

6 2018 95.03  
JV  
7220  
.E54  
0010

# UNDERWORLD: THE IMMIGRANT CRIME LINK IN CANADIAN SOCIETY

by

Adam Ellis, BA, York University, 2009

A Major Research Paper  
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in the Program of  
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2010

© Adam Ellis 2010

PROPERTY OF  
RYERSON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Author's Declaration

---

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this major research paper.

I authorize Ryerson University to lend this paper to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

\_\_\_\_\_

---

I further authorize Ryerson University to reproduce this paper by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

\_\_\_\_\_

---

# UNDERWORLD: THE IMMIGRANT CRIME LINK IN CANADIAN SOCIETY

Adam Ellis  
Master of Arts 2010  
Immigration and Settlement Studies  
Ryerson University

## ABSTRACT

Using a first person narrative and drawing on existing materials, my MRP seeks to extend the literature on the immigrant crime link in Canadian society. I argue that over time a growing immigrant population has threatened the homogeneity of dominant society and their monopolization of economic and political power. As a result, those with power have used the processes of racialization and criminalization to restrict, control and socially exclude immigrants from integrating into Canadian society. My MRP suggests that this social exclusion has led some immigrants to find socio-political and economic autonomy in the informal markets of the sex and drug trades. Using a case study approach I explore the Junction community over time and space to reveal the root cause of immigrant crime. My findings reveal that immigrant crime is not isolated to consensus ideologies of social disorganization, rather my research illustrates that macro-systemic barriers impede immigrants from successful integration into Canadian society. This, I argue, pushes some immigrants to participate in the precarious employment of the underground economy where they continue to face victimization, abuse and increased risk of contact with the criminal justice system.

**Key Words:** immigrants, crime, underground criminal economies, urban areas.

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction	1
Stand Point Theory: An Inside Look at the Immigrant Crime Link in Canadian Society	3
Economic and Racial Conflict: Contemporary Approaches to Crime	6
The Immigrant Crime Link in Canada	13
Globalization, Immigration and Crime	19
From the Global Village to the Urban Enclave: Exploring the Junction A Criminal Place?	23
Confronting Social Disorganization Theory: Informal versus Formal Controls	35
Space, Place, and Immigrant Based Crime	40
Looking Forward: The Legacy of the Junction and its Underground Economy	49
Conclusion	52

## **Introduction**

---

The following MRP project seeks to examine the immigrant-crime link in Canadian society. Specifically, this analysis is interested in the relationship between globalization, immigration, labour market opportunities, and criminality. First, this MRP will argue that globalization has created larger-macroeconomic issues which have increased the migration of marginalized populations from developing countries to developed western nations such as Canada. Second, my project suggests that upon arrival in Canada barriers such as access to employment and educational accreditation force many immigrants (e.g. legal and illegal) into unemployment and low level job sectors, which contribute to financial and social marginalization. This in turn, may 'push' some immigrants to find employment in precarious criminal economies such as the sex and drug trades where they may gain some financial sustainability. Using a first person narrative correlated with a case study approach, this project will investigate the immigrant-crime phenomenon through the lens of the Junction community in Toronto, Canada.

The Junction, a community surrounded by railway tracks and derelict buildings, has been viewed over time and space as a 'problem area' where immigrants and working class populations reside. For years, admitting that you lived in the Junction would elicit a cringe bearing the weight of the rundown Toronto area's reputation as a wasteland (Smith, 2004). Images of dilapidated buildings, prostitution and a burgeoning drug trade kept those who lived outside the area from ever getting close. Since its inception, the Junction has faced socio-economic hardship which raised concerns among dominant groups regarding the community's safety and the control over its residents. For example, in 1904 the community and its inhabitants faced the long arm of the law where interest groups such as the Women Christian Temperance Union rallied for the

prohibition of alcohol (Francher, 2004). This began a century long process of racialization and criminalization which forever linked the contexts of race, class, and gender with crime. My choice of the Junction as a case study has two important elements. First, the Junction has had a long history as a destination point for new immigrants. I suggest that the Junction's rich history will help illustrate the area's economic booms and busts and its transition into a 'problem space'. In short, the Junction's historical background will allow me to examine how the community and its residents became linked to ideas of crime and how underground criminal economies emerged out of the processes of racialization and criminalization. Second, as a resident and participant in the underground economies of the Junction I will be able to use my personal experiences to access knowledge in regards to how race, class, gender and crime intersect one another. My MRP will argue that over time, the media, moral entrepreneurs, the state and police have developed their own views of why crime occurs in immigrant spaces such as the Junction. My paper will utilize my experiences in the underground markets of the Junction to challenge consensus ideologies that link immigrant crime with contexts such as racial/ethnic heterogeneity, weak social controls and neighbourhood disrepair. Thus, my MRP seeks to construct a new narrative which highlights the root cause of immigrant crime and how immigrants navigate through the cultural, political and economic barriers that exist in Canada.

## **Standpoint Theory: An Inside Look at the Immigrant Crime Link in Canadian Society**

My MRP will use Standpoint Theory (Harding, 1991 and Smith, 1987) to challenge contemporary notions of knowledge/truth which have been created and articulated over time and space by those in power. According to Canadian theorist Dorothy Smith (1987), Standpoint Theory allows the examination of power relations linked to institutions and organizations by exploring the first-hand perspectives of those who have been negatively affected by these oppressive and subordinating power structures. Using Standpoint Theory I suggest that knowledge which has been created regarding immigrant crime should not only be presented by those who have power in society (i.e. academics, state agents, police). Rather, the experiences and voices of those who have been economically, politically and culturally marginalized should also be viewed as a viable form of information and data. Based on this reasoning I have chosen to use a first person narrative derived from my personal experiences in the underground criminal economy of the Junction to develop a discussion which draws attention to the real issues which plague immigrants and marginalized populations in urban centres such as Toronto. As a resident of the Junction for many years I have witnessed the racialization and criminalization of immigrants and other marginalized groups in the area. I will argue that immigrant crime has been constructed over time by the dominant class (i.e. British/French Canadian) who seek to maintain economic and political advantage while subordinating those who are 'different' and whose norms and values conflict with those associated with a white Anglo Canadian identity. In the dominant view, immigrants and their communities throughout Canada are blamed for the growing crime problem in society. I will discuss how the state and other interest groups continue to fear the growth of a non-white immigrant population who seek to acquire political, economic and cultural power. Through a conflict perspective my MRP will suggest that those with power

have used the processes of racialization and criminalization to restrict, control and exclude immigrants from attaining a power position in Canadian society. According to Miles (1989) “races have been created through social and historical processes of racialization. Through these processes, certain characteristics (whether real or imagined) were imbued with specific meanings of superiority and inferiority” (p. 76). Miles description of racialization reveals how immigrants and other visible minorities have been socially constructed as the ‘other’, inferior, problematic population by dominant society. As discussed earlier in this section, I will argue that immigrants over time and space have been socially constructed as inferior and problematic by the dominant class in order to protect their racial homogeneity and political, cultural and economic advantage in society. I will also suggest that these social constructions of race have opened pathways to the development of laws and policies (e.g. immigration policy) which enabled the dominant class to restrict, control and exclude a growing immigrant threat whose norms and values conflicted with those found in the framework of a white Canadian identity. I contend that contexts such as race, class and crime were interconnected by those in power, thus creating a racialized discourse which presented immigrants and their communities as criminal/problematic and in need of formal controls such as the state to intervene and fix ‘the problem’. To explain this process McLaughlin and Muncie (2006) contend that “criminalization represents the technical process through which acts are defined as crimes, legislated against, regulated...it is a political, economic, and ideological process through which individuals and groups are selectively policed and disciplined” (p. 95). This working definition of criminalization is helpful to my paper because it illuminates the way groups and individuals are marked as ‘criminal’, thus leading to their marginalization, stratification, regulation and punishment within society.



My MRP will illustrate that immigrant based crime is not caused by such contexts as neighbourhood decay, racial/ethnic heterogeneity and high transiency, factors which loom large in consensus based approaches such as social disorganization theory (discussed in detail below). I will use my experiences living in the Junction correlated with theoretical knowledge to illustrate that the root cause of immigrant crime goes beyond the community. Contexts such as racism, discrimination, criminalization and social inequality must be brought to the forefront and the voices of those who are marginalized must be heard so that consensus ideologies imbued in racialized discourses can be challenged. Standpoint Theory will allow me to confront oppressive power structures which have impeded the economic, political and cultural integration of immigrants in Canada. I will suggest that it is these macro-contexts correlated with the existence of multiple systems of domination which have pushed some immigrants to participate in the informal underground criminal economy in Canada.

## **Economic and Racial Conflict: Contemporary Approaches to Crime**

Before exploring the immigrant-crime link in Canada, my paper will contextualize a working definition of 'crime'. This is important for this analysis because it will illustrate how 'crime' has been defined through a lens of inequality and power relations. Using a conflict approach, I will argue that in Canada the dominant class has utilized, over time, the processes of racialization and criminalization to restrict, control and exclude those who threaten their cultural, political and economic interests. Specifically, I will draw attention to how immigrants have been and continue to be subjected to the criminalization process. For instance, as a result of the racialization and criminalization processes many immigrants and other marginalized populations face economic, cultural and political isolation where they are unable to effectively integrate into Canadian society. I will suggest that informal criminal economies may have developed as a form of resistance to the subordination, stratification and social exclusion which the dominant class has perpetuated and that these secondary markets enabled those with less power to acquire financial resources and political/cultural autonomy.

Although the concept of crime has been a highly contested issue among criminologists and leading academics in society, this MRP will engage in a conflict approach to crime in order to illustrate how power relations, racialization, and criminalization are contexts which have contributed to the subordination and criminal labelling of marginalized populations in Canadian society over time and space. Specifically, the conflict perspective raises important questions regarding who gets labelled as criminal and what gets labelled as crime. This MRP is interested in the way that dominant groups have used the processes of racialization and criminalization to control, restrict and exclude those who are seen as a threat to the Canadian social order. In essence, my project seeks to challenge consensus theorists who believe that "society is held

together by a common acceptance of such basic values as right and wrong. Because of this common agreement social order is largely harmonious and predictable (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2006, p. 64). In contrast, conflict theory suggests that there is little agreement regarding basic values, and it is the competing interests of many groups which cause conflict in society. Thus, conflict, rather than stability, is the underlying context which produces social order in society. Conflict theorists such as Blalock (1967), Quinney (1974, 1977) and Hawkins (1987) believe that power and authority are correlated with the socio-political and economic marginalization of those with less power and the law is used by dominant groups to enforce their own interests.

