MEDIATING MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL LEARNING, SOCIAL CONTROL, AND STRAIN, LINKING UNEMPLOYMENT AND CRIME

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MEDIATING MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL LEARNING, SOCIAL CONTROL, AND STRAIN, LINKING UNEMPLOYMENT AND CRIME

by

Babatunde Soyege

B.S, Western Illinois University, 2020

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts

School of Criminal Justice and Criminology
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

MEDIATING MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL LEARNING, SOCIAL CONTROL, AND STRAIN, LINKING UNEMPLOYMENT AND CRIME

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Babatunde Soyege

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the field of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Approved by:

Dr. Raymund Narag, Chair

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
April 20th, 2022
Unemployment is a crucial issue in the United States. Unemployed individuals are more likely to commit crimes than those who are unemployed. This paper aims to understand the factors related to unemployment that affect crime and how unemployment leads to crime. This paper reviews the empirical literature to understand the relationship between unemployment and crime and develop potential policy solutions. The literature review suggests that youths, women, and people of color are primarily affected by unemployment. Young people get neglected during recruitment processes because they lack responsibilities and skills. Women also experience discrimination in the job market. This aspect causes a higher unemployment rate for women, making them opt for other means of survival. People of color also get discriminated against due to racism and stereotyping in the country. The social status of individuals also affects their ability to get employed. For instance, people of lower social status have limited opportunities to get jobs than those of higher status.

The literature review shows that unemployment may lead to crime through different pathways. First, unemployed people lack attachments to society leading to their involvement in crime. Second, unemployed individuals are likely to hang out with other unemployed individuals, thus increasing their risk of exposure to delinquent peers. Third, unemployment leads to a strain on survival for unemployed individuals, leading to crime. The frustration and other negative emotions evoked during unemployment also lead to crime.
Based on the following review, it is suggested that an individual’s education and training in potential employment sectors must be improved. Additionally, it is suggested that giving loans to individuals and supporting existing sectors will help create job opportunities for most people. Setting strategies that help people deal with negative emotions and fight discrimination and racism will reduce unemployment rates leading to crime reduction. Finally, developing correctional policies that will help people with criminal reputations will help make them ready to apply and get employment opportunities. The focus is the mediating mechanisms of social learning, social control, and strain in the relationship between unemployment and crime, and the strategies mentioned above will help reduce the unemployment rates and eradicate crime.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge the help of several individuals in conducting this research. First, I acknowledge the input and support of my lecturer, who helped guide areas that needed refinement to ensure the research was correctly done. Additionally, I acknowledge the support of my family and friends, who provided a great environment as I did the research. All the input and support have helped effectively finish the research work.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to those unemployed in public and to help provide awareness of unemployment and crime. Additionally, I dedicate the work to all policymakers and the government to give insight into better ways of dealing with unemployment and crime. The dedication also goes to future researchers in the same field when gathering secondary information.
PREFACE

Unemployment and crime are issues that are significantly related in several ways. Therefore, the topic is vital since it affects everyone, whether employed or unemployed. Unemployment causes criminal issues in the country, affecting safety and other economic sectors. As a result, it is essential to conduct research on unemployment and how it is related to crime. Additionally, learning how unemployment and crime relate to different people is essential. This step leads to the enactment of policies that help reduce the issue.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

What is Unemployment?

Unemployment is regarded as the inability of working-age adults to get an employment, thereby lowering productivity (Bräuninger & Pannenberg, 2002; Dougherty et al., 2017; Drago, 1989; Therborn & Therborn, 1995). It is percentage of working-age people without jobs and who are actively searching for employment (Zayniddin, 2021). People are considered to be unemployed when they are sacked or temporarily dismissed or quit their jobs while still actively seeking work (Statista, 2022b). The labor force consists of the employed and unemployed population (Bureau of Statistics, 2014; Zayniddin, 2021). Unemployment is used to refer to the unemployed segment of the labor force; a situation where a person is without a job and has been searching for employment within the preceding four weeks (Statista, 2022a). The government categorized employed people as the number of individuals who get paid or received profit for rendered services and jobs, whether part-time, full-time, or temporary employment (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Additionally, people on vacations, sick leave, maternity or paternity leave, and other conditions or obligations that prevent them from working are also considered as employed regardless of whether they received payment or not (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

People actively searching for jobs or making contacts for jobs get viewed as unemployed. The degree of unemployment is usually evaluated by the unemployment rate; a relative indicator that is calculated by simply dividing the total number of persons in the labor force (employed and unemployed) by the number of unemployed people and multiplying the result by 100 (Statista, 2022a). This metric is one of the metrics that businesses, investors, and citizens of the country employ to assess the situation of the country’s economy (Depersio, 2022). From a
national perspective, there is a high rate of unemployment in the United States (Smith et al., 2021). This rate increased to 3.7 percent in August 2022, the highest rate since February 2022 and which goes beyond market expectations of 3.5 percent; the number of unemployed as well as the labor force rate of participation increased as well (Trading Economics, 2022). The country’s unemployment rate has been at 3.9 percent since 2000, indicating that the labor market has become even more competitive; this rate includes persons who have been unemployed for a long time and consists of unemployed persons who desire to work (Kitroeff, 2018). The highest rate of unemployment (14.70 percent) was recorded during the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic (Trading Economics, 2022).

At the onset of Covid-19, unemployment rates increased aggressively, especially within specific demographic groups (Falk et al., 2021). As the economic expansion ended early in 2020 and the country entered a recession due to Covid-19 pandemic, the unemployment rate hits 13.0 percent in the second quarter before dropping down in the fourth quarter of the same year to 6.7 percent (Smith et al., 2021). During that year, unemployment rate increased in specific working fields such as hotels and travel industries and was particularly witnessed among the young black and Hispanic workers compared to other demographic groups (Falk et al., 2021). As of June 2022, the rate of unemployment in the United States was pegged at 3.8 percent (Statista, 2022). Currently, the rate of unemployment in the United States is 3.7 percent across all industry and class of worker (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022).

Unemployment can also be identified in different sectors of the economy. For instance, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) presented the unemployment rate in fourteen industries and classes of work in the United States. According to the statistics, the agricultural sectors had the highest unemployment rate (6.7 percent), followed by the leisure and hospitality industry (6.1
percent) while the financial industry had the lowest unemployment rate (1.8 percent) in the economy. During the outbreak of the coronavirus disease, the different sectors were greatly impacted and witnessed the highest rate of unemployment ever, the impacts were however varied and unequal (Investopedia, 2022). Many businesses were affected by the pandemic and its resulting lockdown and stay-at-home orders set in the country while most people were unable to work due to the closure or loss of business (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022a). There was an historic loss of 22.1 million jobs between January 2020 and April 2020; the worst and highest unemployment rate ever witnessed greatly surpassing earlier peaks witnessed during the period of the Great Recession (December 2007 to June 2009) (Falk et al., 2021).

The leisure and hospitality sector experienced the greatest job losses (-8.3 million) more than any other sectors, and those who previously worked in this sector were mostly affected and had the highest unemployment rates (Falk et al., 2021). The next industry with the highest job loss was the trade, transportation, and utilities with a huge loss of 3.4 million jobs following restrictions on travels and closures of bars and restaurants and affecting waiters, kitchen staffs, hotel personnel, and workers at gyms, amusement parks, and bowling alleys (Thornton, 2020). Other industries with over a million job losses include government payrolls, education and health services, and professional and business services (Falk et al., 2021; Thornton, 2020). Although there have been declines in the rate of unemployment in the country after the ease of the Covid-19 pandemic, the rate has not completely recovered.

**Unemployed People**

This portion of the paper expounds on the definition of who is unemployed and who is counted as such. The definition of unemployed people varies, with the standard definition being that unemployed people are persons without a specific job (whether full-time, part-time, or
temporary job) at a given period but are seeking for job opportunities and currently available for employment. There are various categories of unemployed people. For instance, people *actively* looking for jobs are classified as unemployed; these include those making direct or indirect contacts for employment, attending a job interview, examining professional or union registers, placing, or responding to job postings, sending in résumés or filling out applications online, and exploring other ways of active search for jobs (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014; Duignan, 2020).

People who engage in *passive* search for jobs (such as surfing the internet or going through newspapers for job postings or attending training programs or classes for job opportunities), are not categorized under unemployed people (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

Unemployed people also include people who are presently eligible for employment and may have participated in at least one active search for job opportunities within the preceding four weeks. These include people who have lost their jobs and searching for another, people who quit their professions in search for better job opportunities, people whose temporary engagement has ended and needed another engagement, persons who just want to begin their first search for jobs and experienced people searching for employment opportunities after they temporarily left labor force for some reasons (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). However, people who are eligible for employment opportunities but do not bother to search for one within the previous four weeks despite needing a paycheck are not grouped as unemployed. Such people have long participated in an active search for employment and may have suffered from job discriminations in the past or believe that there are no suitable jobs for which they are qualified to apply (Duignan, 2020). Such individuals are termed discouraged workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

Moreover, people who are temporarily suspended from their works and anticipating being called back for resumption regardless of whether or not they have participated in the search for
jobs or attended training for job opportunities within the preceding four weeks are equally counted as unemployed (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). People who are ineligible for employment and are not searching for one are neither categorized as unemployed nor included in the labor force. These individuals are out of the labor force; they include children, full-time college students and the retired (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). There are also those with labor attachment and an inability to get employed from their last employment. They are not classified as unemployed people. Therefore, the degree of availability, labor attachment, and seeking jobs show whether a person is unemployed or out of the labor force. Unemployment only serves people willing and available to take the job, while those out of the labor force do not seek employment (Pigou, 2013).

**Types of Unemployment**

Different people encounter different sorts of unemployment. Unemployment might be voluntary, frictional, natural, or seasonal (Goldfarb, 1978). People in the job market are affected differently by these sorts of unemployment. Voluntary unemployment occurs when someone chooses not to work, either because they refuse to work for low pay or because they are pleased with the amount of assistance they receive from the government while not working. When people choose not to work, this is known as voluntary unemployment. Most professionals have experienced this form of unemployment. Some employment, for example, provide obligations and tasks in addition to money (Goldfarb, 1978). This unemployment occurs when a person refuses to work because of low pay (Goldfarb, 1978). As a result, some choose to give up their jobs rather than settle for underemployment.

Frictional employment, on the other hand, concerns those who are between jobs. (Goldfarb, 1978). This situation arises due to job hunting in multiple locations, and as a result,
one works in one place while looking for other alternatives. The pace of pay growth in the workforce impacts real wage unemployment. The demand for workers decreases when minimum wages are raised, or trade unions lobby for better compensation (Goldfarb, 1978).

Furthermore, government and labor unions work to raise minimum earnings and salaries (Goldfarb, 1978). Finally, seasonal unemployment depicts individuals' work patterns. This unemployment is caused by the seasonality of jobs, in which people are hired during the peak seasons and laid off during the low seasons (Goldfarb, 1978). Most people experience job market insecurity because of this situation.

