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NOTES AND COMMENTS

PERSONAL CRIME AND DELINQUENCY RATES IN LOS ANGELES: A SOCIAL AREA ANALYSIS¹

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This paper compares the effects of different measures of the social and physical composition of census tracts on their crime rates for Los Angeles, 1970. The analysis uses three measures of tract composition based on the Shevky-Bell social area typology. In addition to the social rank, familism, and ethnicity measures, several measures of the physical composition of census tracts are included in a multiple regression analysis. As expected, social rank and the ethnicity measures have strong effects on the number of personal crimes reported to the police and on the number of juvenile arrests. Contrary to much previous research, familism does not have a significant effect on either crime measure.

Widespread fear of crime is symptomatic of modern urban life. Research indicates that the majority of urban residents feel it is unsafe to venture outside their homes after dark (Fischer, 1976). These fears are not unfounded since the threat of becoming a victim of a violent crime is nearly ten times greater in large cities than in rural areas (Fischer, 1976:98). Much of the previous research on the location of various crimes within the city has tended to focus on the residential location of the criminal. From the perspective of the city resident, however, it is the actual location of the criminal offense that is important because the potential for becoming a victim is greatest in those areas of the city where the frequency of crime is the highest (Wolfgang, 1968). Several urban sociologists have attempted to explain the distribution and location of crime and delinquency on the basis of the social and physical characteristics of urban sub-areas (see, for example, Schmid, 1960; Boggs, 1966; Pyle et al., 1974; Roncek, 1981).

This paper compares the effects of the social and physical composition of census tracts on their personal crime and juvenile delinquency arrest rates from a social area perspective and attempts to explain the distributions of those rates in Los Angeles for 1970. The research will compare the effects of urban differentiation as outlined by social area analysis using tract level data on both types of officially reported crime. The census tract is used as the unit of analysis because it provides the best available representation of the urban social area. In addition to comparing the effects of social area composition in Los Angeles to research findings for other cities, Shaw and McKay's (1942) findings regarding the deleterious effects of neighborhood instability on delinquency rates will also be examined. Finally, the analysis will also test Polk's (1967) hypothesis concerning the possible added interaction effects of the three social area components.

Shaw and McKay's research on delinquency in Chicago stands out as one of the earliest major attempts to identify crime patterns of urban areas on the basis of their social and physical composition. Using the Burgess concentric zone model of urban development, Shaw and McKay detected a trend of decreasing delinquency rates from the center of the city to the periphery. Areas characterized by physical deterioration and large population changes have the highest delinquency rates in the city. Overall, the highest rates of juvenile delinquency and adult criminality are located in the most socially disorganized areas of Chicago.

The use of the concentric zone model in crime research waned in popularity for two reasons. First, not all cities developed over time in the same way as Chicago. Thus, it is not clear that the Burgess model is appropriate for all cities. Second, several researchers were dissatisfied with the artificial and very large areal units of analysis depicted by zones (Pyle et al., 1974). The net result of this dissatisfaction was a movement towards the application of social area analysis to the study of crime and delinquency.

Shevky and Williams (1949) and later Shevky and Bell (1955) developed the social area typology to examine "the

broad regularities governing the variations in the social characteristics of the population" (Shevky and Williams, 1949:3). They claim that the resulting typology describes and measures urban social differentiation. Using tract level census data, Shevky and Bell (1955) describe this urban differentiation with three indexes: social rank (economic status), urbanization (family status), and segregation (ethnic status). Although the development of these indexes was originally intended to reflect social structural changes in an urbanizing society, Shevky and Bell (1955:3) note that the indexes also "can be used as factors for the study of social differentiation at a particular time in a modern society." Since the social area indexes are really theoretical constructs of urban differentiation and reflect basic social structure, they are extremely useful in analyzing behavior within urban subareas (Quinney, 1964).

The social area typology has been successfully adapted to the study of crime and delinquency in previous research. Polk (1957), for example, finds that the juvenile offender rate in San Diego is highest in areas of the city characterized by low economic status, low family status, and high ethnic status. In a later analysis of juvenile court referrals in Portland, Polk (1967) reports similar relationships. Each of the three social area constructs has been found to contribute uniquely to the distribution of tract level delinquency rates. Polk also hypothesizes that there may be interaction effects among the three indexes that could also contribute to the explanation of delinquency.