In regards to criminality, consensus theorists believe that there is a broad agreement regarding many laws, such as those that deal with street crime (i.e. robbery and murder). On the other hand, conflict theorists such as Quinney (1970) and Chambliss (1975) state that some crimes such as prostitution and drugs – so called ‘conflict crimes’ -- have been subject to little consensus or agreement in respect to whether these acts are morally wrong and should be criminalized and policed in society. This MRP will draw attention to how the dominant groups have been able to monopolize social, political and economic power, thus giving the ruling class the ability to enact and enforce laws upon those with less power. For example, this MRP will suggest that punitive policy measures (e.g. Immigration Act) have been and continue to be enacted by the dominant class who seek to exclude those who are perceived to be ‘different’ and unable to integrate into the homogeneity of a White Anglo-Canadian identity. This in turn may push many immigrants onto the fringes of Canadian society where they face social, political and economic marginalization. My paper will argue that immigrants in Canadian society continue to face systemic and cultural barriers which have contributed to their subordination and stratification in the formal economy. I will posit that the inability of immigrants to access the

formal economy may push some individuals to find employment in the precarious underground markets of the sex and drug trades. Conflict theory will provide a perspective which highlights how the criminalization of conflict crimes has proliferated the development of these underground markets in Canadian society. The rise of underground criminal markets has also opened pathways to increased victimization and contact with the Criminal Justice System for many immigrants and visible minority populations. The following will suggest that conflict crimes such as prostitution and drugs have been and continue to garner little consensus regarding whether these acts are morally wrong and should be subject to legal penalties. My project will demonstrate that although there is no consensus or agreement that these crimes pose any serious harm to society, the dominant class has used acts such as gambling, alcohol/drug use, and prostitution to demonize and criminalize marginalized populations (e.g. immigrants) in Canada. Thus, my MRP will illustrate that the processes of racialization and criminalization have been and continue to be used to restrict immigrants from integrating into Canadian society and subsequently blocking this population from formulating a new Canadian identity which challenges the white Anglo population's cultural, political and economic dominance.

For the purpose of this MRP I will specifically engage with economic and racial conflict theory as this will allow me to analyse crime along class and race lines. First, drawing on traditional Marxism, economic conflict theorists argue that an underlying social conflict exists between those who own the means of production and those who do not. Messner and Liska (1999) contend that "those who control economic relationships constitute a ruling class that also controls the social relationships in other institutions" (p. 183). Richard Quinney (1974, 1977) defined the ruling class as those who own the means of production (the capitalists). He argued that laws in America and the Western world reflect the ruling class' interests and that their

interests determine when and to whom laws are applied. McLaughlin and Muncie (2006) note that, “the defining quality of crime lies not in criminal behaviour but in the power to criminalize. The greater the social conflict, the more likely that the powerful will criminalize the behaviour of those who challenge their interests” (p. 64). Messner and Liska (1999) further this idea by stating that “laws are selectively enforced against those people who threaten their interests; but when members of the ruling class themselves violate laws; those laws are not rigorously enforced” (p. 183). Thus, laws which are enacted to police the working class such as those which target street level crimes (i.e. prostitution and drugs) are enforced through an aggressive crime control model. While crimes of the ruling class (i.e. white collar and corporate crime) are made invisible through lax policing efforts and a passive court system which only at times chooses to bring the dominant class to justice. My paper will explore the criminalization of conflict crimes in order to illuminate how a growing immigrant population in Canada, correlated with a burgeoning underground economy, continues to threaten the ability of the dominant class to retain political power and economic control. I will argue that behaviours which threaten the interests of the ruling class are stringently subject to the criminalization process. Thus, today the criminalization of the sex and drug trades illustrates how these informal economies threaten capitalist interests by their disenfranchisement from the controls of the formal markets.

In his early work, Richard Quinney (1970) highlights that the “social reality of crime is constructed by the formulation and application of criminal definitions by ‘certain social segments’, their diffusion within the rest of society...the defining quality of crime lies not in the criminal behaviour but in the power to criminalize” (cited in McLaughlin and Muncie, 2006, p. 64). Thus, for Quinney the greater the social conflict, the more likely that the powerful will criminalize those who challenge their interests. Furthermore, Quinney (1974, 1977) also

contends that mainstream institutions such as education, religion, and the mass media support the interests of the ruling class who seek to maintain a status quo of dominance. Quinney's economic-conflict approach helps illustrate how the mass media has disseminated capitalist definitions of crime. I argue that the mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, movies, television and internet) focuses on street level crimes (gangs, drugs, prostitution, and guns), while crimes of the ruling class are rarely reported, thus creating a fallacious discourse which draws attention to marginalized populations and their 'socially disorganized' communities as centers of criminal activity. Building on Quinney's research, I suggest that racialized discourses disseminated through the media helped link the underclass (e.g. immigrant) to criminal behaviour. This subsequently led to moral panics among the ruling class who saw marginalized populations as a social threat to dominant society. This in turn opened pathways to the criminalization of the poor and their social exclusion from the macro-social community.

The work of economic-conflict theorists provides a perspective which illustrates how law enactment and enforcement serve the interests of the dominant class (the capitalists), and when, "problematic populations are not controlled by informal institutions, like the family, they are criminalized and controlled by the state" (cited in Messner and Liska, 1999, p. 186). This information is important to my MRP because it highlights the political nature of crime. Instead of focusing on the individual/crime relationship, a conflict approach to crime allows a deeper analysis which illuminates how power relations, and the legal order are used to criminalize, subordinate, and socially exclude the less powerful in society.

Although the economic-conflict approach to crime helps us identify how crime is defined by those who hold economic and political power, the approach itself is limited as it ignores the underlying context of 'race'. Researchers such as Blalock (1967) were one of the first to explore

the majority-minority relations in society. Blalock examined the social processes underlining discrimination, which functions as a “major social mechanism by which majorities control minorities. Minority discrimination is hypothesized to result from economic and political threat to majorities, which in turn is related to minority size (proportion of population); resources (money, property, prestige, authority, education, voting rights) and mobilization (organization of resources)” (p. 186). Blalock argues that as minority population’s increase in size, resources, and mobilization the majority dominant class begins to feel politically and economically threatened. This in turn creates conflict where the powerful majority seeks to maintain power, homogeneity and economic advantage in society. As a result, the majority use various forms of “discrimination-by restricting economic and educational opportunities and restricting political rights, which in turn reduce minority resources, and by geographical segregation, which reduces the power associated with minority size” (Blalock, p. 186). Twenty years later, Hawkins (1987) applied Blalock’s conflict approach to law enactment and law enforcement. His research questioned whether the poor of all ethnic groups were equally discriminated against. Using a historical analysis Hawkins found that Italians and Irish were more likely to experience legal discrimination than other ethnic groups. His analysis identified three factors: size, insularity, and isolation:

(1) Compared to other ethnic groups the Irish and Italian immigrations were very large, and large minorities are more threatening than small ones who can easily be ignored. (2) Some minorities are able to insulate themselves from the majority, either by specializing in a few occupations or by residing in urban enclaves (Asians) or rural areas (German and Scandinavian). These minorities can easily be ignored by authorities, whereas immigrant groups (Italians and Irish) who settle in urban areas and compete over a range of occupations cannot be ignored. (3) Minorities who are culturally or physically different from the majority are likely to be perceived as threatening. All of these factors together may explain why some ethnics in earlier periods were perceived as more threatening than others and why non-whites today are experienced as more threatening than white ethnics (Hawkins 1987, cited in Messner and Liska, 1999, p. 187).

Hawkins' research is important to this MRP because it illustrates how the dominant class views immigrants and immigration as problematic. Specifically, racial conflict theory posits that competition for resources among the native born and immigrants, and the growth of a non-white population threatens the economic and political power of the ruling class. For example, economic and racial conflict approaches demonstrate how social control is a response by the dominant class to perceived social threats by those with minimal power in society who may be amassing their size, power, organization, and mobilization. According to Messner and Liska (1999), conflict theorists "attempt to specify the conditions (e.g. group size) under which some groups are perceived as threatening by the powerful (e.g. upper class, whites, or males) and the conditions under which the powerful respond by various forms of discrimination, including the enactment and enforcement of laws that protect their interests" (p. 190). My MRP suggests that in Canada, over time, immigrants and other visible minority groups have been marginalized and demonized through the processes of racialization and criminalization. This has allowed the dominant class to maintain their privileged power position, thus excluding and subordinating the 'other' undesirable from society. Today, 'crime' continues to be a tool of the dominant class which seeks to control and restrict the underclass. For instance, law enforcement officials and politicians continue to focus on street level crime (e.g. sex and drug trade), while crimes of the upper class (e.g. white collar crime) are made invisible. This is helpful to this project because it highlights how the dominant class is able to utilize its power to define and legislate what a 'crime' is, thus linking criminal behaviour to marginalized populations such as immigrants, and visible minorities in Canadian society.



## **The Immigrant-Crime Link in Canada**

---

Currently, there is growing interest among law enforcement agencies and state officials regarding the immigrant-crime link in Canadian society. Although multiple barriers (e.g. lack of empirical research, limited police/correctional data, and underreporting) exist in the acquisition of data on race/ethnicity and crime in Canada, the available information highlights some common themes. Leading researchers such as Scot Wortley (2009), Matthew Yeager (1996) Ramiro Martinez and Matthew Lee (2000), have produced preliminary data suggesting that immigration has a negative effect on crime. This challenges current political and public perceptions which have connected high immigration density in Canada's urban centres with increased criminality. As Yeager (1996) argues, racialized discourses disseminated through the media have blamed "immigrants not only for crime, especially violent crime, but for the murdering of children, the decline of educational standards, and the problems of inner cities" (p. 1). Henry and Tator's (1997) research confirms this by illustrating the media's racialized representation of immigrants/visible minorities in Canadian society. The authors found that the media stringently linked immigration with contexts such as "crime (in particular racialized crimes such as rioting, drug busts, and violence-related offences); cultural differences as a function of 'inner-city decline', unemployment and poverty, and ethnic relations" (p. 39). This racialized discourse of an immigrant-crime link in Canadian society is, of course, not a new phenomenon. Indeed, fallacious media representation and public and political rhetoric have contributed to the construction of an immigrant-crime connection over time and space. For example, fears over Chinese integration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century spurred the criminalization of opium, thus marking the Asian 'race' and their communities as 'problematic' and a threat to the Canadian social order (Reinarman and Levine, 1989) . More recently, post 9-11 discourses have

created the “enemy from within” or a neo-Muslim terrorist identity where race and religion have become markers of criminality. Wortley (2009) confirms the racialization and criminalization of immigrants in Canadian society and articulates the impact on the public by highlighting that “sensationalistic media coverage of crimes committed by immigrants and racial minorities appears to have had a strong impact on public opinion....a high proportion of the general public believes that immigrants commit more crime than the native born” (p. 1). This fallacious rhetoric continues to drive public and political opinion which holds immigrants responsible for the crime problem in Canadian society.