**Historical trends of unemployment**

Although it is easier to discover estimates of earlier unemployment rates, the United States government started keeping official records of unemployment rates in the 1950s (Fay, 2020). The government considered collecting information of the number of unemployed persons to avoid the country from forfeiting the potential output of products and services; thus, the reason is to save the nation, unemployed individuals, their families as well as every other person (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a division of the Dept. of Labor, measures the unemployment rate on a monthly basis via a survey known as the Current Population Survey (CPS) involving 60,000 households who are randomly selected with simple random probability techniques in order to produce the most accurate approximation of the wider population (Depersio, 2022). Statistics concerning unemployment rates in the United States are based on the number of people actively seeking for employment opportunities but cannot secure a chance. This is measured as a percentage of the labor force.

The most recent rate of unemployment in the United States has been revealed to be 3.6 percent as at June 2022 statistics census, increasing later to 3.7 percent in August 2022,
surpassing market predictions of 3.5 percent and reaching the highest rate since February 2022. The statistics also revealed that the trend of unemployment has been constant since March 2022 before it dropped to 3.5 percent in July and rose over 3.6 percent in August. Also, the rate of employment went up by 442 thousand people to 158.732 million persons in 2022 whereas the number of unemployed persons equally rose by 344 thousand to 6.014 million. Consequently, there was an increase in current records on labor force participation rate, rising from 62.1 percent in July 2022 to 62.4 percent in August, same year. In the year 2021, the rate of unemployment decreased from 6.4 percent in January to 3.9 percent in December (Trading Economics, 2022).

In 2020, the year of Covid-19 pandemic, researchers argued that unemployment rates were higher than they have been in the past. That year, the rate of unemployment sharply increased from 3.50 percent in January, to 4.40 percent in March, and then to 14.70 percent in April, the highest so far in the history of unemployment rate in the United States since year 1948 before it dropped down to 6.7 percent year ending December 2020 and continues to drop the following year, 2021. Since October 2009, the rate of unemployment has generally been on the decline, based on the statistical results, with few fluctuations until March 2020, the beginning of Covid-19 pandemic (Trading Economics, 2022) when a great rise in unemployment rate was recorded. According to the study conducted by Falk et al. (2021), the sharp increase in the unemployment rate in the country reached a level that has never been witnessed since the 1930s.

Before April 2020, the rate of unemployment in the United States peaked at 10.8 percent in the early 1980s and by the end of President Ronald Reagan’s second term, it had dropped to 5.3 percent (Fay, 2022). For the second term in decades, statistics revealed also that the Great Recession (December 2007 to June 2009) also caused the rate of unemployment to rise up to 10 percent in the month of October 2009 (Falk et al., 2021) and up until September 2012, it
remained above 8 percent (Fay, 2022). The lowest rate of unemployment, on the other hand, was at 2.50 percent in the month of May 1953, from the periods between 1948 to 2022 (Trading Economics, 2022). However, Fay (2022) reported that the highest unemployment rate in contemporary times and in the history of the United States, which was 23.6 percent, was experienced during the Great Depression in the early 1930s. According to him, before the newest post-war lowest rate of unemployment in 1953, the country’s lowest rate of unemployment was also recorded as 1.2 percent in 1944, a year in which millions of men were serving in the military and the World War II economy was booming. Since 1948, the end of the postwar era, there have been 11 recessions in the country (Fay, 2022).

The emergence of the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic has created another history for the after-comers, making it the third term in decades experiencing another huge rise in the rates of unemployment in the United States. No doubt, the pandemic had severe effects on the American economy and employment. According to Edelberg and Shambaugh (2020), firms and economic sectors were shut down and several people lost their jobs because of the pandemic. Unpleasantly, the increase of people who temporarily lost their jobs and their means of income, as revealed by the statistics labor market, does not sufficiently reflect the economic damages caused by the pandemic on people and companies (Stevenson, 2020). From 6.2 million in February 2020 to 20.5 million in May 2020, the number of unemployed people increased by more than 14 million as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the accompanying economic crisis (Kochhar, 2020). Edelberg and Shambaugh (2020) observed that the former rate became more than doubled and it was a result of the pandemic’s economic downturn.

Compared to the number of unemployed persons brought on by the Great Recession which saw an 8.8 million rise between the end of 2007 and the start of 2010, the increase caused
by Covid-19 pandemic is significantly bigger and more (Kochhar, 2020). In June 2020, 18 million people reported themselves as being unemployed, 3 million reported that they had permanently lost their jobs (Edelberg & Shambaugh, 2020). During the Covid-19 recession, unemployment increased significantly among all worker groups (Kochhar, 2020). However, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected some groups of workers differently than the Great Recession, particularly for women and black men (Kochhar, 2020). The employment rate revealed by Trading Economics (2022) went down by 315 thousand people to 158.111 million persons in 2021. Current records on labor force show the rates dropping to 62.2 % in June 2022 from records of 62.3 % records in May the same year (Trading Economics, 2022).

**Research Hypotheses**

This study aims to understand the relationship between unemployment and crime. Several research works show that unemployment is related to crime. For instance, Jawadi et al. (2021) examines the linkage association between unemployment and crime (both violent and non-violent) and established that a strong relationship exists between the two variables. According to the study, an increase in the rate of unemployment results in an increase in crime rates, particularly non-violent crimes. Costantini et al. (2018) also revealed a positive relationship between crime and unemployment, arguing that unemployment positively affects crime. Phillips and Land (2012) equally examine the association between unemployment and crime rate fluctuations by analyzing crime fluctuations at three different levels. The study reveals that a rise or decline in crime rates is dependent upon the persistence of unemployment and that the overall rate of unemployment has an impact on the opportunities and incentive for crime.

Furthermore, this study attempts to understand how the relationship between unemployment and crime is conditional on, or mediated by, other factors, framed within the
An integrated approach among social control, social learning, and general strain theories. Thus, this research addresses the following hypotheses:

H1. (Direct effects of unemployment on crime) Unemployed individuals are more likely to commit a crime.

H2. (Causes of unemployment) Age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, education, substance use, and mental health influence unemployment.

H3. (Mediating mechanism of social control) Unemployed individuals are more likely to have weak social ties; in turn, more likely to commit crimes.

H4. (Mediating mechanism of social learning) Unemployed individuals are more likely to be associated with delinquent peers; in turn, more likely to commit crimes.

H5. (Mediating mechanism of negative emotions) Unemployed individuals are more likely to feel negative emotions and, hence, more likely to commit crimes.

H6. (Reverse relationship) Individuals who commit crimes are more likely to be unemployed.

**Why Conduct the Study?**

This study aims to accomplish the following objectives. First, I want to understand the factors related to unemployment. Several factors keep specific individuals employed while others struggle to find employment. Specifically, I want to understand how age, race, gender, education, socioeconomic condition, substance use, and mental health contribute to unemployment.

Secondly, I want to understand how unemployment and crime relate through three mediating mechanisms of social learning, social control, and strain and explain the link between unemployment and crime.
CHAPTER 2
UNEMPLOYMENT

This section discusses the relationship between unemployment and the different variables that relate to it.

Education and Unemployment

Several factors increase or decrease a person’s probability of securing employment and education, as a significant indicator of employment, is one of these factors. Education equips people with the skills they need to find and keep jobs. Employment requires necessary education to demonstrate comprehension of the task at hand. Some professions require tertiary and practical knowledge, while others require academic credentials. As a result, those without the appropriate education degree miss out on opportunities. The relationship between education and unemployment, according to Mpendulo and Mang’unyi (2018), is a positive one. Kochhar (2020) revealed a lower rate of unemployment among employees with higher levels of education during Covid-19 downturn. Thus, a person’s education level can be said to be closely connected to unemployment and has the biggest impact (Mpendulo & Mang’unyi, 2018).

The probability that a person will be employed is greatly improved by education (Alçin et al., 2021). According to Blatna (2019), the degree of one’s education has a substantial impact on the rate of unemployment. Thus, a higher level of education may lead to better chances of securing job opportunities (OECD, 2012). Polojeorgis (2022) explains three different perspectives on this relationship. The academic perspective argues that there are certain connections between education and employment, however these connections are not direct. The views of employer rest on the fact that education does not sufficiently prepare students for employment opportunities and fulfill the numerous requirements of the labor market. This places
graduates with a huge burden of having to use their degree certificates to get their desired jobs. The final perspective holds that education does not necessarily translate to securing an employment, not even a better one. This is because education alone is not enough to withstand the fierce competition that exists in the labor market and sometimes a person might even be overqualified for a job position (Pologeorgis, 2022). The huge percentage of unemployed people and the mounting rate of unemployment is also a core indication that the labor market does not have the capacity to provide sufficient employment opportunities (Alçin et al., 2021).

**Substance Abuse and Unemployment**

The relationship between unemployment and substance abuse is mixed and inconclusive (Mossakowski, 2008). Substance abuse has been revealed as a main cause of unemployment. This position suggests that substance abuse causes a person to be unable to secure employment. Prior substance abuse issues are also likely to prevent an individual from keeping their current occupations (Bowes et al., 2013; Sareen et al., 2011). Unemployment, together with loss of jobs has likewise been revealed as a significant predisposing factor for substance abuse and the successive materialization of disorders resulting from substance abuse and risky consumption of alcohols. This revelation argues the possibility of significant stressors such as unemployment or loss of jobs to cause a person to increasingly abuse drugs or become addicted to and dependent on narcotic substances as a way of survival (Boden et al., 2014; Catalano et al., 2011; Henkel, 2011; Mossakowski, 2008). There is also a third argument which suggests that unemployment causes a reduction in substance abuse by reducing the money accruing to an unemployed person to purchase drugs and narcotic substances (Catalano et al., 2011; Henkel, 2011).

With focus on the first suggestion, this paper argues that substance abuse lowers the prospects that a person will be able to secure a job and increases the possibility that a person will
remain unemployed. Empirical evidence have also revealed a higher prevalence of substance abuse and problematic alcohol consumption among the unemployed than the employed (Henkel, 2011). Teixido-Compano et al. (2018) also revealed an association between unemployment and increased substance abuse in both men and women. Furthermore, a study conducted by Azagba et al. (2021) revealed a significant relationship between admissions to substance abuse treatment and the rate of unemployment. The study showed that a nine percent increase in opiate treatment admissions correlates with a unit rise in the rate of unemployment.

**Mental Health Relationship to Unemployment**

Unemployment may come with serious financial hardship and significant emotional challenges (Virgolino et al., 2022), thereby affecting how a person handles stress and interactions with others. A connection exists between youth unemployment and mental health. However, the possibility of a causal relationship is less obvious and would require more evidence for better comprehension of the association (Bartelink et al., 2020). Zuelke et al. (2018) argues that unemployment increases the risk of poor mental health and that unemployed individuals are at a high risk of depression. However, more explanations, apart from insufficient material and social resources, are needed to explain and evaluate the degree of depression risk in unemployed people (Zuelke et al., 2018). Farre et al. (2018) also examined the impacts of unemployment during the Great Recession on mental health and revealed a strong connection between mental distress and unemployment. The results showed that a 10 percent increase in the rate of unemployment caused by a construction breakdown resulted to a 3 percent increase in self-reported poor health and mental disorders in the population affected (Farre et al., 2018).

