cheap Labor Threat in 1910 is strongly correlated with the comparable measurements for 1900 ($r = .937$) and 1920 ($r = .876$). The correlations for Black Success over the three time points are somewhat smaller ($r = .790$ between 1900 and 1910, and $r = .805$ between 1910 and 1920) but still sufficiently high to warrant the use of 1910 data in the analyses.

Those southern counties classified as predominantly non-farm by Johnson (1941) are omitted from the analysis, because farming would have comprised an insignificant part of the local economy. Also excluded are four counties which were found to be outliers on the lynching rate measure.

Corzine et al. (1983) suggest that the multiple effects of cotton agriculture on social and economic relationships may explain the divergent impact of black proportion on lynchings in the Deep South and the border states found in their research. Other researchers have argued that the cotton-growing areas of the Deep South possessed a plantation economy more similar to the societies of the Caribbean than to other sections of the United States, including the Border South (Wagley 1960). A characteristic feature of plantation societies is the merging of economic and political power in the hands of a small landowning elite, with a greater reliance on informal mechanisms of social control, e.g., lynching. Because it is possible that the role of lynching differed between the two subregions of the South, analyses were first completed on all counties. In a second step, counties were then divided into two groups for separate analysis. The first is composed of counties identified by Johnson (1941) as possessing an economy dominated by cotton; the second consists of counties in which other agricultural products were more important.

During preliminary analyses of the data, the residuals behaved in a heteroscedastic manner. Although OLS parameter estimates are unbiased in the presence of heteroscedasticity, they are inefficient. In other words, the regression coefficients are accurate, but the standard errors are inflated, producing a greater chance of Type I errors. One statistical solution to this problem is to use a generalized least squares (GLS) procedure. We adopted this approach because, with GLS, parameter estimates are nearly identical to those obtained under OLS, but the standard errors are corrected (see Johnston 1972).

Findings

All Southern Counties

Table 1 reports the means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for variables included in the regression model for all southern counties. The largest correlation ($r = .29$) with the lynching rate is that for Cheap Labor Threat, the independent variable of primary theoretical significance. Because the correlation matrixes in Tables 1 and 3 include several bivariate relationships with a magnitude of .5 or higher, we used auxilliary regression techniques to test for the influence of multicollinearity (Johnston 1972). The results of this diagnostic procedure (available from the first author) indicate that multicollinearity is not a problem in interpreting the coefficients from the following regressions.

The regression analysis shown in Table 2 supports split labor market theory, as there is a positive relationship of moderate strength between the relative size of the cheap labor pool (Cheap Labor Threat) and the lynching rate. The standardized regression coefficient for this measure is the largest

Table 1

Zero-Order Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations for All Southern Counties (N = 862)

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7
X1	—						
X2	.29	—					
X3	-.13	-.29	—				
X4	.16	.53	-.38	—			
X5	-.09	.13	-.20	.21	—		
X6	-.09	-.23	.15	-.31	-.04	—	
X7	-.05	.01	-.02	.03	.39	-.13	—
Mean	.69	1.99	.65	34.1	19,772	8.9	6.8
S.D.	1.17	5.60	.14	24.2	10,510	6.2	11.2

X1 = Lynching Rate
X2 = Cheap Labor Threat
X3 = Black Success
X4 = Percent Black
X5 = Population
X6 = White Illiteracy Rate
X7 = Percent Urban

in the equation and is approximately twice the magnitude of that for Population, the only other predictor with a coefficient attaining statistical significance. There is no support, however, for Davis' hypothesis that blacks' economic position is related to interracial violence.

With the exception of Population, the demographic variables in the regression model do not perform as expected. The most surprising result is that the effect of percent black is not significant, a finding at variance with those of past studies (Reed 1972; Corzine et al. 1983). This suggests that whites' hostility over perceived threats to their jobs may have been the primary mediating factor between black proportion and levels of discrimination, at least where white violence is concerned. Similarly, the effects of Percent Urban and White Illiteracy Rate on lynchings are trivial.

Table 2

Regression Analysis of Lynching Rates for All Southern Counties (N = 862)*

Independent Variables	b	Beta
Cheap Labor Threat	.058	.278[b]
	(.016)	(.077)
Black Success	− .301	− .037
	(.569)	(.070)
Percent Black	− .017	− .003
	(.521)	(.092)
Population	− .000	− .154[a]
	(.000)	(.068)
White Illiteracy Rate	− .180	− .009
	(1.000)	(.050)
Percent Urban	.000	.003
	(.005)	(.068)
Constant	.989	
R^2	.113	

[a]$p < .05$
[b]$p < .001$
*Standard errors are in parentheses.