As discussed in the outset of this section, recent research challenges these fallacious racialized discourses by revealing that high immigration to urban centres, such as Toronto, actually has an inverse effect on crime. Charron (2009) suggests that, “most empirical research shows that if there is a relationship between immigration and crime, it is an inverse one, that is, increased immigration equates to less crime” (p. 19). Further, Martinez and Lee (2000) note that in the small number of studies providing empirical evidence “immigrants are generally less involved in crime than similarly situated groups, despite the wealth of prominent criminological theories that provide good reasons why this should not be the case (e.g. residence in disorganized areas, acculturation difficulties, conflicts between cultural codes)” (p. 17).

While at a general level immigration may have a negative effect on crime, researchers such as Wortley (2009) point out that at certain times and places, specific immigrant groups may engage in high levels of criminal behaviour. Specifically, the link between gangs, organized crime and immigration needs to be evaluated more closely. Yeager (1996) argues that, “in the field of organized criminal activity, there is clear evidence of immigrant participation, if not domination of specific markets” (p. 1). For example, over time ethno-racial groups such as the

Italians, Irish, Jews, Puerto Ricans, Russians, Albanians, and Chinese have been connected to criminal markets in Canadian society. More recently, other immigrant criminal organizations have emerged within Toronto's social fabric, including the Jamaican Shower Posse, Asian Tongs, and the Columbian drug cartels. Although the above description alludes to a link between immigration, race and crime, it is important at this juncture to recognize that it is not the intention of this project to criminalize race. Instead, this project seeks to understand why some immigrants may engage in specific forms of criminal behaviour over time and space. Specifically, this project is interested in the socio-economic forces which may push some immigrants to participate in the burgeoning underground criminal markets of Canadian inner cities.

Although preliminary research by Yeager (1996), Wortley (2009), Martinez and Lee (2000) reflects a negative relationship between immigration and crime, this data insufficiently takes into account variables such as socio-economic marginalization/inequality and specifically, the development of informal underground economies in large urban centres such as Toronto. Current research suggests that the reason for the negative relationship between immigration and crime is because of the high human capital (i.e. education, employment skills) immigrants bring with them during their migration to Canada. Charron (2009) engages this phenomenon by illuminating how the level of education of new immigrants can have a negative effect on community crime rates. For instance, he posits that despite their lower incomes, 56% of recent immigrants in the city of Toronto hold a university degree. This high level of education contrasts that of many other residents (e.g. native born) living in similar marginalized areas. According to Charron (2009), "the level of education of recent immigrants seems to have a protective effect on crime in neighbourhoods that are disadvantaged from a socio-economic point of view" (p. 29).

Moreover, the author contends that the migration of new immigrants to certain marginalized areas may in fact encourage the development of new forms of social organization and community revitalization. Martinez and Lee (2000) support these findings by illustrating that “contemporary immigration might not create disorganized communities but instead stabilize neighbourhoods through the creation of new social and economic institutions”. (p. 31). (See p. 16 for a more complete discussion regarding social disorganization and its relationship to crime).

However, what researchers have not focused on enough in their analysis of immigration and crime are the barriers (e.g. cultural, economic, and educational) which immigrants continually face when trying to integrate into Canadian society. I argue that both skilled workers with high human capital as well as those who enter Canada through precarious streams of migration may face economic, political and cultural barriers which negate their access to education and employment. For instance, recent data collected by Statistics Canada (2003), reveals that “immigrants are continuing to find barriers to employment especially among professional and managerially trained immigrants. Six out of ten immigrants have to change their fields of specialization in order to find work in Canada” (cited in Henry and Tator, 2006, p. 86). According to Henry and Tator (2006), barriers such as non-recognition of foreign credentials, lack of contacts and language problems impacted the ability of immigrants to integrate into the Canadian labour market. Further, when discussing the plight of non-skilled immigrants and specifically those with a precarious immigration status, it can be argued that their integration into the labour market becomes more complex and difficult. With a Canadian immigration policy which focuses on labour market sustainability and a government which seeks to attract the best and the brightest, what happens when legal and illegal immigrants are unable to integrate into the labour market? Could this not ‘push’ some new immigrants into an underground economy where

they may alleviate economic hardship, income disparity and inequality? This paper will investigate the multiple intersecting problems immigrants face and illuminate how these impact their participation in certain forms of criminal behaviour. For example, this project will examine the underground economies of the drug and sex trade to understand how multiple contexts such as immigration status, financial hardship, language and cultural barriers, education, isolation/social exclusion, lack of social capital, and criminalization may lead some immigrants to participate in specific forms of criminal behaviour.

This MRP argues that the larger macro-contexts such as racism and discrimination are not accounted for in the current immigrant-crime research. Furthermore, the theorized negative relationship between immigration and crime has only located the impact ‘skilled’ immigrants have on criminality. What has been under-researched and underrepresented in current studies is the relationship between undocumented, unskilled migration and the effect this has on crime. To understand this further, this project seeks to explore the relationship between race, immigration, employment, and crime.

This project contends that some immigrants who face economic barriers may engage in an alternative criminal marketplace in order to achieve economic parity with native born Canadians. Critical race theorists such as Teelucksingh and Galabuzi (2005) highlight the impact of race and immigrant status on employment opportunities and outcomes in Canada. Their work is important to my analysis because it reflects the economic barriers immigrants may face, while creating a broader discussion which challenges Wortley (2009) and Yeagers (1996) notion that high human capital may in fact decrease criminal behaviour. What is of key interest to the current project is the assumption that all ‘skilled’, or ‘desirable’ immigrants, because of their high levels of education, are less likely to participate in criminal activity. What my MRP seeks to

illuminate is that immigrants who enter Canada through legal or illegal streams may eventually face economic marginalization and racial discrimination in the Canadian labour market. Further, the underlying contexts of power inequality and racism may ‘push’ some immigrants to engage in criminal activities where they are able to create economic sustainability within the Canadian neo-liberal framework. For instance, Teelucksingh and Galabuzi (2005) highlight that recent immigrants during the 1996-2001 census period faced a “double digit income gap between racialized and non-racialized populations in the Canadian labour market, high unemployment, and lower participation rates, and occupational concentrations in the low-income occupations” (p. 206). The above mentioned data reflects the devaluing of foreign credentials and the economic barriers immigrants face when they attempt to break into the Canadian labour market. With this knowledge of a growing immigrant population who may find it more difficult to integrate into Canadian society, one must question how labour market barriers would impact the immigration-crime relationship?

Specifically, the research by Wortley (2009), Yeager (1996), Martinez and Lee (2000), has alluded to a large immigrant population in Canada which has a negative effect on crime. What interests this paper is not to challenge the data which reveals this inverse affect on criminality. Instead, this project seeks to understand how globalization and economic barriers have contributed to the development of informal criminal economies where some immigrants may participate to alleviate financial difficulties and inequality within the macro-globalized economic framework.

## **Globalization, Immigration, and Crime**

---

In regards to the immigrant-crime link in Canada, my MRP will first seek to understand the larger macro-global contexts which are re-shaping the way people and goods move across geographic spaces through transnational market-driven networks. In essence, what is the impact of globalization on crime? How has globalization created an environment for criminality? What are the underlying contexts which push some immigrants to engage in criminal behaviour?

First, Tepperman and Curtis (2009) characterize globalization as the “flow of goods, services, media, information and labour between countries around the world” (p. 432). Chatterjee (2005) supports this definition and links it to criminal markets by arguing that significant improvements in modes of transport, technology and communication have allowed international criminal organizations the ability to operate within the global market. He suggests that globalization has contributed to the development of complex, market-driven transnational networks which have the ability to move people and goods through an alternative secondary stream that is undetectable by law enforcement officials. For example, the US Government Working Group on International Crime Threat Assessment (2002) indicates:

The dynamics of globalization, however, particularly the reduction of barriers to movement of people, goods, and financial transactions across borders, have enabled international organized crime groups to expand both their global reach and criminal business interests....Much more than in the past, criminal organizations are networking and cooperating with one another, enabling them to merge expertise and to broaden the scope of their activities (p. 4).

However, globalization has not only contributed to the reorganization of criminal networks, it has also helped reconstruct the economic framework and labour markets around the world. For example, in their discussion of the international sex trade Suthibhasilp, Petroff and Nipp (2000) argue that the global restructuring of the economy and labour market has forced

many poor rural people to migrate to big cities or overseas to look for employment opportunities. Suthibhasilp, Petroff and Nipp contend that globalization “fosters the emergence of a work structure in which women find themselves occupying the low-status and low-paying jobs and hardly surviving. It is anticipated that the growing income disparity between people in the North and the South will continue to push women to migrate” (p. 7). Further, the authors posit that economic recession will increase the outward flow of migrant women to wealthier countries such as Canada where they go to sell their labour in informal secondary markets such as the sex trade. Thus, it is argued that the sex trade absorbs many low waged and/or unemployed women creating a form of economic sustainability. Economic issues regarding Third World economies in the context of the globalization of economics has produced a distinct gendered labour market in which the international migration of trafficked women has become an integral component. For example, Suthibhasilp, Petroff and Nipp (2000) suggest that the sex industry, which is insulated from economic recession and inflation, continues to add millions of dollars to the developing world economies. The proliferation of an internal sex market (i.e. sex tourism) and a burgeoning international sex trade (i.e. remittances) helps maintain these fragile marginalized economies. As a result, many women who face economic hardship and inequality in their country of origin are being pressured into a shifting globalized sex market where they are able to acquire some economic relief within the informal economy. Thus, nations such as Canada are becoming places of destination for transnational criminal organizations who seek to profit from immigration and the development of informal underground economies which stretch across the globalized village.