Following periods of Covid-19 pandemic, the potential effects of unemployment assumed a renewed curiosity. The study of Achdut and Refaeli (2020) showed that greater psychological
distress was independently associated with unemployment which is enhanced by financial stress and lonesomeness and may be lessened via perceived trust, optimism, and a sense of mastery. Posel et al. (2021) also revealed in their study that the loss of employment that was witnessed during Covid-19 pandemic grossly impacted negatively on the mental health and wellbeing of the individuals affected, causing serious depression. Virgolino et al. (2022) revealed an inverse relationship between unemployment and mental health regardless of the economic situation. The study also revealed a positive connection between an increased rate of unemployment and mental health challenges such as anxiety, mood disorders or suicidal ideation which is more severe in both men and young adults. Unemployed individuals were also more likely to commit suicide and experience mood and anxiety disorders.

**Unemployment and Age**

The unemployment rate and people’s employment options differ depending on their age. While Egbewole and Lamidi (2021) revealed no significant relationship between unemployment among young people and age, Ahmad (2022) argued that a relationship exists, and that age level is one of the causes of unemployment. Unemployment and age are known to have a complicated relationship (Katz, 1974). The study of Axelrad et al. (2018) demonstrated that people between the ages of 30 and 44 have a markedly higher chance of securing employment a year after they were unemployed than those who were between the ages of 45 and 59. Older people experience unemployment at a lower rate but for a longer period of time compared to younger employees in other age groups (Katz, 1974). Aging affects the health and availability of a person in the labor force. This aspect makes it difficult for employers to grant employment to older people.

The problem and inability of the older people to be able to secure employment after being unemployed is essentially tied to their ages whereas the difficulties of the young employees are
more closely related to the business cycle (Axelrad et al., 2018). According to Kosanovich and Sherman (2015), the frequency of long-term unemployment rises together with age, and older people have a greater risk of long-term unemployment than younger people. While seniority rights and abundant skills acquired through experience frequently provide older people with protection against losing their jobs, the likelihood of finding new jobs seems to drop with age (Katz, 1974).

On the other hand, it has been estimated that young people are less employed compared to adult people. In the majority of countries around the world, youth unemployment is substantially higher than adult unemployment (International Labor Office [ILO], 2011; Keese et al., 2013; Morsy, 2012). According to Eurostat statistics, 17% of young adults below age 25 in the EU’s 27 member states in 2020 were unemployed whereas older adults was 7%. During the pandemic, youth employment declined by around 8.7% worldwide, whereas adult employment dropped by 3.7% (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2021). When compared to the older workers with greater job experience, job security and have been in their positions for a longer period of time, the younger workers, especially the newest ones, are more likely to be laid off and let go (Furlong et al., 2012).

**Unemployment and Gender**

In 2014, 33.5 percent of all unemployed people were jobless for 27 weeks or longer. Men were slightly more likely than women to be unemployed 27 weeks or longer (34.0 versus 32.8 percent) (Kosanovich & Sherman, 2015). According to Strandh et al. (2013), the rate of unemployment equally affects both men and women. Thus, any differences in the unemployment rate may be due to the variation in representation of men and women in different industries. For instance, during the pandemic, women faced a greater loss of unemployment than men, and a
major reason for this is because of their overrepresentation on the payrolls of firms under two
sectors with huge increase in unemployment rate: the leisure and hospitality sector and the
educational services (Kochhar, 2020). On the contrary, American men experienced a greater rate
of unemployment more than women during the period of the Great Recession. This was because
loss of jobs and unemployment came primarily from the construction and manufacturing sectors
where women, compared to men, are underrepresented (Kochhar, 2020). Overall, Albanesi and
Sahin (2018) argues that the rate of unemployment for the men is always higher than women’s
unemployment rate due to the gender differences in the composition of men and women in
industry where more men are employed than women.

**Unemployment and Race**

Racism affects the ability of people of color to get jobs (Emeka, 2018). Most people of
color get recognized as inferior, thereby getting discriminated against in most cases (Fernandes
& Alsaeed, 2014). As of 2021, the average unemployment rate in the United States was 5.3
percent, the Black or African-American had the highest unemployment rate of 8.6 percent
compared to other races and ethnicities, while white/Caucasian Americans have the lowest
unemployment rate at 4.7 percent (Statista, 2022c). While the number of unemployed Black or
African-Americans was about 1.76 million, the white/Caucasian Americans had the highest
number of unemployed people with about 5.85 million (Statista, 2022d). Among the Hispanics
and major race, Kosanovich and Sherman (2015) revealed that 39.6 percent of Blacks and 37.7
percent of Asians are unemployed and been in the search for work for 27 weeks or longer. On
the contrary, Whites (31.5 percent) and Hispanics (29.9 percent) were less likely to experience
long-term unemployment.

Black people are the only group with wide noticeable gap in unemployment statistics and
a great rate of unemployment in occupations and industries (Kochhar, 2020). Discrimination against black people leads to difficulty accessing higher levels of education, making them unequipped in the job market (Fernandes & Alsaeed, 2014). Black people also encounter lower labor wages and higher turnover rates than white people (Emeka, 2018). Racism prevents black people from getting better employment opportunities, increasing the unemployment rate (Fernandes & Alsaeed, 2014). Therefore, race significantly contributes to unemployment in the labor market. The high turnover rates result from discrimination and mistreatment in the workspace (Emeka, 2018). These factors lead to a higher unemployment rate due to the inability to be welcomed in the workplace (Emeka, 2018).

Black people also have stereotypes that keep them from getting job opportunities. For instance, black people are considered lazy, violent, and criminals (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997). According to Pager (2003), race and the stigma record of black men affected their economic opportunity in the job market. Black men with a past criminal record were less likely to get a job application callback. This aspect affected the men's ability to secure job opportunities. In addition, other black people get stereotyped despite not having criminal records (Pager, 2003). Blacks and Asians face a greater risk of long-term unemployment (Kosanovich & Sherman, 2015). The prejudice against the Blacks and Asian people makes them generalized in negative attitudes and threatens the employment sector. As a result, it becomes difficult for such people to secure employment.

**Unemployment and Socioeconomic Status (SES)**

An individual’s socioeconomic standing also puts them at risk of losing their job or not getting a job. Goodchilds and Smith (1963) revealed a significant link between unemployment and socio-economic status. The study emphasized the importance of SES in the evaluation of
social stress and explained that the longer people from low SES are unemployed, the less likely they are to help others and abide to laws, rules, and regulations. Mpendulo and Mang’unyi (2018), in their study, revealed a positive relationship between unemployment and economic status. This relationship was also explained in a study by Lee et al. (2015) which reveals that people with lower attributed levels of socio-economic status are affected by unemployment.

People who spent their childhood and adolescence in lower SES households appear to be more vulnerable to the negative effects of unemployment (Lee et al., 2015). Unemployment is higher among people with weaker socioeconomic circumstances than those with higher socio-economic backgrounds. People from lower SES also receive lower or inferior education compared to those with higher SES, leaving them unqualified for specific jobs, and thus predicting the high rate of unemployment (Doku et al., 2019).

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter Two entails different explanations of all factors that are related to unemployment. Such factors include age, race, education, mental health, gender, socioeconomic status, and substance abuse. It confirms that socioeconomic status impacts employment where those from poorer backgrounds get inferior education hence being unemployed or getting low-wage jobs. Employers check on one’s qualifications before offering employment, hence education, drug abuse, and mental health issues are of great concern. People’s employability depends on sensitive factors rooted in their gender, age, economic status, and individual education and mental health sector. For example, gender is likely to affect employment, with more male employed than female in society. It mentions how different factors are related to unemployment. Therefore, age, race, gender, socioeconomic condition, education, substance use, and mental health would have direct effect on unemployment.
CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Unemployment is linked to crime through three mediating mechanisms: unemployed individuals have a limited connection to society, their learning of criminal behavior, and the stress experienced by individuals. Some theories that explain these aspects are social control, social learning, and general strain theory. Through these theories, one identifies how an individual breaks the bond with society, how they learn criminal behavior, and the factors that push them to commit crimes.

Mediating Mechanisms of Social Control on the Link between Unemployment and Crime

Social control theory shows the connection between employment ties and deviant behaviors. According to the social control theory, individuals with a weak commitment to work and their jobs are more prone to criminal behaviors (Dizman, 2021; Hirschi, 1969). Social control theory uses a unique approach to explain crime and deviant behaviors. Through the theory, individuals realize the possibility of wrongdoing. Unlike other theories, social control explains why all people are not deviant. However, people with solid employment bonds are more likely to refrain from illegal activities. As a result, employment ties affect the ability of an individual to commit or refrain from criminal activities.

Several aspects of the theory show how individuals are influenced to commit a crime. These aspects include attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief (Hirschi, 1969). These aspects will be discussed as they relate to unemployment.

Attachment

Unemployment as well as loss of employment affects a person’s attachment with families and the society. It strains the relationships between spouses and between parents and children. It
causes disruptive changes in family structures, especially for households with children (Lindner & Peters, 2014). Families who experience unemployment often experience poverty, hardship, deteriorating health, housing stress and strained relationships (McClelland, 2000). If the tensions and problems associated with family instability are as unpleasant and problematic for children as a substantial, growing body of evidence implies, then family instability caused by a parent’s unemployment or job loss can as well have detrimental effects for children beyond the loss of financial resources (Sandstrom & Huerta, 2013). Parents with job loss or without jobs have fewer or no resources to protect themselves and provide for their children. This aspect makes it difficult to get parenting time since most unemployed people spend time looking for jobs; thereby impacting on the overall well-being of the children (Lindner & Peters, 2014). Thus, it can be said that the impacts of unemployment and loss of employment go beyond the parents’ welfare.

**Commitment**

On the other hand, commitment shows the desire to protect society and resources (Hirschi, 1969). This aspect promotes the need to refrain from crime and other deviant behaviors. However, people who lack commitment have a higher chance of committing crimes. Commitment shows the engagement people have in various activities. For instance, young people are committed to attending school and eventually securing employment.

On the other hand, adults engage in work activities and improve their bonds in society. However, the lack of commitment to a given lifestyle affects an individual's ability to commit a crime. When individuals are not committed to a conventional lifestyle, it becomes difficult to engage in developing activities like schoolwork or employment (Hirschi, 1969). Additionally, the lack of commitment does not prevent them from committing crimes because they do not have anything to protect themselves. Individuals with conventional lifestyles seek to maintain such
lives and not jeopardize them by engaging in crime. Therefore, commitment enhances one’s connection to society, keeping one from crime.