Cotton and Non-Cotton Counties

The correlation matrices for the Cotton and Non-Cotton counties in Table 3 show that the relationships between independent variables and the lynching rate differ between the two subregions. These discontinuities support the argument that the cotton region formed a distinctive plantation system during the postbellum era.

Results from regression analyses reported in Table 4 continue to show

Table 3

Zero-Order Correlation, Means, and Standard Deviations for Cotton and Non-Cotton Counties*

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	Mean	S. D.
X1	—	−.02	−.13	.01	.03	.09	.01	.49	1.10
X2	.34	—	−.15	.69	.16	−.15	.02	.44	.81
X3	−.03	−.33	—	.02	−.13	−.06	−.09	.73	.16
X4	.20	.57	−.56	—	.14	−.16	.06	24.00	21.20
X5	.18	.08	−.07	.13	—	.10	−.10	16,584	9,577
X6	−.05	−.26	.23	−.34	−.05	—	.42	10.40	6.90
X7	−.10	.01	.07	.00	.40	−.15	—	6.50	12.10
Mean	.82	3.03	.60	40.80	21,910	7.80	7.00		
S. D.	1.19	7.02	.10	23.70	10,575	5.40	10.50		

X1 = Lynching Rate
X2 = Cheap Labor Threat
X3 = Black Success
X4 = Percent Black
X5 = Population
X6 = White Illiteracy Rate
X7 = Percent Urban
*Upper Triangle: Non-Cotton South (N = 346);
Lower Triangle: Cotton South (N = 516)

subregional differences. Findings for the Cotton South support split labor market theory. Cheap Labor Threat, with a standardized regression coefficient of .347, is the most powerful predictor in the model. Neither the coefficient for Percent Black nor that for Black Success is significant, although both relationships are in the expected direction.

Table 4
Regression Analyses of Lynching Rates for Cotton (N = 516) and Non-Cotton (N = 346) Counties*

Independent Variables	COTTON SOUTH b	COTTON SOUTH Beta	NON-COTTON SOUTH b	NON-COTTON SOUTH Beta
Cheap Labor Threat	.059	.347[b]	– .090	– .066
	(.019)	(.114)	(.342)	(.251)
Black Success	1.484	.124	– 1.062	– .150[a]
	(1.316)	(.110)	(.581)	(.082)
Percent Black	.541	.108	.137	.026
	(.857)	(.171)	(1.275)	(.242)
Population	– .000	– .203[b]	– .000	– .029
	(.000)	(.076)	(.000)	(.150)
White Illiteracy Rate	.814	.037	– 1.602	– .100
	(1.452)	(.066)	(1.137)	(.071)
Percent Urban	– .003	– .029	.000	.002
	(.008)	(.079)	(.010)	(.102)
Constant	.001		1.496	
R^2	.174		.030	

[a] $p < .05$
[b] $p < .001$
*Standard errors are in parentheses.

Other findings for the Cotton South replicate those for all southern counties. Population size has a negative impact on the lynching rate, but the coefficients for Percent Urban and White Illiteracy Rate are nonsignificant. Because there were few large towns in the Cotton Belt during the early twentieth century, it is not surprising that the urban measure is unrelated to the lynching rate.

The results for the analysis of the Non-Cotton South are somewhat puzzling. Only the effect of Black Success is significant, but it is not in the expected direction. Accepted at face value, the presence of larger numbers of successful black farmers decreased lynchings in those counties outside the region where cotton was king. This interpretation is plausible if blacks in these areas were able to translate economic resources into political power, but this result should be interpreted with caution, given the geographical dispersion and social heterogeneity of southern counties outside the cotton-growing region. Overall, the subregional analyses support the idea that lynching was put to different uses by the whites of the Deep and Border Souths. Racial violence linked to economic competition between working-class whites and blacks was apparently limited to the cotton-growing counties.