However, the migrant sex trade is not the only market which has emerged out of globalization. Stamler’s (2009) research reveals the impact of globalization on the development of criminal organizations in Canada. The author argues that Canada, a multicultural society



which extends ethnic ties to all regions of the world, has become a place of destination for transnational criminal organizations. According to the author “crime groups that originated in Canada have grown and established ties with related groups in other parts of the world” (cited in Linden, 2009, p. 473). For example, Linden (2009) highlights that criminal organizations such as the Italian Mafia, Triads and other Asian crime groups, the South American, Colombian, and Mexican cartels; outlaw motorcycle gangs; and the Russian Mafia and other eastern European crime groups have developed transnational market driven networks with base operations established in Canada. For instance, Stamler’s (2009) exploration of the international drug trade illuminates how globalization has contributed to the development of a transnational criminal framework which is able to move goods and services around the world. According to the author “illicit drugs are supplied to Canadian based-groups, which then sell the illicit product to any other organized crime groups, which in turn distribute the drugs in their own established territories” (Stamler 2009, cited in Linden, 2009, p. 484). Chatterjee (2005) supports these findings by offering explicit knowledge regarding the operation of Colombian drug cartels. The author posits that the structure of Colombian cartels is a good example of the complex global networks which are being created around the globe. According to Chatterjee their structure is “compartmentalized, and mimics a large, multinational corporation-with the home-based president and vice-presidents making decisions, monitoring and managing the acquisition, production, transportation, sales and finance for the ‘drug trafficking business’ , and the overseas cells handling the import, storage and delivery of product, as well as money laundering” (p. 3). This investigation of international drug markets suggests that today, criminal organizations are choosing to break the homogeneity and isolated practices of the past and are opting to create a fluid structural organization which is able to participate and take advantage of the global

market. The above stated information helps illustrate the global reach of criminal organizations in contemporary society. Through the lens of the sex and drug trades this project will argue that some immigrants, because of economic hardship and inequality may participate in the growing informal economies of the criminal underworld. Sugiman's (2009) data helps demonstrate this by suggesting that today, informal economies are flourishing as a result of "economic hardship related to restructuring, globalization, and their effects of dislocation and forced migration....people are turning to 'hidden work' in order to survive in the midst of contracting opportunities in the formal economy" (p. 283). Although Sugiman's data refers to a multitude of informal markets ranging from cleaning homes and playing music on the street, she also alludes to the development of underground criminal markets such as gambling and drug dealing. This is helpful to this MRP because it specifically illustrates the existence and proliferation of informal criminal markets in Canadian society. But what are the impact of globalization and the development of informal criminal economies on Canadian society? Does globalization and economic instability push some immigrants to participate in precarious informal economies in Canada?

## **From the Global Village to the Urban Enclave: Exploring the Junction A Criminal Place?**

Today, the bright lights of big cities such as Toronto, Ontario, Canada have become the gateway for millions of people to achieve the 'Canadian Dream'. In the core of these large metropolitan areas an 'Oz' like world exists where excess money and celebrity lifestyles have become the social markers for one to aspire to. The 'dream' is outlined in policy and legislation (e.g. multiculturalism/equity policy) which promote democratic values and the growth of a nation through equity, equality, tolerance and diversity. To the rest of the world, urban centres such as Toronto have become beacons of hope where new immigrants can escape the torturous hands of oppressive governments while finding solace in the arms of liberty and freedom.

However, many people's journeys are not as simple as those described by politicians who promote the ease of passage and the fortunes which lie in the employment goldmines of Canadian cities. For many who find their way to the concrete jungles of Canada, the road to success and fortune is not paved with shiny golden bricks. Instead, the path to the 'Canadian Dream' is blanketed with socio-political quicksand which leaves many strong immigrants with goals and aspirations gasping for air. For some, the bright lights are not bright at all. Instead, the stars they chase flicker with doom and gloom where their dreams, hopes, and aspirations are suppressed further, pushing their minds and bodies into an isolated no man's land which marks and formulates their difference. Here, historical racialized discourses continue to separate 'us' from 'them', the 'good' docile citizen from the 'bad' uncontrollable social threat. Henry and Tator (2006) highlight that this discourse of binary polarization creates a dichotic space where the 'others' difference is constantly being measured by dominant society. Furthermore, the authors argue that "those marked as 'others' are positioned outside of the 'imagined' community of Canada and national identity of Canadians" (Henry and Tator, 2006, p. 27). Thus, decades of

socialization and racist discourse have created a blueprint in the Canadian imagination which highlights those who are citizens of the state and those who are undesirable. This in turn has pushed many new immigrants onto the margins of society where their goals of a better life are diminished by socio-political movements which seek to maintain a status quo of dominance.

I argue that hell's bell tolls not in the rich occupied sanctuaries of Forest Hill or the Bridal Path (i.e. upper-class communities in Toronto) where CCTV, private police and gated communities are utilized to keep the undesirables away from the Canadian utopian village. Rather, the symbolic language of 'Hell' (or the 'at risk' neighbourhood) has been rearticulated by the dominant class to represent the deteriorating, unsafe, crime-ridden parameters of the 'other' immigrant quarters within the urban jungle. In this respect, 'crime' has become linked with working class and immigrant spaces. This neo-racialized discourse continues to re-emerge from early historical narratives which perceived immigrants as 'different' and unable to assimilate to Canadian values and norms. This in turn proliferated moral panics regarding the "other" undesirable-immigrant which suggested that new Canadians were more likely to engage in criminal activities and that they were a threat to the Canadian social order. For instance, Kelley and Trebilcock (2000) reveal that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century "law enforcement officials registered their alarm at the growing incidence of crime, which they attributed to the rapid influx of people who did not share British customs and values" (p. 116). Immigrants such as the Irish, Chinese, and Japanese, were seen as a problem population who could not assimilate into Canadian society and who brought disease and criminality (e.g. drugs use, and prostitution) with them from their country of origin. As Plummer (2008) demonstrates, over time, the dominant class constructed Canadian immigrant communities such as the Junction, Kensington Market, and the Ward (today occupied by Toronto City Hall) as quadrants of crime, where

underground deviant economies such as bootlegging, gambling and prostitution threatened the social order of dominant society. According to Plummer (2008), neighbourhoods such as the Ward and the Junction were becoming overpopulated with an expanding immigrant population. This, correlated with deindustrialization and an unstable economy, proliferated moral panics which viewed immigrants as a threat to the Canadian social order. In response, Strange and Loo (1997) reveal that morality laws were created to police the problematic immigrant population. For instance, social purity advocates and reformists engaged in a racist discourse which directly connected alcohol and prostitution (i.e. bawdy houses/white slavery) with the working poor and an emerging immigrant population. The white-Anglo population viewed immigrants and immigrant quarters as spaces of disease (i.e. health, prostitution, poverty, and alcohol) where there was a high risk of contamination and spillage thus threatening the 'purity' of white society. For example, Plummer (2008) posits that "while the majority of the Ward's population was hard-working and undeserving of the added stigmas of vice....The neighbourhood was rife with bootlegger dive bars (in the era of the Ontario Temperance Act), gambling dens, and brothels" (p. 1). Plummer's description of the Ward provides an example of the development of a criminal secondary marketplace (i.e. bootlegging and bawdy houses) which was constructed in the face of adversity and economic inequality. Although economic depression and barriers to integration were the 'real' reasons why some immigrants had to engage in criminal behaviour, white reformists constructed a racist discourse which linked crime with immigration, placing the ills of society directly on the backs of new Canadians. This paper argues that a growing immigrant presence in Toronto neighbourhoods, correlated with deindustrialization and economic fragility created competition for employment among the white-Anglo population and new Canadians. This, in turn, created conflict between these groups resulting in the racialization and

criminalization of the 'other' undesirable-immigrant in Canadian society. Thus, 'crime' would be defined along 'race', class and gender lines where new immigrants would be marked as problematic and a threat to the Canadian way of life.

Currently, immigrant populated spaces such as the Junction have become further marginalized where the metaphor of 'disease' is hauntingly rearticulated to explain the existence of crime and vice in Canadian inner cities. Here, race, class, and crime intersect one another proliferating a socio-political 'war' on the immigrant underclass. In this war, the roots of criminal behaviour (i.e. racism, language, and employment/educational barriers) are kept invisible, while race and class are stringently linked to the reason for crime in society. For example, immigrant populated spaces such as the Junction continue to be the focus of public and political concern. In recent years, gentrification and revitalization have become initiatives by the state to weed out the problematic-criminal elements which have rooted themselves in the community (Williams, 1987). According to Walks and Maaranen (2008), gentrification is a post-war phenomenon which is associated with "declining stocks of affordable rental housing, displacement of the working class from the communities where they have traditionally lived and accessed services, the conversion of inner-city neighbourhoods from production to consumption spaces for the middle-class, and speculative real estate markets that drive up the cost of housing across the metropolitan area" (p. 1). Thus, I suggest that, middle-class gentrifiers have taken the role of urban colonizers who seek to invade and re-organize marginalized spaces in response to moral panics which continue to present the 'other' undesirable immigrant as the reason for criminal behaviour in Canadian urban communities. McLaughlin and Muncie (2006) note that a moral panic is a "disproportional and hostile social reaction to a condition, person or group defined as a threat to societal values, involving stereotypical media representations and leading

to demands for greater social control and creating a spiral reaction” (p. 251). Subsequently, these moral entrepreneurs/gentrifiers blame the demise of Canadian communities and formulation of criminal markets on the immigrant’s inability to integrate into the Canadian mosaic. I argue that this project of revitalization/gentrification, which seeks to ‘destroy and rescue’, reinforces the dominant class’ position within the socio-political hierarchy. This depicts white-Anglo society as the cure to the suffering and atavistic nature of the immigrant underclass. The ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy is re-articulated fusing the immigrants physical body and space with ideas of social disorganization and criminality.

For instance, according to Wirth (1938) and Skogan (1977) social disorganization theory proposes that “urbanization-the increasing size, density, and heterogeneity of a community-leads to a weakening of community cohesiveness and normative consensus, thereby undermining informal mechanisms of social control and increasing crime” (cited in Linden, 2009, p. 170). Further, Shaw and McKay’s (1969) study of juvenile delinquency in Chicago revealed that impoverished areas, with a highly transient population and adjoining industrial zones, had the highest crime levels. The authors argue that in areas with high population turnover, people tend to have weak attachments to community activities and institutions which normally control behaviour. More recently, Charron (2009) also noted that “urban neighbourhoods provide an environment characterized by its density and its apartment buildings, and are inhabited by renters who may not reside at the same address for an extended period. Those conditions do not favour the development of cohesive local communities able to exert social control over behaviour, particularly criminal behaviour” (p. 30). For example, Jonathan Jenkins’ (2006) article in the Toronto Sun alludes to the ‘social disorganization’ of marginalized spaces such as the Junction. In his interview with Katie Kwaczek, a long-time resident of the Junction she reveals that “drugs,

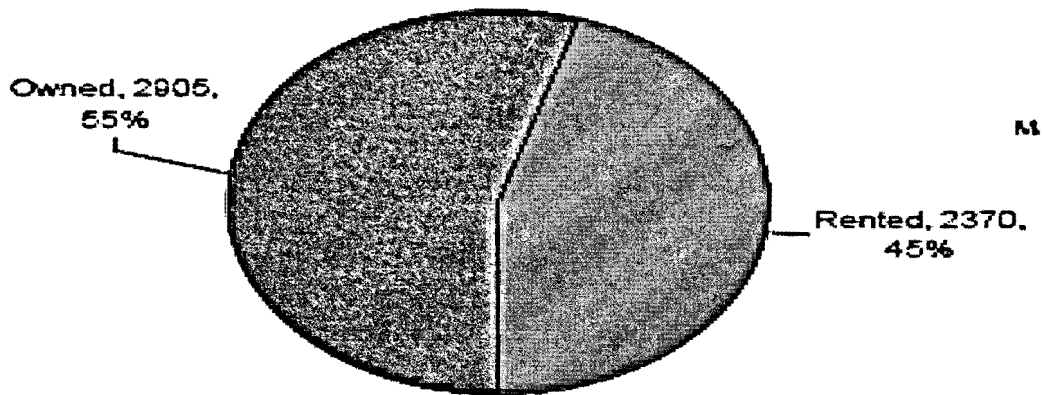
definitely drugs are the biggest problem...over her 32 years in the neighbourhood she said she's seen a long decline, with single family homes turned into rental properties for tenants with fewer roots and less commitment to the area" (p. 5). Charron (2009) suggests that the degradation of a neighbourhood's physical environment correlated with dwellings requiring major repairs can be associated with multiple typologies of crime (i.e. violent offences, mischief, motor vehicle theft, and other thefts). Moreover, the degradation of the physical environment proliferates the notion that the residents do not care about the community, thus marking the area as problematic and disorganized.