Involvement

Involvement affects an individual’s ability to commit a crime. People with higher involvement choose to protect society and refrain from crime. Involvement shows the time people spend on various pro-conventional activities. According to the social control theory, people with more activities to indulge in have less time to commit crimes (Ross & Gross, 2017). Individuals who work are involved in pro-conventional activities. Employed individuals are supervised by their bosses and co-employees, limiting their exposure to criminal behavior (Ross & Gross, 2017). Unemployed people have less involvement in society from other perspectives. Such people get extra idle time since they are not involved in any activities (Hirschi 1969). The idle time can be spent by the unemployed planning and indulging in illegal activities (Hirschi 1969).

Beliefs

Beliefs are the moral codes people live by and help them follow the rules. All individuals that believe in broader society intend to follow the rules. They also keep everyone safe according to the code of character regulation. Seeing society as a more significant place with other people makes it easy to refrain from wrongdoing (Ross & Gross, 2017). As a result, employed individuals refrain from wrongdoing and other activities that may affect the community.

Unemployment also affects the belief system of people. The lack of such beliefs affects their engagement and involvement in society. These aspects show how unemployment can lead to crime. Additionally, criminal trajectories change with one’s situation. According to Sampson and Laub (1993), life events affect people's behaviors. The age-graded theory shows that
individuals are more likely to commit crimes when their bonds are weakened with society (Sampson & Laub, 1993). The independence one gains in society and weakened bonds with families increase the likelihood of committing a crime.

**Mediating Mechanisms of Social Learning on the Link between Unemployment and Crime**

Another theory relevant in explaining the interaction between unemployment and crime is the social learning theory. This theory was developed by Albert Bandura and stated that social behavior is learned by mimicking and observing other people (Akers & Jennings, 2019). According to Bandura (1977), four steps lead to learning and imitating a behavior. One of the steps involves attention which shows how an individual notices a behavior (Bandura, 1977). Baron and Hartnagel (1997) also identify the influence of peer groups on youths and crime. According to the two writers, many youths fall into crime by associating with young criminals of their age gap. People’s attention to a specific behavior affects their ability to learn and imitate the act.

Motivation is essential in social learning theory as it gives one the need and willingness to learn and imitate a behavior (Akers, 2017). Unemployment motivates individuals to learn other ways of survival. Motivation also involves the observance of how actions influence other people. People with motivation and willingness are likelier to imitate and reproduce their practical actions (Akers, 2017). Individuals who do not see the desired outcomes of their actions may not get the motivation to imitate the act. Therefore, other steps heavily rely on motivating social learning to be productive. According to social learning theory, people commit crimes because they are connected to other criminals. They are rewarded for their illegal actions, and they develop pro-crime attitudes. They are associated with criminal models. They are motivated to commit crimes by the rewards associated with committing crimes.
**Differential Associations**

Social learning theory stipulates that crime gets learned and imitated in society. People who indulge in crime gain experiences through engaging with other criminals (Akers, 2017). Associations with criminals make people earn traits that are favorable to crime. As a result, individuals see crime as something justifiable. As mentioned earlier, the motivation to do something leads to the need to imitate an action. As a result, when individuals see the outcome of crime from others, they get the desire and need to learn and indulge in criminal activities (Akers, 2017). This step leads to an increase in criminal activities in society.

Unemployment leads to severe idle time for people. As a result, this makes people find better ways to cope with their idle time. An example entails people joining groups in society to be part of a community. Coping with idle times affects people doing criminal activities to pass the time and stay busy. These instances increase the likelihood of crime among individuals, especially young people. Finding better solutions and activities to occupy one's time is therefore essential.

**Differential Reinforcement**

Differential reinforcement refers to the idea that individuals are more likely to repeat or imitate behaviors that are reinforced or rewarded, while they are less likely to engage in behaviors that are not reinforced or are punished (Akers, 1979, 2017). Reinforcement can be positive or negative, and it plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's behavior. Positive reinforcement involves providing rewards or desirable consequences following a behavior, which increases the likelihood of that behavior being repeated (Akers, 1979; Akers & Jennings, 2017; Brauer & Tittle, 2012). For example, if a person receives praise or recognition for helping others, they are more likely to engage in similar helping behaviors in the future.
Negative reinforcement involves removing or avoiding aversive or unpleasant stimuli following a behavior, which also increases the likelihood of that behavior being repeated. For instance, if a student is allowed to skip a homework assignment after consistently completing their classwork, they may be more motivated to continue completing their classwork promptly.

On the other hand, punishment refers to the application of negative consequences or the removal of positive stimuli following a behavior, with the intention of decreasing the likelihood of that behavior occurring again (Akers, 1979). Punishment can deter individuals from engaging in certain behaviors. For example, if a person receives a fine for speeding, they may be less likely to exceed the speed limit in the future.

**Definitions**

Individuals have various attitudes, values, and orientations toward crime. If the individual whose crime is to be explained defines it as desirable or justified, such crime is likely. Crime is desirable because it meets wants. Internalized rules that more or less prohibit crime are referred to as "justified." Unemployed people see crime as attractive and justified since it allows them to meet their necessities. For instance, if an unemployed person assumes that they must feed their family, primarily through crime, they will indulge in theft. The individual feeds their family but is responsible for the increased crime rate.

**Imitation**

Unemployment affects the behaviors people imitate and learn from others in society. People unable to get jobs are more likely to engage in criminal activities. First, unemployed people are more likely to associate with other unemployed people (Akers & Jennings, 2019). In the process, they may learn the justification for being unemployed. Being idle, they may also learn justifications to involve in criminal behavior. Additionally, admiring the actions of other
unemployed yet successful individuals may entice them to follow their criminal behaviors. (Akers & Jennings, 2019).

Unemployment also deprives an individual of prestige and status in society. This step makes people seek ways of survival and gain their presence in society. As a result, it is easy to admire those with a higher status in the community. For instance, some people excuse crime depending on the situation they encounter. A person can justify the crime because they are unemployed and therefore need a means of survival (Akers & Jennings, 2019). This belief leads to the normalization of criminal behaviors to earn a living.

Unemployment also makes people follow their role models and people they respect to attain similar success levels (Akers & Jennings, 2019). This aspect leads to the desire to indulge in these people's activities to succeed. However, when a person sees their role model or people they respect committing a crime, it is easy to follow the same when the crime results prove positive (Akers & Jennings, 2019). An individual who observes someone they admire committing a crime and gaining from it will be tempted to do the same and earn a living (Akers & Jennings, 2019).

**Mediating Mechanisms of General Strain on the Link between Unemployment and Crime**

General strain theory (GST) differs from the other two theories by explaining the effects of stress on people. Additionally, general strain theory emphasizes how unemployment could be a form of strain. The theory, like other strain theories have their roots in Robert Merton’s version of strain built upon Durkheim’s anomie theory. The GST was expounded by Agnew (Agnew, 1992; Brezina, 2017). According to the general strain theory, social problems such as a lack of quality education and a lack of income can pressure individuals to commit crimes. According to traditional strain theories, disadvantaged social groups are driven to crime because they cannot
satisfy the shared objectives of other social groups. Individuals without jobs, for example, are more likely to fail to reach common, socially accepted goals using legal means. Inequality is expected to have two effects on crime: first, the higher the inequality, the wealthier the potential victim, and thus the higher the returns for potential offenders; second, the lower the relative income of those at the bottom of the distribution, the lower the opportunity costs of engaging in criminal activity for those at the bottom of the distribution (Wu & Wu, 2012).

Types of Strain and Stressful Life Events

According to the theory, strain and stressful circumstances increase an individual’s likelihood of committing a crime. According to the theory, three factors cause strain: failure to achieve a goal, presence of harmful impulses, and lack of positive impulse (Agnew, 1992). People get motivated when they achieve their set goals. However, the inability to achieve one’s goal leads to stress and strenuous situations which later result in negative and adverse emotions and consequently crime.

Several factors also cause strain since individuals get pushed to do illegal behaviors. These situations make people seek ways to solve their issues. Additionally, people with harmful impulses tend to be stressed and cannot make rational decisions (Agnew, 1992). On the other hand, some experiences remove positive impulses from an individual. Such circumstances include losing or lacking something valued (Agnew, 1992). As a result, an individual may try to indulge in activities to replace the loss felt. The circumstances people find themselves in influence their stress level, which determines their decisions.

Unemployment as a Type of Strain

Unemployment is among the causes of stress and straining instances that lead to crime. First, unemployment makes it difficult for individuals to attain their goals (Agnew, 1992). In
most cases, people need jobs and employment opportunities to achieve their goals and success. However, the lack of employment prevents people from experiencing growth and development. Unemployment can also result from getting fired or the loss of jobs in the case of seasonal employment. The loss of jobs is an example of a removed positive impulse (Agnew, 1992).

The presence of harmful impulses also causes stress, increasing the likelihood of crime. Unemployment is an example of an event that can trigger harmful impulses in an individual. It becomes difficult to meet family expectations through unemployment, which may trigger negative emotions (Agnew, 1992). For instance, Richardson (2003) explains how the strain theory forces Osama Bin Laden to be a crime lord. The terrorism he led was due to the radicalization of the Islamic religion, which led him to declare war on Americans and Israelis (Torres, 2013). The strain behind Osama Bin Laden’s actions is the unjust nature of the ridicule Muslims received from other people and the great extent of residents affected due to his actions (Richardson, 2003; Agnew, 2001). Moreover, the radicalization of the Islamic religion caused him anger and hatred toward the people that did not accept the Islamic religion. Similarly, in our case, unemployment causes strain on the lives of the unemployed, and the strain is directed toward crime.

*Negative Emotion and Coping Mechanism*

People experiencing strain or stressful moments undergo negative emotions that affect their behaviors (Agnew, 1992). Several instances affect an individual's reaction during strain, including people's perception, magnitude, social control, and pressure (Agnew, 1992). When people see the stress providers as unjust, it is easy to have higher stress levels. For instance, getting fired from the workplace seems unjust to individuals, forcing them to react in anger, frustration, and other negative emotions (Agnew, 1992). On the other hand, higher stress levels
make it difficult for someone to control their behaviors. The pressure developed by stress also pushes people into negative coping, resulting in crime.

This step leads to frustrations, anxiety, and other negative emotions (Agnew, 1992). As a result, it is more probable for people to indulge in crime as a coping mechanism or means to attain set goals (Agnew, 1992). Crimes like violence or drug abuse may not be directly linked to unemployment. However, the problems and negative emotions caused by unemployment lead to the likelihood of committing a crime (Winkelmann, 2014). A range of negative emotions have been associated with unemployment such as hopelessness, sadness, anger, depression, and low self-esteem (Chambers, 2012; Dooley & Prause, 1995; Galambos et al., 2006). Unemployment leaves people sad, up to the point of depression and renders them hopeless of securing a job later in the future. Some individuals might regret past mistakes and feel worthless. To release or distract themselves from their negative emotions resulting from unemployment, people take strong solace, especially in reliance on God and their spiritual beliefs. Other coping mechanisms include being prayerful and constantly praying to God, talking to others, striving to keep up with positive attitudes, reframing their disappointments and staying optimistic, (Chambers, 2012). According to Kessler et al. (1988), coping behavior helps to reduce the impact of unemployment.