Quinney (1964) used the social area typology to analyze rates of crime and delinquency in Lexington, Kentucky. His findings parallel those of Polk for San Diego. Quinney reports that both crime and delinquency rates are positively correlated with areal ethnic status and negatively correlated with economic and family status. He further concludes that high family status serves as a deterrent to juvenile delinquency in that city.

In a study of crime in St. Louis, Sarah Boggs (1966) finds that the three social area indexes are related to crime occurrence in a manner similar to other social area analyses. Boggs' study, as well as others (see for example, Schmid, 1960; Chilton, 1964;

Bordua, 1958-1959), also supports the hypothesis that crime is negatively related to areal socioeconomic status.

In summary, previous research on crime and delinquency using social area analysis has found consistent relationships between the three component social area indexes and criminal behavior. These basic findings are that both crime and delinquency are negatively related to social rank or economic status and familism or family status but positively related to ethnicity.

DATA AND METHODS

The City

Los Angeles is an interesting city to study for several reasons. First, with a 1970 population of 2,816,000 it was the third largest city in the U.S. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1976). By 1979, its population had increased to 2,863,000 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1981). Second, although Los Angeles exhibits a lower violent crime rate than some smaller cities, its 1970 rate was still relatively high at 1,062 per 100,000 population and increased to 1,515 per 100,000 population in 1979. This rate was the seventh highest among the fifteen largest American cities in both 1970 and 1979 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1976; 1981). In addition, Los Angeles, as a newer city, has a wide range of densities across its subareas.² Furthermore, although Los Angeles is the city where Shevky and Bell (1955) originally developed their social area typology, no social area analyses of crime and delinquency have been conducted for that city.

The Variables

The measure of personal crime is limited to those crimes reported to the police. Personal crimes, for the purpose of this research, include murder, robbery, and assault.³ Although the estimated number of crimes that are actually reported to the police vary greatly by the category of offense, the more serious personal crimes involving injury, the use of a weapon, and the loss of property tend to be more highly reported (Skogan, 1977). Roncek (1981) notes that if research on ecological distributions of crime is limited to examining serious crimes, little is lost

in accuracy by using reported crimes as a dependent variable. Thus, reported serious personal crimes provide the best single estimate of the number and the location of personal crimes, in general.

The measure of delinquency used in this research is the total number of juvenile arrests made in each census tract of Los Angeles during 1970. The use of these data presents two potential problems. First, by using official arrests records, it is virtually impossible to estimate the extent of "hidden delinquency." Although attempts have been made to uncover the extent of undetected youthful involvement with crime using self-report data, such data are unavailable for the present analysis. Second, there may be a built-in bias in police arrests of juveniles (Black and Reiss, 1970). There is some evidence that lower class, black youths are arrested more frequently than upper or middle class whites (Black and Reiss, 1970). Despite these limitations, however, official records of juvenile arrests represent the best available data on the extent and location of delinquent activity at the tract level.

All the remaining variables are from the census tract reports for 1970. The 1970 data are used because the 1980 census data are not yet available. Three indexes reflecting the social differentiation of census tracts in Los Angeles are constructed following the theoretical formulations proposed by Shevky and Bell's (1955) social area analysis. The index of social rank is constructed on the basis of factor scores derived from a principal component factor analysis of theoretically grouped variables. The principal components analysis used to create the index includes only those variables that are theoretically related to the underlying concept of social rank. This technique is used rather than a factor analysis of all the predictors because the single factor analysis procedure could result in a theoretically uninterpretable factor. The variables included in the social rank analysis of principal components are median number of years schooling completed, the percentage of males over 16 who are unemployed mean housing value, and median family income. The social rank index is then constructed using the factor score estimates from the one statistically significant emerging factor.⁴

The same procedure is used to construct an index of familism. Variables entered into the principal components analysis include the percentage of female-headed families, the percentage of husband-wife families, and the percentage of females in the labor force. Again, one significant factor emerged and the index is computed using the resultant factor scores.⁵ Factor analysis is used to create the indexes so as to conceptually clarify the interpretation of the results. The use of the factor score indexes rather than using each variable separately avoids spreading the variance among the predictors that may actually be indicators of the same construct. This technique also avoids possible problems with multicollinearity that may arise when using a large number of independent variables that are intercorrelated.