Specifically, in regards to immigrants and social disorganization, Cote (2002) posits that marginalized spaces continually face invasion by successive waves of immigrants who are entering the city from their countries of origin or rural areas. Many new Canadians, who already face multiple barriers (e.g. language, economic and cultural barriers) to integration, may also encounter heightened levels of stress and anxiety as they move into areas which are in a perpetual state of social disorganization. Based on this consensus perspective of crime, one can argue that as new immigrants transition into marginalized areas with low levels of social capital they may not be able to integrate successfully, thus opening pathways to acculturative stress which may lead some immigrants to participate in the underground criminal economies of Canadian society. Research by Sampson and Groves (1989) has investigated the mediating effects of "guardianship, community attachment, and informal social control. They have shown that integration and social ties are important mediators between social conditions and crime" (cited in Cote, 2002, p. 76). For example, Sampson and Groves have found that successful integration is indicated by the individual's ability to develop local networks (i.e. friendships), community attachment and their participation in pro-social activities.



Rose and Clear (2002) further this discussion of immigrant integration and social disorganization by revealing that today, contemporary researchers continue to “subscribe to the idea that disorganized communities are ethnically heterogeneous and residentially mobile because they are poor” (cited in, Cote, 2002, p. 79). However, Cote questions whether poverty and residential segregation impact the upward mobility of new immigrants. For instance, the author highlights that “economic opportunities may not be driving residential mobility trends in some of today’s poorer neighbourhoods. Rather, other forces may be at work, forces producing entrenched deficits in social capital” (cited in Cote, 2002, p. 79). In their examination of social networks and the role they play in the settlement and integration of immigrants to Canada, Bergeron and Potter (2006) recognize that access to social capital within the first six months of arrival is imperative to the safe and successful integration of new immigrants. For example, Bergeron and Potter reveal that “newcomers are faced with tremendous challenges as they begin the process of settling into their new homes and communities, and even longer process of integrating into Canadian society....networks provide access to many different kinds of support that newcomers can use as they face challenges and barriers to their integration” (cited in Metropolis, 2006, p. 79). Thus, social disorganization theorists such as Wirth (1938), Skogan (1977), Shaw and McKay (1969), Charron (2009), and Cote (2002), speculate that communities with high levels of immigration, ethnic/racial heterogeneity, high mobility, and low attachments to social networks are more likely to experience crime because of the lack of formal social controls in the area. For example, looking at the Junction community, the City of Toronto’s current social profile reveals that a large portion of the community is made up of a large transient immigrant population who are renters (see image below) with low incomes.

## Rented vs Owned Private Dwellings



Comparison to All of Toronto	
% Renters	Same
% Lone Parents	Bit Higher
% Lone Seniors	Same
% One-Family Dwellings	Same
% Multi-Family Dwellings	Bit Lower
% Dwellings Requiring Major Repairs	Higher

(City of Toronto, Junction Area Neighbourhood Social Profile, 2006)

The above information correlated with research provided by social disorganization theorists suggest that a large mobile population with weak attachments to the community could be problematic to the maintenance of the social equilibrium in marginalized spaces such as the Junction. But what happens when immigrants face large social capital deficits, economic and cultural barriers, and acculturative stress? Is this a recipe for criminal behaviour?

Although the research provided by social disorganization theorists illustrates that poverty, high racial/ethnic heterogeneity, and high residential mobility are correlates of crime, the theory does not engage in a discussion regarding the root causes of crime. It isolates crime to the geographical borders of communities without stepping outside and illustrating how power

relations, discrimination, and punitive policy measures socially exclude vulnerable populations where they may face cultural, economic, and political marginalization. Conflict theorists would contend that it is these factors which must be examined if we are to understand crime in society. My MRP uses a conflict approach to challenge these consensus perceptions of crime (e.g. social disorganization) which neglect to examine the underlying political, economic, and cultural contexts. Specifically, my MRP argues that, larger systems such as the state and other powerful interest groups have used the processes of racialization and criminalization to subordinate and stratify immigrants and other marginalized populations in society. This I posit has a significant impact on how communities organize and develop characteristics which may or may not be conducive to criminal behaviour. For instance, my MRP will suggest that immigration policies over the last century have been used to control, restrict and at times exclude immigrants from integrating into the 'Canadian Identity' (i.e. British/French). This has allowed the dominant class to maintain a homogenous nation where the monopolization of economic, political and cultural power is accomplished through the racialization and criminalization of the immigrant underclass. These contexts will be further discussed later in my paper as I illustrate how punitive policies such as prohibition, drug laws and immigration legislation were created to control and exclude a growing immigrant population in Canada.

In short, a detailed analysis of the immigrant-crime link cannot be understood through consensus approaches which argue that poverty, poor social disorganization, and the lack of social control in communities are the explicit reasons for criminal behaviour among immigrant populations. Instead, the connection between criminality, race and class must be viewed through a conflict lens which illuminates how power relations, racialization, and criminalization are contexts which lead to who gets labelled as criminal, and what gets labelled as a crime. My MRP

suggests that the dominant class continues to rearticulate racialized discourses entrenched in a social disorganization perspective which draws attention to the contexts of poverty, population heterogeneity and neighbourhood decline as the reasons for criminality in Canadian urban cities. As a result, the issues of racism, discrimination and inequality have been made invisible by consensus approaches which blame crime on the cultural differences of immigrants/visible minorities and their inability to integrate into Canadian society. What is missing in a consensus approach to crime is how laws and policies are developed by those with power (i.e. the state), and the impact of these formal controls and legal penalties on populations with less power. My MRP argues that racist policies such as those constructed to control immigration correlated with the restructuring of global economies have created social, economic and political barriers which impede the successful integration of immigrants in Canadian society. Subsequently, many immigrants find themselves living in poverty and in communities which are in conflict with dominant society. This in turn pushes some immigrants to engage in secondary criminal markets where they are able to obtain economic stability and cultural/political autonomy. Thus, I argue that 'crime' is not simply a result of individual choice or environmental conditions; rather my analysis recognizes how the dominant class has been able to maintain economic/political power by controlling the immigrant underclass through the processes of racialization and criminalization.

Further, I posit that by articulating that crime is a function of social disorganization the dominant class is able to develop policies which seek to re-organize or revitalize these problematic criminal spaces (Messner and Liska, 1999). For instance my MRP suggests that the processes of revitalization and gentrification are projects of urban colonialism where the white dominant class seeks to restore social equilibrium through the processes of "invasion,

domination and succession” (Shaw and McKay, 1969). In this, the state and City officials seek to socially displace, and exclude those who are different, while re-constructing marginalized areas such as the Junction to reflect the dominant class’s perception of the ‘Canadian Identity’. Walks and Maaranen (2008) verify this by pointing out that gentrification is associated with the “displacement (direct/indirect) of low income households, and is specifically meant to apply to the transformation of working-class communities into spaces for middle-class and elite households” (p. 2). My project argues that, the state and public continue to view immigrant spaces as transient, disorganized and problematic, thus rearticulating the dominance of white Anglo-Canadians over the ‘other’ immigrant population who are unable to integrate into society. This consensus perspective of crime delineates those with power from the criminalization process while those with less power are subjected to the labels such as socially disorganized, at risk, problematic and criminal. Social disorganization theorists have conceived that the conflict which arises out of cultural heterogeneity threatens the dominant class’s position in society. Thus, I argue that a growing immigrant underclass which seeks to gain autonomy and economic/political power threatens the existence of a white majority in Canadian society. The dominant class then perceives these threats as a loss of social control, thus leading them to create laws and policies which seek to re-organize social equilibrium while maintaining the balance of economic, political and cultural power. However, this is a concern because social disorganization theorists only see formal controls such as the state, and its agents (e.g. police) as responsible and respectable solutions to the problems which plague the demise of immigrant working class spaces. I question whose view is used to define what areas are socially disorganized? Are there informal controls in these communities which construct a well managed organized space? Although social disorganization theorists suggest that immigrant crime may be linked to

communities with high transiency and high racial/ethnic heterogeneity which subsequently leads to the breakdown of social controls, they do not however recognize the impact of informal controls (e.g. organized crime). Nor do social disorganization theorists take into account the importance and necessity of informal criminal economies which not only allow immigrants and other marginalized populations a space of economic, cultural and political resistance, but researchers must also question what impact these underground economies have on community and global economic sustainability. To understand this further I will use a first person narrative to discuss how informal controls such as organized crime have created a state of social equilibrium in marginalized spaces such as the Junction.

## **Confronting Social Disorganization Theory: Informal versus Formal Controls**

Growing up in the Junction one knows that the conflict and struggle for power equality has been a long battle. Since the early days of criminalization when prohibition was enacted to control a new and emerging social threat, the Junction and its residents have been isolated on the “wrong side of the tracks” and the wrong side of the law. As those who came before, today spaces of resistance such as massage parlours and drug enclaves shadow those of the underground booze cans and prostitution dens which existed a century ago. The Junction itself has always been viewed as a problem space by dominant society. The smell of rotten flesh from the slaughterhouse, the railway tracks, the broken windows of social decay, and the community’s reputation for violence all perpetuated an image which isolated and excluded those who lived there from the larger macro-Canadian community. But was the Junction really socially disorganized and does the community need to be re-organized through formal controls? Well the answer is not really. Although a socially disorganized perception of the Junction has been constructed by dominant society I argue that the community is quite organized even though it operates in conflict with some of the norms and values of those with power. For example, social disorganization theorists are limited in their analysis of crime because they only focus on the weakening of social bonds with formal controls as the reason for criminality. Further, formal controls become the only mechanism which can re-establish social equilibrium in socially disorganized spaces. However, as a long time resident of the Junction I argue that this discussion of control and social order is much more complex than it appears in social disorganization theory. I argue that informal controls such as organized crime groups create an equal if not more important infrastructure of laws, regulation, and control than the formal apparatuses which are supplied by the state. For instance, organized criminal elements in the area such as the Hell

Angels and international mafias not only protect and police the community from smaller fringe gangs, but they also regulate the informal underground economies which have been embedded in the cultural makeup of the community. Furthermore, urban laws such as the “the code of the streets” are passed down from one generation to another enabling those involved in conflict behaviour to police themselves and those they are working with. Although not all residents choose to reside outside the framework of the white Anglo ethnocentric imagination, those who do choose to resist the racialization and criminalization processes are able to operate in a functional and organized manner. Thus, for some immigrants and other marginalized populations the only way to escape economic, political and cultural isolation is through the participation in informal criminal economies.