**Anger**

Unemployment leads to emotions like anger which leads to violence. Additionally, cases where individuals get fired from their jobs or seasonal employment, create anger and fear due to uncertainty (Agnew, 2017). Additionally, others may steal the information and sell it to get money for survival. Several aspects of unemployment cause people to act in ways that negatively affect others. Employees can also frame others in wrongful acts to foster their unemployment in the quest for job security (Peterie et al., 2019). Such cases occur when people fear the aspects of
lay-offs and additional training, which reduce individuals in the workplace (Peterie et al., 2019). The desperation to get employed may put people as prey for giving bribes and getting conned.

**Frustration**

Frustration is best described as an irritable distress brought on by restriction, exclusion, and failure (a state of displeased insecurity). Rooted in disappointments, frustration is a chief negative emotion; a short-tempered anguish and dissatisfaction that follows a person’s wish collides with an unyielding reality (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017). Technically, frustration is triggered when a goal is not achieved at the anticipation point in the sequence of behavior (an unexpected non-reward) (Jeronimus et al., 2015). According to Agnew (2017), frustration can be caused by the failure or inability of an individual to achieve his/her aspirations or goals, the loss of positive encouragement or stimuli, and the presence of negative stimuli.

In the context of unemployment, a failure to get a job within a specific time, or loss of one’s job may trigger the negative emotion of frustration. The usual goals and expectations of graduates after getting through college is to clinch a paid white-collar job almost immediately so as to display their skills and put their knowledge and expertise into good use. However, when these expectations are unmet, or their goals are showing signs of non-accomplishment, they feel discouraged, hopeless, worthless, and get frustrated. Frustration sets in when a graduate starts to think about his/her struggles in college, expectations after struggles and compare them with the reality of the labor market in terms of non-availability of job opportunities and attitudes of employers towards shunning recent graduates because of lack of working experiences.

Some workers also face frustration after loss of jobs or threats of job loss. Job loss and insecurity frustrates the psychological needs of employees in terms of competence, autonomy, and belongingness (Elst et al., 2012). Elst et al. (2012) also explained the frustration that arises
when employees feel like they are incompetent, not needed, and are ineffective in an organization. Seasonal unemployment causes both companies and employees to be frustrated. Seasonally unemployed employees are especially frustrated because they face difficulty while catering for the family and children. During the low season, seasonal unemployment results in the rapid loss of job prospects. Employees, for example, may be laid off during the off-season when they require funds for personal reasons. Accordingly, when people cannot achieve necessities or maintain their normal livelihood, they get frustrated (Izaks et al., 2018). Because there is less productivity, firms are likewise frustrated by the loss of personnel and diminished jobs. Furthermore, such conditions impact the families of these people, leading to a higher likelihood of frustration. The inability and failure of family members to meet their desired goals and expectations leads to feelings of worthlessness.

**Depression and Anxiety**

Other destructive emotions brought on by unemployment include depression and anxiety. Depression is defined as a person’s persistent feelings of sadness. Anxiety is a destructive emotion that results from constant concern. Anxiety produces worry in everyday settings, making a person concerned about finding solutions to various issues. Individuals who do not have a job have more time to overthink, feel anxious, and lonely. Unemployment makes people feel sick, inferior, secluded, and embarrassed because they do not know what to tell others when they ask about their jobs. The majority of unemployed persons complain about not being able to socialize with people because of shame, embarrassment, and inferiority (Chambers, 2012). People experience melancholy due to constant rejection, which can develop into depression. As a result, these emotions harm the individual and those around them.

Several studies have linked unemployment with depression and anxiety, such as
Chambers (2012), Dooley and Prause (1995), Galambos et al. (2006), Montgomery et al. (1999), and Wanberg (2012). Studies examining the relationship revealed that unemployed people experience more depression and anxiety than employed people. Unemployment contributes to depression as a result of a person’s lack of career opportunities, stress related to income and financial difficulty, losses in social contact and statuses (being abandoned by families and friends) and long experience of unemployment. abandoned by their peers and families. Furthermore, seasonal unemployment leaves people unprepared to deal with the unknown. These occurrences cause them to constantly worry about managing their finances and job-search methods. People who lose their jobs get anxious about preserving their lifestyles. Changes in how these people use their times are also noticeable. They get agitated and unproductive due to a lack of activity, which leads to lousy thinking. This situation causes uneasiness in the person and those around them. Lack of a job causes anxiety and stress because of the constant worry about finding a new job and surviving. In other cases, a person who is fired feels betrayed, and makes them agitated. Individuals experience anxiety because of these events.

Unhappiness

Unemployment is among the leading causes of unhappiness. On average, many studies have confirmed the association between unemployment and large and long-term reductions in happiness. In other words, unemployment makes people unhappy. According to Winkelmann (2014), happiness is better achieved when the unemployed are given job opportunities and are helped back to work than compensated. Although it is not the unemployed that are only unhappy, unemployment exhaust people the most, depleting their mental capabilities, and are unhappier than employed people. The unhappiest unemployed people find it the most difficult to secure jobs, and thus need to be helped the most because they suffer most from feelings of
psychological scarcity; a condition of depletion of mental resources and poor decision making (Winkelmann, 2014). Most unemployed people complain about feelings of sadness and unhappiness because they don’t work, and that the feelings usually result to laziness and continuous depletion of physical and mental strength (Chambers, 2012).

In summary, unemployed people face personal challenges that contribute to their involvement in crime. However, because the challenges that unemployed people face affect them and many others, it is a social issue. Unemployment prevents an individual from gaining access to financial and social possibilities; it also creates psychological problems and even diseases caused by stress, such as suicide. Unemployment also causes challenges in family life and deteriorates social relations. There are several reasons why unemployment is considered a significant cause of crime. People with a job are more likely than those who are unemployed to follow the rules, meaning that working permits them to gain social control.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter 3 delves into an in-depth exploration of the three theories introduced in the preceding chapters of this research study, namely social control theory, social learning theory, and general strain theory. This chapter explains the mediating mechanisms inherent within these theories to demonstrate how unemployment is associated with crime.
CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE MEDIATING MECHANISMS OF THE THREE THEORIES IN UNEMPLOYMENT-CRIME NEXUS

This chapter addresses existing empirical studies from prior research on unemployment, especially focusing on the mediating mechanisms of social control, social learning, and general strain theories in the relationship between unemployment and crime. This chapter and the sections are tailored towards the research hypotheses investigated in this study.

Unemployment and Crime (Direct Relationship)

Several studies have revealed the direct effects of unemployment on crime. According to an analysis of approximately 30 relevant studies from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia (Tarling, 1982), unemployment is neither the solitary nor even the most crucial crime factor. The studies were concerned with determining the impact of unemployment on crime as one of many factors that could influence crime. The studies were primarily aggregate or ecological; they compared unemployment rates and recorded crime rates for different places at the same time. However, some evidence of a link between unemployment and crime exists, even though crime and unemployment appear to be intricately linked to social-economic failures, with unemployment directly proportional to the crime rate (Tarling, 1982).

In a study of panel data from France, Fougère et al. (2006; 2009) also discovered a positive relationship between youth unemployment and crime where an increase in the rate of unemployment is expected to bring about an increase in crime. The study revealed a significant influence of unemployment on property crimes but no effect from general unemployment. They also find no evidence of a link between long-term unemployment and criminality. Nordin and Almén (2011) used Swedish panel consisting of 288 municipalities and a yearly data from 1997
to 2009 to re-examine the relationship between unemployment, specifically long-term unemployment and crime rates. The researcher looked at the impact of long-term unemployment on crime and discovered that long-term unemployment has a more significant impact than the overall unemployment on crime, particularly violent and property crimes. Recent empirical studies revealed a significant positive relationship between unemployment and crime (e.g., Ajimotokin et al., 2015; Costantini et al., 2018; Jarvenson, 2022; Jawadi et al., 2021). It indicates that a higher unemployment rate encourages people to engage in criminal conducts whereas job opportunities in the labor market reduces the participation of youths in crime.

Schleimer et al. (2022) revealed the impacts of a rise in unemployment during the pandemic on violent crimes such as firearm violence and homicide. On the contrary, Edmark (2005) actively strive to establish a link between unemployment and crime utilizing a mathematical model but discovered that the connection between crime and unemployment is unclear, with mixed outcomes and no perfect agreement. As a result, further research was suggested to obtain more exact estimations that identify and quantify a causal influence.

At the micro level, several studies have investigated the association between unemployment and crime, particularly focusing on the mechanisms through which unemployment can lead to crime (see Adebayo, 2013; Edmark, 2005; Farrington et al., 1986; Hagan, 1993; Papps & Winkelmann, 2000). Unemployment increases the likelihood of crime by creating a sense of frustration, limited opportunities, and economic strain (Adebayo, 2013; Edmark, 2005; Farrington et al, 1986). As Hagan (1993), on a larger scale, unemployment disrupts social bonds and weakens informal social control mechanisms, thereby increasing the likelihood of engaging in criminal activities.

Furthermore, Papps and Winkelmann (2000) argued that the relationship between
unemployment and crime is more pronounced for property crimes compared to violent offenses. This, among other evidence, provides support for the notion that higher levels of unemployment lead to an increase in property crimes, highlighting the economic motivations behind criminal behavior during periods of joblessness for individuals (Edmark, 2005). Hence, the direct relationship between unemployment and crime is attributed to the lack of productive engagement and the allure of quick financial gains (Adebayo, 2013).

**Unemployment and Its Causes**

Existing literature show that there is a relationship between education and unemployment, with research indicating that higher levels of education tend to be associated with lower unemployment rates (see Alcin et al., 2021; Clark, 2011; Mpendulo & Mang’unyi, 2018). The literature show that education tend to have the greatest impact on unemployment. Studies revealed that enrollment in higher education positively impacts on youth unemployment just as high unemployment rates can motivate individuals to remain in school (e.g., Clark, 2011; Clarke, 2016). Although Alcin et al. (2021) strived to investigate the relationship between education and youth employment in Turkey and Spain and argue the capacity and potentials of education in ensuring that jobs are available for the youths, and the consequent reduction in the rate of unemployment, the results revealed otherwise, indicating that the causal link between higher education enrollment and the rate of youth unemployment is not clear. In addition, increasing enrollment in higher education has been observed to have no effect in the reduction of youth unemployment.

Evidence shows that socioeconomic status and unemployment are closely intertwined, with each influencing the other. Individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often face higher unemployment rates (Kosanovich & Sherman, 2015) due to limited access to job
opportunities and resources. Simultaneously, experiencing unemployment can contribute to a decline in socioeconomic status (Doku et al., 2019), as the loss of employment can lead to financial strain and reduced social and economic well-being. Mpendulo and Mang’unyi (2018) argue that people with higher education often get good paying jobs which ultimately improve their socioeconomic status. Goodchilds and Smith (1963) further explained that the longer people from low SES are unemployed, the less likely they are to help others and abide to laws, rules, and regulations. The study also emphasized the importance of SES in the evaluation of social stress. Doku et al. (2019) similarly revealed the likelihood of parents’ low SES, poor educational level and long-term unemployment to increase the risk of their children’s unemployment.