Two measures of the ethnic status of the census tracts are used in the analysis; percent black and the percent Spanish. These two measures of ethnicity are used because they represent the two major minority groups in Los Angeles. In 1970, 17.5 percent of the city was black and 18 percent was Spanish (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1976). The two variables are entered into the analysis separately to allow a comparison of the effects of two different types of minority populations on personal crime and juvenile arrests. To test Polk's interaction hypothesis, however, the two ethnicity measures are summed to provide a general index of the minority status of different tracts. This is done to simplify the interaction term used in subsequent analyses. Although Shevky and Bell (1955) suggest that the three indexes be broken down into categories resulting in a 32 cell typology, such a procedure here would result in a loss of valuable information. Therefore, all three components are left as continuous variables.

In addition to the three social area measures, three measures of the physical and spatial characteristics of each census tract and one measure of the tract population are also included in the analysis.⁶ The first physical variable is density, measured as the number of persons per acre in the tract. Empirical research on the effects of density has not produced a strong argument for the existence of strong independent effects of density

on behavior (Verbrugge and Taylor, 1980) nor has the theoretical link between density and behavior been adequately assessed (for excellent reviews of this research see Roncek, 1975; Choldin and Roncek, 1976; Choldin, 1978; Verbrugge and Taylor, 1980). Some previous research on crime and delinquency has demonstrated a connection between density and crime. Verbrugge and Taylor (1980) note that most sociological research on the effects of density on behavior assume a negative model. That is, increased density produces negative behavioral outcomes for city residents. In the case of crime, increased density should increase the amount of criminal activity in an area.

The second physical variable included in the analysis is the percentage of the population over five years old living in the same house in 1970 as 1965. This variable represents a measure of the stability of the census tract population. Shaw and McKay (1942) report that neighborhood instability is a primary force in producing juvenile delinquency. It is hypothesized that instability will have a similar effect on personal crime.

The final physical variable included in the analysis is the tract's vacancy rate. Vacant buildings provide an environment conducive to the commission of criminal acts by providing the criminal with suitable hiding places, as well as unobserved avenues of escape. Furthermore, vacant buildings are difficult to watch because they represent nondefensible space (Newman, 1973; 1980).

The percentage of males in the population aged 15 to 19 is included in the analysis of juvenile arrests because this segment of the population represents the group that is most often involved in delinquent activity. The age category is extended to include males aged 15-24 for the analysis of personal crimes for the same reason.

The three social area components and the four variables representing the physical and age composition of the census tracts are entered into a multiple regression analysis. This statistical technique is used for three reasons. First, multiple regression allows an examination of the direct effects of each of the variables on both personal crime and delinquency arrests.

Second, regression analysis allows for comparisons of the similarities and differences of those effects on each of the dependent variables. Third, it allows for an examination of the non-linear interaction effects among the social area indexes hypothesized by Polk (1967).

The use of aggregate measures always presents the potential problem of committing the ecological fallacy. The ecological fallacy occurs when ecological correlations are assumed to equal individual correlations (Robinson, 1950). Since Robinson's famous paper on the subject, a number of authors have argued that his critique of ecological analyses was too harsh (see, for example, Menzel, 1950; Goodman, 1963; Allardt, 1969; Valkonen, 1969). This research examines differences in crime rates within census tracts and makes no attempt to impute the results to individuals within different areas of the city. Thus, the goal of this research is to determine which urban subareas are potentially the most dangerous for all its residents and does not purport to generalize the results to specific individuals.