Discussion and Implications

The present research tests the ability of split labor market theory to explain variation in the lynching rate of blacks across southern counties during the postbellum era. Results are supportive in that the ratio of black to white tenants, a measure of the threat to high-priced (white) labor posed by cheap (black) labor, is the most powerful predictor of lynchings in a regression model including several other variables selected on the basis of past research. The threat of cheap labor, however, increases lynchings only in the Deep South where cotton agriculture and the plantation system were concentrated; in the border states, the racial composition of the tenant class does not affect the county lynching rate. Subregional differences within the South have been reported by other investigators (Wasserman and Segal 1973; Corzine et al. 1983), and researchers should not assume that the region is homogeneous.

Although split labor market theory is supported in the Cotton South, the model is not very successful in explaining variation in the lynching rate for these counties ($R^2 = .17$). Undoubtedly, there are structural characteristics excluded from the model which affected the white propensity to lynch black southerners. A second shortcoming is the measurement of lynching rates. Cantril (1941) distinguishes two types of lynching, the "Bourbon" and the "proletariat," which were organized and carried out by upper-class and lower-class whites respectively. Logically, racial antagonism associated with a split labor market would primarily influence the level of proletariat lynchings,

but available data do not allow the systematic classification of lynching incidents by type.

Past empirical support for split labor market theory has been moderate to strong, but its successful application to the explanation of lynching in this investigation suggests two avenues for further development. First, this inquiry demonstrates the potential for refining split labor market theory by testing derived propositions with quantitative data. Second, past investigations have focused on the origin of exclusionary movements and economic caste systems, but the tenancy system of the postbellum South presents a case in which high-priced labor failed to counter the threat from cheap labor, with intergroup conflicts apparently extending beyond the economic sphere. This situation is in contrast to *interclass* conflicts in American urban areas, where Katznelson (1981, p. 6) has argued that people have largely separated "the politics of work from the politics of community." Although more studies of split labor markets are needed, this paper suggests that contestants in *intraclass* conflicts are less likely than those studied by Katznelson to leave their hostility at the plant gate or the edge of the field when the work day is over.

Split labor market theory may also prove useful in explaining other forms of collective violence between ethnic or racial groups. An example which provides interesting parallels with lynching is the wave of race riots in northern cities during the early 1900s (Boskin 1976). In the North, urban whites were much more likely to face economic competition from blacks than their rural counterparts. While racial disturbances in urban areas of the North began in the 1800s, they increased in volume and intensity following the major influx of blacks from the South during and after World War I. Whites were typically the aggressors in both race riots and lynchings, and the similarities between these two types of collective violence suggest that the relationship between economic competition and racial conflict was the same on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line.

Finally, the results of this study have important implications for the field of intergroup relations, particularly for Blalock's (1967) theory of discrimination. Our findings support Blalock's underlying assumption that the actual struggle for economic or political resources accounts for the higher level of discrimination suffered by minorities who are proportionately more numerous in a population. Further attempts to specify the processes which mediate this association between minority percentage and patterns of discrimination should receive high priority.

ENDNOTES

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[1]Increased racial competition was not limited to the agricultural sector but, in fact, extended throughout most areas of the southern economy. Urban white workers in the South engaged in several types of collective action, including some fifty strikes between 1882 and 1900, to protect their wage levels from threats posed by the hiring of cheaper black labor (Woodward 1951). Their most potent weapon, however, proved to be their vote, which was instrumental in enacting Jim Crow laws excluding blacks from many trades and skilled industrial jobs (Wilson 1978). The ability of white tenants to adopt these measures as a class was limited because, as stated by Higgs (1977, p. 132), "in agriculture an employer dealt with individual white workers without organization and often constituting a minority element in the labor market."

[2]N.A.A.C.P. records are the standard data source on lynching used by researchers, but concerns about their quality have been expressed for almost fifty years (Johnson 1941). The compilers of these records purposefully erred on the conservative side by omitting reported lynchings which could not be confirmed through newspapers or first-hand accounts (N.A.A.C.P. 1919), so the listings of lynching victims are undoubtedly incomplete. It is likely that a greater proportion of lynchings occurring in remote rural areas are missing from the records, but the magnitude of this bias is unknown.

[3]Difficulties in calculating a lynching rate have been recognized for over a half century (Raper 1933), and other researchers have adopted alternate measures (e.g., Inverarity 1976). The relevant issues and rationale for Reed's formula are presented in Reed (1972) and further elaborated in Corzine et al. (1983).

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