The relationship between substance abuse and unemployment is complex, with evidence suggesting that unemployment can increase the risk of substance abuse, and substance abuse can, in turn, hinder employment prospects. (see Compton et al., 2014; Ettner, 1997; Henkel, 2011; Lee et al., 2015, 2017). This empirical position suggests that substance abuse causes a person to be unable to secure employment and that prior substance abuse issues are also likely to prevent an individual from keeping their current occupations. Other studies (Catalano et al., 2011; Ettner, 1997; Forcier, 1988; Henkel, 2011; Mossakowski, 2008) suggested the causal effect of unemployment on substance abuse. This position argues that unemployment and loss of jobs are predisposing factors for substance abuse and subsequent materialization of disorders. Among them is the study of Compton et al. (2014) who also demonstrated a very strong and robust association between unemployment and the problematic abuse of drugs and narcotic substances. The study revealed a stronger use of and dependence on tobacco, heavy alcohol and illicit drug being a result of job loss or unemployment. The misuse of marijuana has also been associated
Race can be a factor influencing unemployment rates, with racial and ethnic minorities facing higher levels of unemployment compared to Whites (see Emeka, 2018; Fernandes & Alsaeed, 2014; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997; Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Pedulla, 2018; Wilson et al., 1995). Factors such as discrimination, unequal access to education and job opportunities, and socioeconomic disparities contribute to these differences (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997). Wilson and colleagues (1995) examined the labor market experiences of Black and White individuals in the United States, finding that Black individuals faced higher unemployment rates compared to White individuals during the study period. Fernandes and Alsaeed (2014) explored workplace discrimination against African Americans and highlighted how racial biases can affect employment outcomes.

Furthermore, research consistently indicates that unemployment is associated with adverse mental health outcomes. A study by Cygan-Rehmn and colleagues (2017) found a causal relationship between unemployment and mental health through nonparametric analysis across four countries. Their findings suggest that experiencing unemployment can lead to a decline in mental well-being. Similarly, a systematic review by Virgolino et al. (2022) supported this association, with consistent evidence linking unemployment to poorer mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and psychological distress. The review emphasized that the duration of unemployment and the quality of employment play significant roles in influencing mental health. Zuelke et al. (2018) conducted a population-based study and found a substantial association between unemployment and a higher risk of depression, even after accounting for various confounding factors. Unemployment affects mental health through multiple mechanisms, including increased stress, feelings of hopelessness, financial strain, loss of self-esteem, and a
lack of social connections and daily structure, which can contribute to isolation and loneliness.

Age also plays a role in the relationship with unemployment, as different age groups may experience varying levels of unemployment. Young individuals entering the labor market may encounter challenges in securing stable employment due to lack of experience or skills (Axelrad et al., 2018). Conversely, older individuals may face age-related discrimination in the job market, leading to higher unemployment rates (Mossakowski, 2008). Egbewole and Lamidi (2021) investigated the effect of youth unemployment on crime in Nigeria and found that unemployment among young individuals was associated with an increased likelihood of engaging in criminal activities.

Lastly, gender disparities exist in the context of unemployment, with differential rates and experiences between men and women. Women may face a gender unemployment gap, with higher rates of unemployment compared to men (Albanesi & Sahin, 2018). Sandell (1980) examined the unemployment rate of women and suggested that factors such as gender roles and societal expectations can influence women's labor force participation and their vulnerability to unemployment. Additionally, the gender regime, which encompasses social norms and policies related to gender, can affect the relationship between unemployment and mental health among different genders (Strandh et al., 2013).

**Unemployment and Crime: The Mediating Mechanisms of Social Control**

The mediating mechanisms of social control theory in the relationship between unemployment and crime can be understood by examining various aspects such as the impact of employment, socialization processes, neighborhood context, and the role of social ties. Unemployment can influence crime rates through the disruption of social control mechanisms. According to Sampson and Laub (1993), employment acts as a turning point in individuals' lives,
reducing their engagement in criminal activities. This suggests that employment channels individuals away from crime. Paternoster and Bachman (2001) further explore the effect of unemployment on crime and emphasize the significance of socialization processes. They argue that the absence of employment opportunities can hinder the development of prosocial values, leading to an increased likelihood of criminal behavior.

Uggen (2000) supports these arguments by demonstrating how employment can act as a turning point in the life course of criminals, reducing recidivism rates. This suggests that employment not only provides financial stability but also enhances social bonds and social control, thereby reducing the inclination to engage in criminal activities.

The neighborhood context also plays a crucial role in the relationship between unemployment and crime. Stults and Baumer (2007) highlight the impact of neighborhood inequality and community organization on crime rates. These factors influence the effectiveness of social control mechanisms, such as informal social control through community ties, in mitigating the negative effects of unemployment on crime.

Furthermore, Horney and Osgood (2013) emphasize the importance of youth employment in reducing crime. They apply propensity score matching to national panel data and find that youth employment programs and opportunities can have a significant impact on reducing criminal involvement. This suggests that providing employment opportunities to youth can act as a preventive mechanism, reinforcing social control and diverting them from criminal behavior.

The role of social ties in mediating the relationship between unemployment and crime is explored by Berg and Huebner (2011). They examine the impact of social ties and employment on recidivism rates, highlighting the importance of family and community support as protective
factors (see also Lockwood et al., 2016). Strong social ties, including employment networks and familial support, can enhance social control and decrease the likelihood of engaging in criminal activities (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Lockwood et al., 2016).

In addition to the individual-level mechanisms, the social control theory also considers the broader societal factors. Western and Pettit (2010) investigate the impact of incarceration on social control and inequality. They argue that incarceration disrupts employment opportunities and social ties, thus perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage and increasing the likelihood of criminal behavior among the formerly incarcerated population.

In summary, the mediating mechanisms of social control theory in the relationship between unemployment and crime encompass multiple factors. These include the impact of employment as a turning point, the role of socialization processes, the neighborhood context, the importance of social ties, and the influence of broader societal factors. By understanding these mechanisms, policymakers and researchers can develop strategies to enhance social control, provide employment opportunities, and foster supportive environments, ultimately reducing crime rates.

**Unemployment and Crime: The Mediating Mechanisms of Social Learning**

Several studies have examined the role of social control as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between unemployment and crime (e.g., Akers, 2017; Berg et al., 2011; Dugan & Everett, 1993). Such mediating mechanisms could manifest through peer influence, levels of social control, and social disorganization, among others. According to Akers (2017), a large body of research accounts for individual differences in criminal and delinquent behavior. They use one or more social learning concepts and variables of differential reinforcement, differential association, definitions, and modeling characters involving peer groups and the family.
(Krumboltz et al., 1977). As unemployed people have an increasing need for resources to support basic needs, the chances of engaging in criminal activities increase. Here, social learning of crime takes place in the family or rather compels a person to learn from secondary agents such as peers.

Apel and Kaukinen (2008) found that social capital and gender influence the mediating role of social control in predicting crime. They suggested that individuals with higher levels of social capital and stronger social control are less likely to engage in criminal activities, even when facing unemployment. Furthermore, Berg et al. (2011) found that peer deviance mediates the relationship between neighborhood factors and adolescent offending. They proposed that individuals residing in disadvantaged neighborhoods may be exposed to peers engaged in deviant behaviors, which in turn increases the likelihood of their own involvement in criminal activities.

Unemployment can affect crime rates differently depending on various factors. Dugan and Everett (1993) explored the sources of variation in the effects of unemployment on property and violent crime rates. They found that the impact of unemployment on crime is influenced by factors such as economic conditions, social disorganization, and social control mechanisms. These factors may either exacerbate or buffer the relationship between unemployment and crime.

Moreover, gender differences have been examined in relation to crime and desistance. Giordano and colleagues (2002) proposed a theory of cognitive transformation, suggesting that individuals may go through a process of cognitive change that leads to desistance from crime. They found that gender differences exist in this process, with females experiencing higher levels of cognitive transformation compared to males.

Imprisonment can also play a role in the relationship between unemployment and crime. Huebner and Payne (1996) explored the impact of imprisonment on crime rates in Canada. They
found that increased imprisonment rates were associated with reductions in property crime but had no significant effect on violent crime rates.

Several additional articles provide further insights into the empirical status, application, and conceptualization of social learning theory in the explanation of crime and deviance (Akers, 2017; Akers & Jensen, 2017; Akers & Jensen, 2017; Bandura, 1977; Baron & Hartnagel, 1997; Brauer & Tittle, 2012; Costello, 2017; Costello & Hope, 2016; Krumboltz, Mitchell, & Jones, 1977).

**Unemployment and Crime: The Mediating Mechanisms of Negative Emotions (Strain)**

Unemployment and its association with crime have been widely explored, especially through the lens of General Strain Theory (GST) to understand the mediating mechanisms involved. The section provides a framework for understanding how negative emotions mediate the relationship between unemployment and crime (Agnew, 1992; Agnew, 1999; Rebellon et al., 2011). According to GST, unemployment creates strain, which refers to negative experiences that individuals perceive as stressful or harmful (Agnew, 1992). Strain can arise from the inability to achieve goals, the removal of positive stimuli, or the presentation of negative stimuli (Agnew, 1992). The strain resulting from unemployment is believed to lead to negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, depression, anxiety, and unhappiness (Agnew, 1992; Mazerolle et al., 2000).

Anger has been identified as a common emotional response to strain associated with unemployment. Agnew and White (1992) found that anger mediated the relationship between strain and delinquency. Similarly, Mazerolle et al. (2000) highlighted the links between strain, situational anger, and crime, suggesting that individuals experiencing strain may be more likely to engage in criminal behavior as a means of coping with or expressing their anger. Frustration
has also been identified as a mediating mechanism in the unemployment-crime relationship. Rebellon et al. (2011) conducted a study testing the mediating effect of negative emotions, including frustration, and found that strain led to negative emotions, which in turn increased the likelihood of engaging in delinquency.

Furthermore, negative emotional states such as depression and anxiety have been associated with the experience of unemployment and may contribute to criminal behavior. Studies have found that unemployment precedes symptoms of depression and anxiety, which may increase the risk of engaging in criminal activities (Montgomery et al., 1999; Kessler et al., 1988). Unhappiness, stemming from the experience of unemployment, has also been linked to criminal behavior. Wanberg (2012) highlighted that individuals who are unemployed tend to experience lower levels of happiness, which can increase the likelihood of engaging in criminal activities as a response to their unhappiness.

It is important to note that these mediating mechanisms are not mutually exclusive, and individuals may experience multiple negative emotions simultaneously or sequentially. For instance, frustration and anger may lead to depressive symptoms, which in turn contribute to criminal behavior (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017).