RESULTS

Table 1 contains the zero-order correlations, means, and standard deviations of the variables in the analysis. The correlations indicate that the social area indexes have moderate correlations with both the number of personal crimes and the number of juvenile arrests. As expected, both social rank and familism are negatively correlated with personal crimes and with juvenile arrests. Ethnicity is positively correlated with both dependent variables. None of the physical variables is highly correlated with either measure of crime although the signs of the correlations are in the hypothesized direction. The inter-correlations among the predictors indicate that areas of high social rank also tend to be high on the familism index and have lower percentages of minority population. High status areas also tend to have lower vacancy rates and lower density. In addition, areas characterized by a high degree of familism appear to be more stable.

Table 1
Zero-order Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of the Variables

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Juvenile Arrests | 1.000 | .753 | .412 | .649 | .768 | -.453 | -.226 | .505 | .132 | -.090 | .233 | .072 | .037 | .461 | .119 |
| 2. Personal Crimes | | 1.000 | .645 | .930 | .976 | -.637 | -.478 | .682 | .395 | -.205 | .373 | -.081 | -.021 | .696 | .045 |
| 3. Murders | | | 1.000 | .577 | .627 | -.420 | -.280 | .459 | .237 | -.144 | .262 | -.050 | -.024 | .503 | -.024 |
| 4. Robberies | | | | 1.000 | .829 | -.551 | -.502 | .583 | .426 | -.203 | .361 | -.164 | -.078 | .647 | -.044 |
| 5. Assaults | | | | | 1.000 | -.646 | -.433 | .695 | .351 | -.193 | .356 | -.026 | -.014 | .678 | .096 |
| 6. Social Rank | | | | | | 1.000 | .542 | -.685 | -.457 | .235 | -.362 | .073 | -.124 | .512 | -.342 |
| 7. Familism | | | | | | | 1.000 | -.389 | -.593 | .527 | -.466 | .331 | -.022 | .391 | -.034 |
| 8. Ethnicity | | | | | | | | 1.000 | .367 | -.025 | .301 | .008 | -.035 | .814 | .395 |
| 9. Density | | | | | | | | | 1.000 | .359 | .205 | -.286 | -.038 | .280 | .173 |
| 10. Stability | | | | | | | | | | 1.000 | -.407 | .217 | -.197 | .032 | -.092 |
| 11. Vacancy Rate | | | | | | | | | | | 1.000 | -.109 | -.071 | .281 | .061 |
| 12. % Males 15 - 19 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1.000 | .744 | .019 | -.016 |
| 13. % Males 15 - 24 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1.000 | -.061 | .038 |
| 14. % Black | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1.000 | -.215 |
| 15. % Spanish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1.000 |
| Mean | 34.05 | 48.61 | .45 | 16.23 | 31.93 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 35.96 | 16.01 | 45.01 | 4.44 | 4.06 | 7.97 | 17.62 | 18.33 |
| S.D. | 34.42 | 50.03 | .92 | 19.22 | 32.32 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 34.33 | 9.96 | 12.26 | 3.29 | 1.92 | 3.14 | 32.33 | 20.45 |

N = 719

Table 2 contains the results of the multiple regressions on the number of juvenile arrests and the total number of personal crimes reported for census tracts. Social rank and both ethnicity measures have significant effects on juvenile arrests. The beta for familism in this equation is not statistically significant at the .05 level. Two physical variables have significant effects on juvenile arrests; density and neighborhood stability. While the effect of stability is negative as hypothesized, the coefficient for density is also negative rather than positive as expected.

Table 2

Regression Results: Juvenile Arrests and Total Personal Crimes

| | Juvenile Arrests | | Total Personal Crimes | |
|----------------|------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| | b | Beta | b | Beta |
| Social Rank | -8.549* | -.247* | -14.613* | -.291* |
| Familism | 2.014 | .057 | .770 | .015 |
| % Black | .436* | .410* | .814* | .526* |
| % Spanish | .225* | .134* | .088 | .036 |
| Density | -.395* | -.112* | .298 | .058 |
| Stability | -.287* | -.102* | -.490* | -.120* |
| Vacancy Rate | .357 | .034 | 1.033* | .068* |
| % Males 15-19 | 1.060 | .059 | | |
| % Males 15-24 | | | -.847* | -.053* |
| R | .557 | | .787 | |
| R ² | .311 | | .620 | |

* p ≤ .05

Social rank and percent black have significant effects on personal crimes. In addition, vacancy rate has a positive and statistically significant effect on that crime measure. In this equation, the coefficient for density is positive but is not significant at .05. Neighborhood stability has a significant negative effect on personal crimes. In both equations, percent black has the strongest effect on the dependent variables followed by social rank.

