



Slaughterhouses and Increased Crime Rates

An Empirical Analysis of the Spillover From “The Jungle” Into the Surrounding Community

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Abstract

More than 100 years after Upton Sinclair denounced the massive slaughterhouse complex in Chicago as a “jungle,” qualitative case study research has documented numerous negative effects of slaughterhouses on workers and communities. Of the social problems observed in these communities, the increases in crime have been particularly dramatic. These increases have been theorized as being linked to the demographic characteristics of the workers, social disorganization in the communities, and increased unemployment rates. But these explanations have not been empirically tested, and no research has addressed the possibility of a link between the increased crime rates and the violent work that takes place in the meatpacking industry. This study uses panel analysis of 1994-2002 data on nonmetropolitan counties in states with “right-to-work” laws (a total of 581 counties) to analyze the effect of slaughterhouses on the surrounding communities using both ordinary least squares and negative binomial regression. The findings indicate that slaughterhouse employment increases total arrest rates, arrests for violent crimes, arrests for rape, and arrests for other sex offenses in comparison with other industries. This suggests the existence of a “Sinclair effect” unique to the violent workplace of the slaughterhouse, a factor that has not previously been examined in the sociology of violence.

[meatpacking industry](#) [slaughterhouses](#) [crime](#) [employment](#)
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Articles citing this article

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