In summary, evidence supports the mediating role of negative emotions, including anger, frustration, depression, anxiety, and unhappiness, in the relationship between unemployment and crime. General Strain Theory provides a framework for understanding how the strain resulting from unemployment leads to these negative emotional states, which in turn may increase the likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior. These findings underscore the importance of considering the psychological and emotional experiences of individuals facing unemployment to develop effective strategies for crime prevention and intervention.
**Reciprocal Relationship Between Unemployment and Crime**

The relationship between crime and employment is reciprocal. Crime has an effect on unemployment, where an individual with a past criminal record may lack future employment opportunities. Unemployment leads to crime because people who do not have jobs engage in crime for survival. Crime also results in future unemployment due to a person’s past criminal history. Raphael and Winter-Ebmer (2001) conceptualized crime as a form of employment that consumes time and generates income, although illegal. They explain that a person experiencing chronic unemployment may have to make a choice between staying unemployed with persistent decreased or non-availability of income or potential earnings, and earnings through proceeds from illegal activities and crime. There are greater chances that he chooses the latter, without regrets or risking being arrested and convicted. Thus, unemployment leads to crime because people who do not have jobs engage in crime for survival.

However, Bound and Freeman (1962) and Nagin and Waldfogel (1995) disclosed the implications of this in mitigating chances for future job prospects, thereby increasing the chances for future unemployment. Thus, the real effect of crime on unemployment surfaces. By reason of economic advantage, criminal offenders and crime rates are products of unemployment when a person commits crimes for survival due to unemployment. On the other hand, unemployment can also be a product of earlier criminality when an offender’s past criminal activity reduces his/her future probability to gain employment. An individual’s criminal record impacts their capacity to find work. Minor et al. (2018) discovers that a person without criminal records has a greater chance of securing job opportunities than applicants with criminal records. The factor of ‘criminal record’ affects a persons’ job prospects despite having the requisite academic qualifications. For example, a person’s criminal record limits the types of occupations they can
be trusted with by companies. Some workers hire people who have never committed a crime. Legal and financial professions, for example, require non-criminal personnel because they rely on observing the law and having faith in their employees. As a result, those engaged in criminal activity are not regarded suitable for work.

Willis (1997) argues that companies are increasingly considering crime rates in their locations and places extra care in recruiting workers due to the assumption that persons with criminal past are guilty. Criminals are often regarded as dangerous individuals, thus people having criminal records are seen as a threat to the vulnerable, such as women, girls, and children. The study of Grogger (1995) equally revealed small and short-lived impacts of arrests on employment. As a result, low production and the chance of being fired arise from this effect. To protect the company’s reputation, most companies choose to fire workers who have engaged in criminal activity, or do not bother recruiting people with past criminal records. These details may be inaccurate, but people choose to be cautious, denying one the job. As a result, a person’s current status of unemployment and future employment status is directly proportional to crime.

In some instances, employers may be able to hire someone with a criminal past. Such situations, however, result in excessive monitoring while working. Any inconvenience caused by the individual is met with suspicion and blame based on their track record of a crime or crimes in the past (Minor et al., 2018). This element makes working tough because there is little freedom. Furthermore, excessive caution creates a hostile atmosphere among coworkers. This also has an impact on the workspace’s productivity and growth. The study's research question evaluated how unemployment theories address unemployment. According to my analysis above, unemployment affects social bonding and learning and causes strain on individuals. Such steps lead to an increased rate and ability of unemployed people to commit crimes. As a result, it is necessary to
develop policies that help reduce unemployment as a factor behind the high crime rates. The guidelines should also deal with the issue of social bonds, learning, and strains that lead to crime.

**Crime and Unemployment** (Inverse relationship)

The vast majority of empirical literature focuses on the effects of unemployment on crime. However, the effect of crime on unemployment is hardly investigated and literature is very scanty on this effect. One of the scanty literatures was the study of Calvo-Armengol and Zenou (2003) who demonstrated that unemployment rate of a community increases as crime increases. According to the researchers, crime rates increase as weak bonds lose value in terms of obtaining information contents about employment because there is a higher chance that they will come into contact with criminals. As a result, fewer jobs are advertised via personal contacts, tensions in the labor markets are worsened, and the rate of unemployment increases. To the best of my knowledge, there is no recent empirical literature on the effect of crime on unemployment. A closely related literature examines the effect of criminal records on access to employment (such as Agan & Starr, 2017).

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter 4 presents the empirical evidence of previous studies that examine the connection between unemployment and crime as well as studies that examine the link between unemployment and intervening variables such as educational level, socio-economic status, age, substance abuse, gender, race, and mental health. The chapter also discusses empirical studies that investigated the mediating mechanisms of social control, social learning and strains (negative emotions), linking unemployment with crime. The empirical studies behind unemployment and crime are deeply discussed to conclude that different factors affect unemployment and crime separately in the United States. The support of several researchers
backs up the research problem of my research paper. It concludes that different factors lead to
unemployment and crime and that social control, social learning, and negative emotions (strains)
provide different pathways to crime as a result of unemployment.

Generally, the mediating mechanisms of strain, especially through the negative emotions
and coping mechanisms provide the strongest evidence for the relationship between
unemployment and crime (Agnew, 1992; Agnew, 1999; Agnew & White, 1992; Mazerolle et al.,
2000; Montgomery et al., 1999; Rebellon et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the mediating mechanisms
of social control and social learning theories also provide enormous evidence in the connections.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS

The research study has covered several areas to show the connection between unemployment and crime, including intervening variables such as age, education, gender, socio-economic status, substance abuse, mental health, and race, as well as the mechanisms that link unemployment to crime, discussed under social learning, social control, and strain theories.

First, as evidence has shown, there is a direct relationship between unemployment and crime. While unemployment is not the sole or most significant factor contributing to crime, evidence suggests a correlation between the two. Aggregate studies comparing unemployment rates and crime rates across different locations have found a link between unemployment and crime. In specific studies focusing on youth unemployment in France and long-term unemployment in Sweden, a positive relationship with certain types of crime was observed (Fougère et al., 2006; Nordin & Almén, 2011). Recent empirical studies also support the idea that higher unemployment rates increase criminal activity, while job opportunities reduce youth involvement in crime (Ajimotokin et al., 2015; Costantini et al., 2018; Jarvenson, 2022; Jawadi et al., 2021). However, some studies have yielded mixed results, highlighting the need for further research to establish a clearer causal relationship. On a micro level, unemployment is associated with frustration, limited opportunities, and economic strain, which can contribute to criminal behavior (see Adebayo, 2013; Edmark, 2005; Farrington et al., 1986; Hagan, 1993; Papps & Winkelmann, 2000). The relationship between unemployment and crime is stronger for property crimes compared to violent offenses, indicating economic motivations behind criminal behavior during unemployment (Papps & Winkelmann, 2000).

Furthermore, analyzing the statistics about unemployment is essential in understanding
the issue. Also, as noted in the research, people are affected by unemployment as these effects include age, race, socio-economic status, gender, substance abuse, education, and mental health (Edmark, 2005). For instance, the intervening variable of age argues that young people have a higher unemployment rate than adults due to the inexperience faced by young people. On the other hand, older adults face higher long-term unemployment rates, and this is due to their age and health complications.

The study also reviewed the relationship between race and unemployment. The research findings show that minority communities face discrimination and stereotyping, which affects their ability to get jobs. For instance, minorities are less likely to be employed compared to Whites (Avery et al., 2008). As a result, most people indulge in criminal activities like property crimes to earn a livable wage. The discrimination of such people also leads to negative emotions that make one dependent on drugs. On the other hand, drug abuse causes violence, making them even more susceptible to crime. Therefore, people of different races have various interactions with unemployment and crime.

Social class is another factor that affects the employability of an individual. People with higher socioeconomic status easily find opportunities and connections to get jobs (Peterman, 2018). On the other hand, people of lower social class hardly get employed or get jobs with lower pay rates (Peterman, 2018). As a result, such individuals may engage in crime to get accepted and level up with others in the higher classes. Unemployment makes people in the lower socioeconomic class poorer, which may push them to criminal activities to survive. This factor shows how socioeconomic status affects the poor and lowly in the economy, increasing crime likelihood. As a result, poor communities experience higher crime rates than those in more established areas.
The study also revealed the relationship between unemployment and other variables such as education, gender, mental health, and substance abuse. A person’s level of education directly affects the ability to get jobs with people of lower education having the highest risk of facing unemployment. In terms of gender, men generally face higher unemployment rates since they constitute the majority of workers’ composition and distribution in industries. However, in industries where men and women are equally represented, the effect is equal. In terms of mental health, the general argument is that unemployment increases the risk of depression, psychological distress as well as other mental problems including suicidal ideation and mood disorders, thereby affecting the mental well-being and health of unemployed individuals. The relationship between substance abuse and unemployment is in three ways: Firstly, substance abuse causes a person’s inability to secure jobs; secondly, unemployment causes a person to abuse drugs and narcotic substances; thirdly, unemployment results in a reduction in substance abuse due to a reduction in the money available to an unemployed person to purchase drugs.

The mediating mechanisms adopted in this study argues that unemployment is caused by a weak social control (bond), negative social learning, and strains (negative emotions), and thus predict the likelihood of an unemployed person to commit crime. These mechanisms are explained under three theories: social control theory, social learning theory and strain theory. These theories argue them as different motivating and influencing pathways through which an unemployed person may commit a crime.

Lack of attachment also develops poor relationships, which may cause crimes like domestic violence and child abuse (Hipp, 2010). Therefore, individuals must remain connected to the labor market. Through the experiences obtained, this level also contributes to continual growth and development. On the other hand, unemployment deprives people of the opportunity
to constantly work and acquire new concepts (Hipp, 2010). Some people, for example, have been unemployed for extended periods, resulting in a loss of knowledge or skill. This makes it difficult for such people to increase their productivity, skillset, and morale to receive lucrative opportunities. Most firms prefer to hire people with recent experience, leaving individuals who have been out of the sector for extended periods behind. Furthermore, people detached from society do not focus on how their actions affect others. Therefore, lack of attachment is significant in causing crime. Consequently, finding ways to solve unemployment and promote better attachments and connections is essential.

Commitment is another factor influencing an individual’s ability to commit a crime. According to Hirschi (1969), commitment to a conventional lifestyle enables people to avoid crime. For instance, people committed to work and developing their lifestyles are more focused on achieving such luxuries. Additionally, individuals may seek education and other training to develop skills for employment. Committing to such activities prevents these people from committing crime (Hipp, 2010; Peterman, 2018). However, people who lack such commitments are likely to engage in harmful activities like violence and drug intake. Such instances lead to the likelihood of engaging in crime.