Table 3 contains the regression results for each of the three personal crimes run separately. In all three equations, percent black has the strongest effect on reported crime. Percent Spanish

is significant in the assault equation only. The coefficients for percent black in all three equations are positive. Social rank has significant negative effects on murders, robberies, and assaults. Familism is a significant predictor only in the murder equation while vacancy rate has a statistically significant positive effect on robbery only. Thus, areas with a higher proportion of vacant buildings apparently provide the criminal with excellent hiding places because of the lack of surveillance by police and other neighborhood residents. Density has a significant and positive effect on robbery only while neighborhood stability is a significant predictor of all three personal crimes.

Table 3

Regression Results: Individual Personal Crimes

| | Murder | | Robbery | | Assault | |
|----------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|----------|--------|
| | b | Beta | b | Beta | b | Beta |
| Social Rank | -.209* | -.227* | -4.204* | -.218* | -10.210* | -.314* |
| Familism | .117* | .125* | -1.206 | -.061 | 1.859 | .056 |
| % Black | .011* | .403* | .259* | .436* | .543* | .543* |
| % Spanish | -.001 | -.032 | -.054 | -.057 | .143* | .090* |
| Density | .003 | .033 | .256* | .128* | .040 | .012 |
| Stability | -.011* | -.146* | -.120* | -.077* | -.359* | -.136* |
| Vacancy Rate | .018 | .065 | .487* | .083* | .528 | .054 |
| % Males 15-24 | -.016 | -.056 | -.580* | -.094* | -.250 | -.024 |
| R | .558 | | .738 | | .778 | |
| R ² | .311 | | .544 | | .605 | |

* p ≤ .05

Table 4 contains the results of the regression equations for juvenile arrests and personal crimes with an interaction term combining the three social area indexes added. This interaction term is forced into the equation after the original variables in order to assess its unique contribution to the explained variance and to examine the changes in the effects of the independent social area measures. The ethnicity variable, combining both percent black and percent Spanish, is transformed by multiplying by a factor of negative one. Thus, the negative signs of the regression coefficients indicate that there are more reported

personal crimes and juvenile arrests in areas with higher concentrations of minority population. This is done to allow an easier interpretation of the resulting interaction effects. The three way interaction of social rank, familism, and ethnicity, then, represents the effect of predominately white, high social rank, high familism areas on the number of juvenile arrests and personal crimes. The three way interaction term adds only around 1 percent to the variance explained in juvenile arrests. The interaction term has a stronger effect on the number of reported personal crimes, however. In that equation, the interaction term increases the variance explained by about 5 percent. It appears that any effects of familism on the number of reported personal crimes are mediated through social rank and ethnicity.

Table 4

Regression Results With Interaction Term Included

| | Juvenile Arrests | | | Total Personal Crimes | | |
|--|------------------|--------|------|-----------------------|--------|------|
| | b | Beta | u.v. | b | Beta | u.v. |
| Social Rank | -7.430* | -.215* | | -10.674* | -.213* | |
| Familism | 2.015 | .057 | | -.025 | -.000 | |
| Ethnicity** | -.358* | -.357* | | -.552* | -.379* | |
| Social Rank x Familism x Ethnicity | -.067* | -.114* | .009 | -.209* | -.224* | .049 |

* p ≤ .05

**Ethnicity is % black and % Spanish summed and multiplied by -1.

SUMMARY

This analysis compares the effects of the social and physical composition of census tracts on their personal crime and juvenile arrest rates. Multiple regression is used to explain the variation in the number of reported personal crimes and the number of juvenile arrests in each tract in Los Angeles for 1970. Specifically, the analysis assesses the effects of social area composition, as measured by indexes of social rank, familism, and ethnicity on the amount of criminal activity in urban subareas. In addition,

measures of the physical character of the census tracts are included in the analysis. A social area analysis allows a comparison of results with those reported for other large American cities, as well as providing a useful theoretical framework from which to study urban behavior. In general, some of the findings reported here are consistent with previous social area research while other findings are not.