My MRP suggests that immigration and social disorganization is not the antecedent to crime; instead I argue that the root cause of crime can be linked to power inequality, racism and discrimination by the dominant class. Over time the dominant class has been able to monopolize power and has used this power to create punitive laws and regulations which seek to control those who are different. Thus, using the law, dominant society has criminalized, marginalized, and policed those that do not fit into the Canadian identity. As a result many immigrants and visible minorities have been subjected to economic, political and cultural barriers which impede their ability to properly integrate into Canadian society. This, I contend, may have led some immigrants to participate in specific criminal behaviour where they are able to resist the barriers which push them into economic, political, and cultural marginalization. Having this information helps raise important and complex questions regarding crime and society. Do informal controls help sustain a community? What consequences will removing these controls have on the area? In



regards to the underground economy, what impact will the removal of these markets have on those who are dependent on them and what are the consequences if any on a global scale?

The information in this section has highlighted some important contexts regarding immigrants, crime and the policies which seek to fix the 'problem'. I suggest that the actions by the state to re-organize socially disorganized spaces fails to account for the true causes of immigrant criminal behaviour in Canadian society. As discussed previously, revitalization/gentrification projects such as those taking place in Parkdale, Regent Park, and the Junction fail to acknowledge the roots of crime (e.g. racism, inequality), thus creating a smoke screen which may only hide and displace the problem. Stepping outside onto the streets of the Junction today, it appears that the state's obsession with defragmenting communities through revitalization has changed very little. Revitalization/gentrification over time has only taken what was once an overt criminal market, and changed it to a covert-underground criminal economy which is perhaps even more enterprising today. Although this section has highlighted that the root cause of immigrant crime can be linked to racism, discrimination and power inequality, the fact is immigrant crime still exists and we must begin to develop more complex solutions rather than the band aid formulas which the state perpetuates.

### **Emerging Transnational Criminal Markets**

The emergence of new informal criminal markets today illustrates the continued economic, cultural and political marginalization of immigrants and visible minorities in society. My MRP recognizes that the restructuring of the global market, correlated with racial stratification has placed immigrant populations in a vulnerable state where they are finding it more difficult to integrate economically, culturally and politically. This can be seen in the

development of new organized transnational criminal networks which seek to bring financial sustainability and cultural autonomy to those who are being subordinated and socially marginalized in Canadian society.

For example, as of 2010, the four points of the Junction house some of the most notorious international criminal elements (Hells Angels, Italian Mafia, Russian Mafia, Asian gangs, and the Jamaican Shower Posse) who have a strangle hold on the burgeoning underground economies (i.e. gambling, prostitution, and drugs). The crime and violence (i.e. bootlegging and prostitution) which began over a century ago, continues to exist in the back alleys and invisible markets of the Junction today. For example, in 1992 the Toronto Star published an article illustrating the community crime problem. According to the Star (1992), “a series of raids on businesses in Toronto's Junction area last night netted dozens of refugee claimants, gambling paraphernalia and almost \$100,000 in brown heroin from the Middle East” (A28). The article directly highlights the development of an underground drug economy which is managed by international criminal organizations.

Although the above article and research illuminate a correlation between crime and immigration it must be recognized that not all immigrants participate in criminal behaviour. As Wortley (2009) suggests, specific immigrant groups may be more inclined to engage in a focused approach to criminality (i.e. human trafficking, drug trade...). Wortley contends that although an increasing number of studies have documented that first-generation and second-generation immigrants are not more involved in crime than the native born, research has also consistently documented that at certain times and places, specific immigrant groups appear to be more involved in criminality than others. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (2006) report “Canada/US Organized Crime Threat Assessment”, alludes to this growing pattern of immigrant-

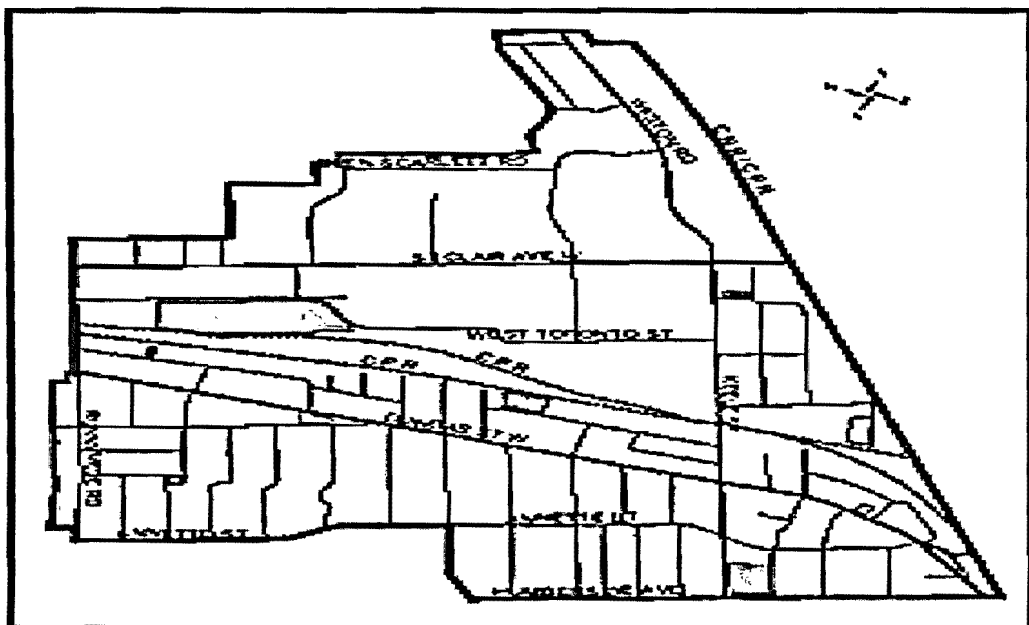
based crime in Canadian society. Specifically, the RCMP illustrates the existence of an immigrant-crime link in Canadian society by suggesting that:

Legal and illegal immigration, drug and contraband smuggling, and financial crimes remain key factors in assessing organized crime activity in Canada and the United States. Immigration has always been a driving force in the historical evolution of Canada and the United States. However, impoverishment and lack of language skills and social networks can force immigrants to become a readymade labour pool for criminal organizations and their illicit activities (p. 1).

Further, according to CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) immigrant criminal organizations such as the Asian triads, Colombian cartels, Mafia groups, Russian Mafia, and Nigerian crime groups have rooted themselves in Canada where they compete within a market-driven underground economy (Munroe, 2008). But what impact does a growing transnational informal network have on smaller communities? How do smaller areas such as the Junction and its residents fit into this complex picture of immigration and crime? To understand these questions one must unveil the root causes of crime by venturing further into the stories and narratives of those who have experienced the underworld which is the Junction.

### **The Reach and Formulation of Transnational Criminal Networks**

Standing at the crossroads of the Junction surrounded by the crumbling brick of deindustrialization, once booming factories have become vacant ghostly spaces where broken windows and graffiti symbolically reflect the lived realities of those who are confined to the boundaries which house society's ills. The geographical borders of the Junction have been challenged for many years by city officials and its residents. According to the City of Toronto's neighbourhood profile (see below map) the Junction is confined by the CPR railway to the East, Scarlett Road to the North, Runnymede Road to the West and Annette Street to the South.



(City of Toronto, Junction Area Neighbourhood Social Profile, 2006)

The above representation by city officials is highly problematic and lends itself to an inaccurate portrayal of the Junction's reach and location. Another set of boundaries exist that have a deeper narrative which illuminates how crime has helped construct social space. Since the

late 19th century the Junction has been divided along race, class and criminally negotiated lines. The Junction has been a space of mobility since aboriginal populations used the trails to transport goods from the Humber River to other trading stations. Today, the borders of the Junction encompass a greater number of fragmented spaces (i.e. Jane and Woolner, Jane and Dundas, Lansdowne and Bloor...) which have been incorporated through criminal activity. For example, criminal gangs in the area have used the Junctions unwritten street code to negotiate both business and territorial usage. I argue that the Junction itself has become a space of international criminal activity where the homogeneity of 'old school' criminal networks has been fragmented into more functional heterogenic groups which share in the development and operation of contemporary criminal markets. I suggest that criminal organizations in the Junction and other marginalized areas have evolved using multicultural discourse, equity legislation and the reach of the global market to expand their very own corporate business models. The CSIS report (2009) supports this idea by illuminating the evolution of criminal groups and networks in Canada. For example, the report illustrates that, "with globalization and increasingly multicultural communities, organized crime is now best understood as small, loosely structured and often multi-ethnic networks that adapt quickly to any pressures or changes in the criminal or legitimate marketplaces" (p. 9). The report posits that these networks amalgamate, and disband regularly in order to adapt to law enforcement intervention, competition, and other burgeoning pressures within the marketplace.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police also support this phenomenon by concluding that "the criminal organizations of the 21st century are characterized by a large degree of fluidity and structural complexity...they utilize diverse forms and sizes of clusters, network structures and groups, often but not invariably transnational with occasional local home-bases, as suited for

their diverse forms of illegal activities (Chatterjee, 2005). Although the above stated information highlights the working framework of organized crime groups, it can also be argued that similar ebb and flow patterns can be seen throughout the hierarchy of criminality from biker gangs down to the fringe gangs which operate within communities such as the Junction. On a micro-communal level criminal organizations may be forced to incorporate because of the lack of criminal resources (i.e. drugs, guns...) and the small proximity in which these multiple diverse groups are able to manage their criminal economies. An example of this neo-multicultural 'gangsterism' and the expanded reach of the Junction can be understood through the context of the underground drug economy which exists in the area.