Social learning theory has shown how people learn and adopt behaviors. According to the idea, people copy or imitate behaviors from those around them, such as family, friends, relatives, etc. The reward of behavior is a motivation in social learning. Unemployment makes people desperate to do various activities for a living. When criminals surround people, it becomes easy to imitate their behavior (Tittle et al., 2012). This theory stressed the family and peer influence factors as motivations to commit crime. Having role models - such as a family member or a friend - with criminal activities and experiencing more significant rewards makes people imitate
the behavior and indulge in crime. Social learning can be identified in unemployed people who strive to fit into society and meet the set standards. This theory, therefore, shows a connection between unemployment and crime.

Harmful coping mechanisms trigger individuals into committing a crime. Unemployment leads to negative emotions like anger, anxiety, depression, unhappiness, and frustration. These emotions affect how people relate to each other. Harmful coping mechanisms involve drugs, passive aggression, or violence to escape reality (Smith et al., 1992). Unemployed people risk getting by these emotions leading them to violence toward others. Additionally, these people engage in drug theft and other criminal activities due to unemployment to cope with their spare time. These issues increase the rate of crime among people facing unemployment issues. Therefore, better coping strategies must be set to avoid crime in society.

Seasonal and frictional unemployment contribute to a lack of attachment between employers and employees. Because of the insecurity of job chances, people are employed multiple times and laid off. Furthermore, frictional unemployment refers to situations in which people are between jobs, resulting in a lack of stability. As a result, training personnel becomes more challenging as others depart or seek other opportunities. This scenario has an impact on the attachment required to improve workplace efficiency.

The study also shows the connection between crime and future employment. Criminal activities make it difficult for individuals to get employed. Most professions view a person’s past criminal history and decide whether they are legible for work. For instance, jobs like law require the observance of the law. Individuals with criminal records cannot pursue such a profession in most firms. A criminal record also makes people instantly judge an individual’s behavior despite the possibility of any changes. An individual with a criminal record that adversely affected
children cannot be allowed to take jobs that revolve around children (Pager, 2003). These people get viewed as threats to the safety of a child. Due to criminal records, the inability to get jobs makes people dependent on crime to survive.
CHAPTER 6

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Unemployment taps into an individual’s psychological and sociological aspects, so governments must formulate policies regarding strain, social control, and social learning theories. In general, unemployment increases the chances of criminality as it can lead to hopelessness, lack of self-efficacy, and a sense that bad choices are the only ones available. Policies that aim to alleviate poverty and unemployment and its sociological effects include job creation schemes, training programs that help unemployed individuals find new jobs, social security benefits that help to soften the blow of unemployment, and schemes that provide food and housing assistance (Edmark, 2005).

In addition, psychological effects can be curbed when governments can increase spending on social welfare programs to create a sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation (Toge, 2016). Overall, these policies aim to improve an individual’s psychological well-being while also reducing their chances of engaging in criminal behavior.

Setting strategies to reduce the unemployment rate helps deal with the crime issue. To impact the mediating factors caused by unemployment which are detachment from society, social learning of crime and strain caused by negative thoughts, unemployment should be dealt with first-hand. The unemployment insurance modification strategy provides long-term assistance to the unemployed or encourages them to find new jobs and maintain their skills quickly. Moreover, changes to the unemployment insurance program that encourage jobless people to return to work quickly, stay engaged in the workplace, and even avoid losing their jobs might assist in reducing long-term unemployment.

Workers’ skills improvement through training programs, such as those aimed at
developing general work skills and specific industries and vocations in particular places, may make long-term unemployed people more appealing to employers. The skills and experience determine the benefits of training programs that unemployed people already possess. Basic skills training may benefit unemployed high school dropouts, although specialized training may benefit more highly trained people (Creed et al., 2011; Miyamoto & Shirai, 2006). Higher earnings from the improved activity for young people accumulate over time and are more likely to exceed the investment cost; investment returns for older workers with fewer years till retirement would likely be lower.

Facilitating Employment Transitions. Some jobless persons may be unable or unwilling to take advantage of available job possibilities, and specific policies could help them find work. People may lack knowledge of public employment or the ability to look for them efficiently. They may also have to deal with the shame of long-term unemployment or immobility due to a lack of accommodation.

One of the policies that help is enhancing education and training among young people. Employment opportunities make people commit to a conventional lifestyle that prevents them from committing a crime. However, as noted earlier, most youths miss job opportunities due to their lack of training and experience. This aspect makes them dependent on crime to gain finances and means of survival (Uggen & Wakefield, 2008). As a result, setting up training and education programs helps people gain the necessary skills needed when seeking employment. Additionally, training equips people with skills to set up businesses, making earning income easy.

Another policy strategy to prevent unemployment is giving loans to individuals. Governments have the mandate and resources to ensure their people have better lives. The
government should set plans that provide loans for entrepreneurs, which help them set up businesses instead of relying on formal employment (Uggen & Wakefield, 2008). When such firms are set, other people also get employment opportunities. This step helps increase the number of employed people, reducing crime issues in society. Additionally, having jobs and running businesses keeps people busy, limiting time spent planning criminal activities.

Supporting existing sectors also helps enhance employment. Seasonal unemployment results from economic disruptions where a firm close due to issues like limited finance. This form of unemployment causes uncertainty in individuals leading to low job security. In cases where individuals lose jobs, it becomes challenging to maintain their status, making them seek criminal activities that help them get money (Uggen & Wakefield, 2008). Therefore, funds need to be set aside for businesses and various sectors that help during crises. This step will help prevent unnecessary closure and fallout in the company. As a result, individuals get to retain their jobs, making it challenging to indulge in criminal activities.

Developing strategies to help the unemployed deal with emotions is another significant policy. This strategy helps prevent strain and negative emotions developed during unemployment. As observed, most unemployed people face negative emotions leading them to crime. The government should set plans to allow people to discuss their feelings and get counselling (Uggen & Wakefield, 2008). Through counseling, individuals learn how to deal with emotions and develop strategies to cope with the loss of jobs. This step prevents crime related to negative coping and lack of attachments. Additionally, this strategy helps foster better relationships, making connecting easier. It becomes challenging to indulge in crime through relationships since people's social values, and beliefs develop (Uggen & Wakefield, 2008).

Dealing with issues of racism is an essential factor in preventing crime. Most people of
color lose jobs due to stereotyping and discrimination. This step leads them to depend on offense as a way of survival. The government should ensure that all citizens have equal opportunities when searching for jobs. Additionally, a better education system that promotes inclusivity helps ensure that people of color gain training and experience like the rest (Uggen & Wakefield, 2008). This aspect makes people of different races gain better opportunities when applying for jobs. As a result, the number of unemployed people of race decreases, reducing the likelihood of indulging in crime.

A policy implication that can help reduce the unemployment rate includes setting up correctional facilities and programs to help people get jobs. The correctional facilities help solve the issue of social learning that promotes crime by developing positive understanding. Some people find it difficult to get employment due to their past criminal records. By setting up correctional facilities, individuals learn from their mistakes and gain practices that help them get work (Raphael & Winter-Ebmer, 2001). Showing what individuals go through helps employers build trust in such people, thereby granting them jobs. Gaining skills also helps such people start their businesses, allowing them to utilize their time and resources. As a result, it becomes difficult for such people to engage in criminal activities to survive.
CHAPTER 7
RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the issue of the direct and indirect effects of unemployment, this study recommends that the government create an integrated information system that stores data on all unemployed persons in the country so that they can get unemployment benefits. This data would be used to investigate the impact of unemployment on crime in cities. If these steps are implemented, there will be a significant decrease in violent offenses reported. Indeed, the findings suggest that good social ties may be significant for men with frequent unemployment.

Psychological assistance and social bonding can also help reduce crime by creating a sense of self-awareness and comfort for unemployed individuals. By aiding unemployed people and creating supportive social environments, society can help reduce the incidence of crime and unemployment.

According to the research to address the issue of this study about analyzing the impact of unemployment on crime rates, unemployment, and high crime rates are linked. This report suggests that suitable empowerment policies be implemented to combat the problem of unemployment by increasing access to public finances and giving youth 30 percent preference in public procurement. There is also a need to improve young access to knowledge about inexpensive funding sources, such as the youth fund and a 30% preference in public procurement for youth. This initiative aims to assist unemployed people in establishing projects to help them meet their basic requirements and minimize crime.

This study advises that entrepreneurship training and skills be required at all levels of the educational system to solve the problem of unemployment and high rates of poverty as some of the causes that attract people to crime. A specific team of monitors should control it to ensure
that standards and resources are held accountable. This study also recommends the creation of vocational training facilities in low-income areas to give graduates the necessary technical skills for the employment market. The governments can also use this to participate in indirect employment for casual workers in public projects to alleviate their unemployment and gain experience.

Social learning theory suggests that people learn from observing the behavior of others. If unemployed individuals see others working and being productive, they are more likely to want to do the same (Akers & Jensen, 2017). General strain theory suggests that people are more likely to lash out and commit crimes when they are under constant pressure (Akins et al., 2010). Social control theory suggests that society can use various methods to help stop crime and unemployment, such as providing social support, enforcing laws and regulations, and creating social environments that discourage crime and unemployment. All of these methods work together as a mirror to help understand the contribution of unemployment to individual crime. At the micro-level, these methods can help policymakers and the government understand the leading causes of crime due to unemployment.

This study suggests that to reduce crime and improve the quality of life for unemployed people, the key development stakeholders, such as international assistance organizations and their development partners, should push for a comprehensive economic plan to attract investors and provide jobs. Job provision would be the most efficient method of lowering high crime rates. This research recommends that changes in the employment sector be identified and used in policymaking to curb unemployment-related crimes. Progress in the employment sector should be identified as such changes contributing to low levels of unemployment impact policymaking. Additionally, different crime-related cases due to unemployment assist in understanding the
crime crisis in the present day. The mediating mechanisms of social control, social learning, and strain are essential theories in criminology that mediating mechanisms of social learning, social control, and strain theories explain the relationship between unemployment and crime. Such tools provide an understanding of how to curb crime-related cases that arise from unemployment. This knowledge is essential in developing crime-reducing approaches in the United States under different policies governing unemployment-related scenarios.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Unemployment is a crucial matter experienced by people. People have experienced higher unemployment rates in historical periods than in recent times; hence this study aims at identifying a connection between unemployment and crime. Unemployment causes crime through the development of negative emotions by individuals, need for survival, lack of monitoring, and lack of societal attachment, making it for unemployed individuals to indulge in crime. Factors directly related to unemployment, such as age, gender, socioeconomic conditions, education, substance abuse, and mental health, are essential aspects that are indirectly related to crime. Moreover, this study gives a deeper understanding of how unemployment affects crime through the mediating factors of social control, social learning, and negative emotions.

Therefore, it is essential to set policies that help reduce unemployment and prevent crime. These policies include training and educating unemployed individuals, providing loans for businesses, supporting existing firms that will, in turn, provide job opportunities, providing safe spaces to unemployed individuals, and dealing with racism. Therefore, it is essential to find steps to help mitigate unemployment and crime problems.
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Mediating Mechanisms of Social Learning, Social Learning, and Strain, Linking Unemployment and Crime

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