One of the most interesting findings of this research is the nonsignificant effect of familism on the number of juvenile arrests and reported personal crimes. In previous research, familism has been consistently shown to have a negative effect on delinquency rates. This findings has led Quinney (1964) to conclude that a high degree of familism serves as a deterrent to delinquent behavior. For Los Angeles, however, this is not the case. The direct effect of familism on the number of juvenile arrests is not significant in these data. The other two social area measures, social rank and ethnicity (as measured by percent black and percent Spanish), both have significant effects on juvenile arrests, however, and the signs of the coefficients are in the hypothesized direction.

The results of the regression analysis for the total number of reported personal crimes are similar to the results reported for the analysis of juvenile arrests. Of the social area measures, only social rank and percent black have significant effects on the number of personal crimes reported within a census tract. The effect of social rank is negative and the effect of percent black is positive. The effect of percent black on personal crimes is the strongest in the equation.

In their analysis of juvenile delinquency in Chicago, Shaw and McKay (1942) report that neighborhood stability over time has a deterrent effect on delinquent involvement within different areas of the city. For Los Angeles in 1970, stability has a significant negative effect on both the number of juvenile arrests and the number of reported personal crimes for census tracts. Thus, areas with a more stable population have fewer reported personal crimes and fewer juvenile arrests.

Other researchers have demonstrated the deleterious effects of high density of urban residents. That is, high density produces

stressful environments that are conducive to increases in pathological behavior. The results presented here do not support this contention, however. Density has a significant positive effect on the robbery measure only. Although density does have a significant effect on juvenile arrests; that effect is negative rather than positive as would be expected. This finding is apparently related to the relationship between density and areal stability. In Los Angeles, more stable neighborhoods tend to have higher densities. This may be due, perhaps, to the "spread-out" nature of residential living arrangements as compared to other cities where residences are concentrated.

Two physical variables are significant predictors of crime; vacancy rate and neighborhood stability. The effect of vacancy rate on personal crime is positive, as expected. Thus, vacant buildings represent a form of nondefensible space (Newman, 1973; 1980) that provides an environment that may be conducive to the commission of personal crimes, especially robberies.

Polk's hypothesis concerning the additional interaction effect among the three social area indexes on crime and delinquency is supported by these data. The three way interaction of social rank, familism, and ethnicity has significant effects on both personal crimes and juvenile arrests. Thus, areas with low social rank, low degrees of familism, and a high concentration of minority population tend to have more personal crimes reported to the police and have more juvenile arrests. Furthermore, it appears that any possible effect of familism on personal crimes is mediated through social rank and ethnicity.

The question of police bias in juvenile arrests cannot be directly addressed by these data. The zero-order correlation between the number of juvenile arrests and the number of reported personal crimes, however, is both positive and strong. In addition, each residential census tract in the city has at least one juvenile arrest. When the correlation between personal crimes and juvenile arrests is controlled for ethnicity, there is only a slight decrease in the magnitude of the coefficient. Therefore, if there is a police bias in juvenile arrests, it appears that the police are directing their attention to high crime areas.⁷ It is

difficult to unravel the actual connection between police bias and juvenile arrests because high crime areas also tend to have large concentrations of minorities as well. Therefore, it is impossible to determine from these data whether the police arrest a disproportionate number of black and Hispanic youths in these areas.

The general consistency of the results of analyzing the effects of social area composition in Los Angeles with previous research in other cities indicates the utility of social area analysis as a technique for studying urban crime and delinquency across cities. The general trends in the relationships between the social area indexes and crime have been reported for several cities with similar results. The fact that, for Los Angeles, familism does not have a deterrent effect on juvenile arrests or personal crime may be a result of using the factor score index construction technique which allows for the use of a more diverse set of variables in the analysis. This technique has not been used in previous social area analyses of crime and delinquency. The factor score index construction allows the variables to vary from city to city and does not require that variables be forced into the index in the same way across cities. This technique results in an index that ranks each tract in the city by its relationship with other tracts. This implies that the social composition of urban subareas may in fact operate differentially across cities. Further research in other large cities using this type of index construction may reveal some general effects of urban differentiation of crime rates.