For example, my own experience participating in the drug trade in the Junction helps illustrate that although ethno-racial criminal organizations may work together at times it is only on a 'what can you do for me' basis. Beyond the interconnected business model of these criminal economies a strict hierarchy correlated with racial segregation usually permeates a homogenous mind set within these criminal organizations. The old adage of strength in numbers reflects the need to keep those you can trust within your inner circle. In his study of drug traffickers Desroches (2007) points out that "individual traffickers compete for their market share and usually deal exclusively with trusted contacts drawn from the same ethnic background" (cited in Wortley, 2009, p. 351). However, in the multicultural ganglands such as the Junction this ideology is sometimes broken. This complex web of business relations and the fluidity to enter in and out of its operations allows criminal organizations to maintain their respective informal criminal economies while incorporating when needed. This phenomenon is reflected by Chatterjee (2005) who suggests that "rather than treat each other as rivals, many criminal organizations are sharing information, services, resources, and market access according to the

principle of comparative advantage” (p. 9). For instance, regarding the drug market, a top criminal organization such as the Hells Angels has a strong covert presence in the area. Certain businesses (e.g. bars) have been expropriated to allow underground criminal markets to operate while maintaining their invisibility to state agents (i.e. police, CSIS). Many business owners who have ethno-racial backgrounds co-operate in this regard to avoid damage to property and physical harm. However, in a contradictory move, businesses also allow the larger criminal organizations to operate because they further protect the area from smaller fringe gangs who may not operate in a rational business-like manner. This can only be described as opting out for the lesser of two evils.

My first hand knowledge of the drug economy highlights that some smaller players such as Latin crime organizations are brought into business relations with the larger dominant biker gangs and mafias. To gain access to the larger macro-global drug economies a multicultural business approach is employed. Once drugs such as cocaine/heroin enter the city they are distributed down the hierarchy of criminal organizations. Thus, drugs flow from the top tier (i.e. biker gangs and mafias) down to the small fringe players on the street. Using bars as spaces of criminal entrepreneurship multiple ethno-racial groups maintain the underground economy while paying tax to those who have secured the territory and space (i.e. biker gangs and mafias).

The narrative of the Junction is interesting and complex as it reveals an underground criminal world which operates outside the norms of other criminal organizations. In the Junction White, Black, Asian, Southern Mediterranean, Latin and a host of other ethno-racial groups are able to operate in a mutual underground criminal economy. The reach of the Junction expands beyond the restricted geographical borders which the City of Toronto employs, as many groups

enter the Junction area from fringe locations where they are able to convert their criminal skills into economic capital.

### **Race and Class: Speaking of the 'Problem'**

Although criminal organizations have contributed to the physical and symbolic territorialisation of the Junction, the community has also been spatially segregated along race and class lines. Specifically, the Junction has become spatially excluded from the white middle class population who occupy the residential space of Bloor West Village. The 'other' undesirable space of the Junction is seldom visited by those who migrate through the high end streetscape of 'Bloor West'. Oral histories and racialized discourses about the 'problematic' space of the Junction keep the white middle class from venturing away from their fortified enclaves and into the depressed parameters of the 'other' immigrant space. In Bloor West Village even specialized businesses such as organic grocery markets, high end restaurants and overpriced coffee houses become symbolic messages which differentiate those who fit into the values and norms of Canadian society and those who do not. In contrast, the immigrant working class space of the Junction is littered with low end grocery stores (i.e. Price Chopper), bars, liquor outlets, massage parlours and pawn shops, all of which are presented in the forefront of deteriorating rail yards, and factories, thus proliferating the presentation of a problem space that is weakened by the absence of social controls.

However, this perception of the Junction as a problem space is nothing new. Before the roar of motorcycle gangs rolled in, before drugs became an economy and before prostitution became a permanent fixture within the decaying streetscape, the Junction was a place which was feared and avoided by the white dominant class. For over a hundred years the physical and



psychological boundaries of the area have been developed along race and class lines. From its genesis, the Junction, a growing industrial area attracted many new immigrants who sought to gain employment and acceptance into the Canadian social fabric. However, economic recessions and depressions crippled the community sending it into a downward spiral of disrepair, and social disorganization, thus forever linking the space and its residents with ideas of crime, violence and vice. For example, according to Myrvold (2009) the Junction, a manufacturing community, endured multiple economic booms and busts during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Companies were attracted to the area because land, labour and taxes were cheaper compared to the large urbanized centre of Toronto. Further, the Canadian Pacific Railway established rail yards in the area creating an economic infrastructure in the area. In the 1890's the community was recognized as a port of entry where local businesses could clear goods instead of having to travel into downtown Toronto. Myrvold posits that factors such as industrialization and cheap rent also contributed to a growing immigrant presence in the neighbourhood. Irish Catholics, Italians, Poles, Macedonians and Croatians were among the first groups to migrate to the area. The author contends that growing industry in the rail yards and meat packing sectors attracted new immigrants to the region. For example, Petroff (1995) posits that Macedonian sojourners settled in the Junction to take advantage of work in the nearby slaughterhouse, while German and Jewish residents found employment at the Heinzmann Piano Factory. Further, neighbourhoods' such as St. Johns Ward were becoming disorganized, overpopulated and falling further into disrepair, forcing many immigrants to migrate to smaller communities such as the Junction. During its booms, the Junction was populated with hotels which were outfitted with bars, where rail and slaughterhouse workers (immigrants and Anglo workers) would "get wet" (i.e. get drunk). Petroff suggests that on many occasions public drunkenness and violence would

erupt in the streets of the Junction. For example, Myrvold (2009) illustrates that “by 1903, alcohol was a big problem for families and a public embarrassment for the town. It was not unusual to find a dozen men lying drunk in snow-covered ground, when the other men were headed for work in the morning” (p. 23). According to Myrvold (2009) and Francher (2004) the taverns were always full, where drunken brawls and robberies were common place. Prostitution and gambling also became common vices which problematized and demonized the area.

The criminalization of the Junction can be viewed through Myrvold (2009), and Francher’s (2004) research where they highlight two events which propelled the area into an era of prohibition, thus constructing it as a ‘problem’ space. First, Myrvold and Francher posit that the mysterious death of Joe Curley initially fuelled the fire for the ban of alcohol. According to the authors, on December 30, 1897 Joseph Curley a labourer, from the town of Weston, engaged in a night of drinking at the Subway Hotel (a tavern/hotel in the Junction). After the bar was closed Curley attempted to access the local train home, however was denied due to his drunken behaviour. Four hours later Curley’s battered, motionless body was found one hundred feet from the Subway Hotel. The authors argue that residents of the community along with public officials blamed alcohol as a major contributing factor in his death. The second event, which proliferated the criminalization of alcohol, was the occurrence of a raucous brawl which happened in the Junction at the Heydon House hotel in 1903. Myrvold and Francher reveal that the fight occurred between cattlemen from the Union Stockyards and a group of C.P. railway workers. The fight which began as a battle of words over a neighbourhood prostitute, escalated over the weekend into a bloody fight, resulting in the arrest of three individuals. Although there is no documentation which describes who was involved in the violence, it can be argued that some immigrant groups may have been connected to this event. As discussed earlier, many new

immigrants (i.e. Macedonian, Irish and Polish) worked in the stockyards and frequented the neighbourhood bars. Could this have been the origins of the immigrant-crime link?

The authors posit that these two events correlated with a growing economic problem led to a temperance movement, headed by the Women Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Methodist church. In a speech by a local Reverend (T. Shore) from the Annette Street Methodist Church he proclaimed that the Junctions hotels and bars were ‘cesspools of harlotry’ vice and iniquity. This paper argues that ‘moral entrepreneurs’ such as the WCTU and Reverend Shore may have constructed a racist discourse which linked a growing immigrant population with criminal behaviour. According to Kappeler and Potter (2005) ‘moral entrepreneurs’ are individuals who have a vested interest in an issue and bring it to public attention. This project suggests that the origins of the immigrant-crime link in Toronto can be traced to immigrant quarters such as the Junction where temperance movements sought to police the problem through the criminalization of alcohol. Further, tensions between the white-Anglo community and a growing immigrant presence in the area may have proliferated racialized discourses which demonized the ‘other’ immigrant as criminal and problematic. For example, immigrant populated areas such as the Junction, St. Johns Ward and Kensington Market were marked by racist discourses which constructed new immigrants as a social threat. Kwong (2009) reveals that the rising immigrant population flooding these areas created “growing public concern over crime, poverty, and drug use” (p. 1). This project argues that, moral panics opened pathways to racist discourses which articulated that immigrants were the reasons for poverty, crime and vice in the inner city. Thus, in 1904, moral panics over a growing immigrant population and the increase in problematic behaviour (i.e. alcohol, drugs and prostitution) which went against the churches moral fabric led to increased pressure from the WCTU resulting in the criminalization

of alcohol in the area. This in turn, however, created an underground criminal economy which challenged the conservative ideologies of the church. The emergence of booze cans, and bootleggers quickly filled the demands of thirsty Junction residents for more than 100 years that followed.

## Looking Forward: The Legacy of the Junction and its Underground Economy

Today, the informal economies of the past continue to be re-shaped, and re-organized as a result of macro-socio-economic contexts and power inequality. The economic deficit and social marginalization which many residents face on a daily basis can still be viewed by the presence of an underground criminal economy. Walking around and exploring the Junction one might, however, find it difficult to point out these underground economies which have been mapped into the backdrop of small businesses, churches and residential stock. However, as a resident and participant of the underground economy in the Junction I am able to view the problems which plague my community. The silence and invisibility of these markets is what brings most anxiety to my mind when I think of what it means to be Canadian and what it means to live in this urban jungle where so many important matters get lost in the shuffle, and those who are oppressed, subordinated, and victimized inevitably become another headline or statistic. I am thrown back by the undemocratic way that Canada treats immigrants and it is even more compelling when we look at the impact of cultural, economic, and political inequality. When I navigate through the dens of iniquity and vice I see a population who has been forgotten and excluded. The words of hope and justice fail to pass through the wind as I re-immense myself in the darkness of the Junction. At some point as a society we have socialized ourselves to believe that it is okay for some groups of people to suffer and never have upward mobility in society. As more massage parlours emerge and bars continue to be the hospice of a drug economy I wonder if there is any hope left. Over the years I have seen many new immigrants move in and out of the Junction trying to find their way through the barriers of Canadian life. The ones who stay have either given up or found some form of economic and cultural autonomy in the underground economies. Others have unfortunately been forced into the sex and drug trades by a new breed of globalized

transnational organized crime. This can be seen in the increased presence of a working class who sell their labour in the economies of massage parlours; strip joints, drug dens and underground booze cans which continue to threaten the dominant groups in society.