FOOTNOTES

1. The author gratefully acknowledges financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation in the Ford-Rockefeller Program in Social Science, Law and Population Policy, and the Center for Population Research of the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (Grant RO 1HD0831-01). Dennis W. Roncek, Anthony Ragona and anonymous reviewers provided helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper which was presented at the 1979 annual meetings of the Midwest Sociological Society. Penny L. Havlicek also provided helpful comments on the revised version of the paper.

2. Gross density ranges from a minimum of less than one person per acre to a maximum of 58.198 persons per acre with a mean of 16.007 persons per acre based on a total of 719 census tracts.
3. Data on the number and location of rapes are unavailable.
4. The equation used to construct the social rank index is as follows:

$$\text{SOCIAL RANK} = .18364 * (\text{med. No. yrs. school compl.} - 12.3319) / 4.0805$$

$$- .34293 * (\% \text{ males unempl.} - 7.1335) / 3.7149$$

$$+ .39044 * (\text{mean housing value} - 28323.3359) / 11145.3984$$

$$+ .42114 * (\text{med. Family income} - 8948.6992) / 4509.6016$$
5. The variables entered into the principal components analysis and the subsequent significant factor actually represent a familism index that is in the reverse of the desired order. In order to insure simplicity and consistency with previous research, the entire equation is multiplied by -1. The familism index is constructed as follows:

$$\text{FAMILISM} = -1 * (.44882 * (\% \text{ multi-unit dwellings} - 29.9537) / 26.4660$$

$$- .41132 * (\% \text{ H-W families} - 80.4798) / 28.0208$$

$$+ .43167 * (\% \text{ fem.-headed families} - 16.4260) / 9.4990$$

$$+ .30302 * (\% \text{ fem. in labor force} - 45.5435) / 8.5394$$
6. Initially, a measure of overcrowding was also included in the analysis. A Haitovsky heuristic Chi-square statistic which measures the extent of possible multicollinearity among the independent variables revealed significant multicollinearity was present. An examination of the correlation matrix indicated that the overcrowding measure was a key contributing factor to the problem. The variable was subsequently dropped from the analysis. A Haitovsky test on the remaining independent variables revealed that multicollinearity was no longer a problem. For a detailed explanation of the computation and use of the Haitovsky heuristic Chi-square statistic, see Rockwell (1975).
7. The zero-order correlation between the number of juvenile arrests and total number of personal crimes is .75. When areal ethnic status is controlled, the first order partial correlation drops slightly to .62.

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DE/STRUCTURING THE STRUCTURALIST ACTIVITY
A CRITIQUE OF SELECTED FEATURES OF
THE STRUCTURALIST PROBLEMATIC

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This essay represents an attempt to critically assess the intellectual orientation often termed 'structuralism.' In particular, the essay is concerned with European, and even more specifically French, structuralism as displayed in the writings of Louis Althusser, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and C. Levi-Strauss. The analysis indicates that despite a novel language, an often rigorous character, and some interesting, indeed exciting, intellectual constructions, structuralism is very much a child of positivism. The positivism/structuralism relationship is most clearly revealed when structuralism is contrasted with Marxian social inquiry. For comparative and illustrative purposes, then, the essay contrasts structuralism and Marxism.

For all its possibilities, structuralism was stillborn and to know it now is to seize its character as an instantaneous transformation. Nietzsche would, of course, have said that it appeared in the 'hour of its shortest shadow' (Bouchard; in Foucault, 1977:16).

Structuralism "was" an intellectual *tour de force* whose understandability was never particularly great. Shrouded in the argot of linguistics, it managed to present itself as an intellectual posture to be reckoned with; yet always on the far side of comprehension. This was its public image. It was an enigma for all those honest social theorists who sought to construct a modern social science predicated upon humans in the real world. By its very enigmatic status, however, structuralism was deemed important. The claim by Bouchard that structuralism has expired is historically inaccurate and naive, for structuralism is far from dead. It lives in the form of a hundred pedantic syntheses with the orientations it once seemingly opposed.