Living in the space of the Junction I ask myself many questions. Sitting on a roof top over hanging the streetscape I peer into the suns gaze and trace the railways to a time where new immigrants landed here from their arduous journey, with nothing in their pocket and a willingness to sacrifice everything to chase the Canadian dream. I look toward the nexus where the railway tracks intersect and reflect on my grimy days and participation in organized crime. I remember friends who are now dead, in jail or on drugs, but most of all I picture what it was like for my uncles, aunts and grandparents coming up in the Junction. Did they hear, smell and see the same Junction as me? For over 100 years the Junction has been an entry point into Canadian society for thousands of new immigrants and has become a unique place where survival is taught and the residents seek to live their lives on their terms. The place that I call home is a space of complexity where the processes of modern revitalization conflict with an old working class image that just can't peel away the scars of the past. The Junction for me is now a place undecided and in a perpetual state of ambiguity. For me the projects of revitalization and gentrification seem to have run out of steam, where great ideas and money could not combat the strong informal controls that have owned the Junction for decades. The underground working networks of biker gangs, ethno-racial gangs, and mafias continue to immerse themselves into the social fabric of the area. Today, the old school isolation of criminal networks has been erased and replaced with a neo-multicultural model which allows these groups to operate effectively within the community while having the ability to access the reaches of a growing global criminal marketplace. But what forces maintain the pulse of this underground economy? Atop the roof I

sit perched like a hawk in some pharaoh's kingdom gazing across the horizon, imagining if there are other Junctions in the nation or perhaps in the world. My eyes examine the concrete jungle below me and I think about the next wave of new Canadians who will enter communities such as mine, armed with passion and a willingness to chase the Canadian dream. I contemplate whether they know their sacrifices will be made more difficult and painful through the harsh arms of state policies which seek to subordinate and restrict their upward mobility. And I grow weary knowing that some may in fact fall into the cyclical life of the underground economy where they are pressured to sell their labour, thus increasing the likelihood that they will experience abuse, victimization and contact with Canadian criminal justice system.

## **Conclusion**

---

In summation, my research argues that the immigrant crime link in Canada has been constructed over time and space and along race, class and gendered lines. First, My MRP demonstrates that over time the dominant class has used the processes of racialization and criminalization to restrict, control, and exclude immigrants from acquiring political, cultural and economic equality within Canadian society. I suggest that moral panics regarding a growing immigrant underclass seeking power and equality threatened the dominant group's position in society. This in turn opened pathways to punitive policies which socially excluded immigrants and other marginalized populations. My MRP argues that the processes of racialization and criminalization marked communities such as the Junction as problematic, and criminal, thus isolating the area and pushing its residents into economic, political and cultural stratification. Further, I contend that some immigrants were unable to resist economic, political and cultural subordination and this led them to participate in underground criminal markets such as prostitution, booze cans, and drug dens. As a result, I have found that those with power were able to construct the space of the Junction as criminal and problematic and this has had a lasting effect on the area and its residents for years.

Second, I draw on these early constructions of the Junction to reveal how immigration continues to threaten those with power. I argue that the processes of racialization and criminalization continue to socially exclude the Junction and its residents from upward mobility. For example, examining contemporary society my findings reveal that, although research by Wortley (2009), Yeager (1996) and Martinez and Lee (2000) demonstrate that immigration has an inverse effect on criminality, the authors also illustrate that at certain times and places, specific immigrant groups may engage in high levels of criminal behaviour. Examining the



underground criminal economies of the sex and drug trades I was able to ascertain that immigrant crime cannot be isolated to generalized consensus ideologies which assume that high ethno/racial heterogeneity, high transiency, poverty and, neighbourhood disrepair are correlates of crime. Instead, an approach grounded in conflict theory helps highlight that crime among immigrants involves a major examination of systemic issues which impede their acquisition of economic, political and cultural equality. For example, my MRP draws attention to globalization and the impact of restructured labour markets on migration. My findings suggest that the inability for immigrants to attain economic sustainability in developing countries pushes some to migrate to western nations in hope of finding job security and cultural integration. However, my MRP posits that barriers such as language skills, Canadian job experience and educational requirements block immigrants from acquiring safe and meaningful employment. I argue that flawed immigration policy places immigrants in a vulnerable position as they are unable to transfer their employment/academic skills into economic gains. These macro-contexts produce financial and social barriers, thus pushing some immigrants to participate in underground criminal economies where they can resist political, cultural and economic marginalization. Further, as immigrants are pushed into the underground economy their risk of abuse, victimization and contact with the criminal justice system increases. This I argue perpetuates racialized discourses about race, class, and crime, and justifies state interventions which seek to wipe the area clean of the immigrant crime problem. Current revitalization and gentrification projects are grounded in such myths and empower the state and other interest groups to invade, dominate and succeed spaces such as the Junction. However, my findings indicate that the states objective to revitalize the Junction has not worked and that the root cause of immigrant crime has been overlooked, while the underground economies of the sex and drug trades have been driven

further underground. Although my MRP has highlighted that the root cause of immigrant crime can be linked to racism, discrimination and power inequality, the fact is immigrant crime still exists and we must begin to develop more complex solutions rather than band aid formulas which the state perpetuates. Moving forward I hope that future research may build on what I have developed and real discussions can take place in regards to micro and macro solutions to the immigrant crime dilemma in Canadian society and beyond.

## Works Cited

---

- Blalock, Herbert M. (1967). *Toward a Theory of Minority-Group Relations*. New York: Wiley.
- Chambliss, W. (1975). Toward a Political Economy of Crime. *Theory and Society*, 2, 149-70.
- Charron, Mathieu. (2009). Neighbourhood Characteristics and the Distribution of Police-reported Crime in the City of Toronto. *Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics*, 18, 1-56.
- Chatterjee, Jharna., (2005). The Changing Structure of Organized Crime Groups. *Royal Canadian Mounted Police: Research and evaluation Branch*, 1, 1-33.
- City of Toronto. (2006). *Junction Area Neighbourhood Profile*. Retrieved from [www.toronto.ca](http://www.toronto.ca).
- Cote, Suzette. (2002). *Criminological Theories: Bridging the past to the Future*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Fancher, Diana. (2004). *The Leader and Recorder's History of the Junction Toronto*. Toronto: The West Toronto Junction Historical Society.
- Harding, Sandra. (1991). *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* Ithaca. N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- Hawkins, Darnell F. (1987). Beyond Anomalies: Rethinking the Conflict Perspective on Race and Criminal Punishment. *Social Forces*, 65, 719-745.
- Henry, F., and Carol Tator. (2006). Racism in Canadian History. In Henry, F., and C. Tator (Eds.), *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society* (p. 67-100). Toronto, Ontario: Thomson/Nelson.

- Henry, F., and Carol Tator. (2006). The Ideology of Racism. In Henry, F., and C. Tator (Eds.), *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society* (p. 15-30). Toronto, Ontario: Thomson/Nelson.
- Kappeler, V., and Gary W. Potter. (2005). *The Mythology of Crime and Criminal Justice*. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc.
- Kelley, N., and Michael Trebilcock. (2000). *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press.
- Kwong, M. (2010). "*The Ward*". Retrieved from [www.heritagetoronto.org/discover-toronto](http://www.heritagetoronto.org/discover-toronto).
- Martinez, R., and Matthew Lee. (2000). On Immigration and Crime. *Criminal Justice* 2000 1, 485-524.
- McLaughlin, E., and John Muncie. (2006). Conflict Theory. In McLaughlin, E. and Muncie, J. (Eds.), *The Sage Dictionary of Criminology* (p. 64-65). London: SAGE publications Ltd.
- McLaughlin, E., and John Muncie. (2006). Moral Panic. In McLaughlin, E., and Muncie, J. (Eds.), *The Sage Dictionary of Criminology* (p. 250-252). London: SAGE publications Ltd.
- Messner, S., and A. Liska. (1999). *Perspectives on Crime and Deviance*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Miles, Robert. (1989). *Racism*. London: Routledge.
- Myrvold, Barbara. (2009). *The Most Attractive Resort Town: Public Library Service in West Toronto Junction 1888-2009*. Toronto: Coach House Printing.

- Petroff, L. (1995). *Sojourners and Settlers: The Macedonian Community in Toronto to 1940*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Plummer, Kevin. (2008). *Forgotten Urban Squalor of the Ward*. Retrieved from [www.torontoist.com](http://www.torontoist.com)
- Quinney, Richard. (1970). *The Social Reality of Crime*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
- Quinney, Richard. (1974). *Critique of Legal Order*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
- Quinney, Richard. (1977). *Class, State, and Crime*. New York: David McKay.
- Reinarman, C., and Harry Levine. (1989). Crack in Context: Politics and Media in the Making of a Drug Scare. *Contemporary Drug Problems*, 16, 535-577.
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (2006). *2006 Canada/ US Organized Crime Threat Assessment*. Retrieved from [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca).
- Rose, D.R., and Todd R. Clear. (2002). Incarceration, Social Capital, and Crime. In Cote, S. (Eds.), *Criminological Theories: Bridging the Past to the Future* (p. 74-83). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Sampson R.J., and W.B. Groves. (1993). Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life. In Cote, S. (Eds.), *Criminological Theories: Bridging the Past to the Future* (p. 74-83). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Shaw, C. R., and Henry D. McKay. (1969). *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Skogan, W.G. (1977). The Changing Distribution of Big-City Crime. In Linden, R. (Eds.), *Criminology: A Canadian Perspective* (p. 171-172). Toronto, Ontario: Nelson Education Ltd.
- Smith, Dorothy. (1987). *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Chicago, IL: University Press.
- Smith, E.C. (2004, November 28). Junction Crosses into Bohemia. *Globe and Mail*, p. M4.
- Stamler, Rodney T. (2009). Organized Crime. In Linden, R. (Eds.), *Criminology: A Canadian Perspective* (p. 463-497). Toronto, Ontario: Nelson Education Ltd.
- Strange, Carolyn, and Tina Loo. (1997). *Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada 1867-1939*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Sugiman, Pamela. (2009). Work and the Economy. In Tepperman, L., and J. Curtis (Eds.), *Principles of Sociology: Canadian Perspectives* (p. 274-301). Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Suthibhasilp, N., Petroff, L., and Dora Nipp (2000). Trafficking in Women Including Thai Migrant Sex Workers in Canada. *Status of Women Canada*, 1, 1-79.
- Teelucksingh, C., and Grace-Edward Galabuzi. (2005). Working Precariously: The Impact of Race and Immigrants Status on Employment Opportunities and Outcomes in Canada. *Policy Matters*, 22, 1-11.
- Tepperman, L., and James Curtis. (2009). *Principles of Sociology: Canadian Perspectives*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Walks, Alan R., and Richard Maaranen. (2008). Neighbourhood Gentrification and Upgrading in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. *Centre for Urban and Community Studies*, 43, 1-9.

Williams, J.C. (1987). *A Revitalization Action Program for the Junction Gardens B.I.A.* Toronto, Ontario: Toronto Public Library.

Wirth, L. (1938). Urbanism as a Way of Life. In Linden, R. (Eds.), *Criminology: A Canadian Perspective* (p. 171-172). Toronto, Ontario: Nelson Education Ltd.

Wortley, Scot. (2009). Introduction. The Immigrant-Crime Connection: Competing Theoretical Perspectives. *Int. Migration and Integration*, 10, 349-358.

Yeager, Matthew. (1996). *Immigrants and Criminality: A Meta Survey*. Ottawa: The Metropolis Project.