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THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON CRIME

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Abstract: The focus of this paper was to look at the impact of culture on crime. Data, except for Religion Adherence Rates, came from the 2007 County and City Data Book. Religion adherence rates came from for the Association of Religion Data Archives. The dependent variables were total crime, violent crime, and property crime rates. The main independent variables used in the analyses were those that measured aspects of culture. These variables are religious adherence rates, percent republication, and net immigration. Religious adherence rate had a weak, negative, and statistically significant association with total crime rate. A similar result occurred when examining religion adherence rate's association with property crime. The association between religion adherence rate and violent crime rate was weak and statistically non-significant. The sex ratio had a negative, weak, and statistically significant association with crime rates. Percent urban had a positive, moderate, statistically significant association with crime rates. South had a positive, weak and statistically significant association with crime rates.

Keywords: culture; crime; religion; race; class

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What is Crime? The formal definition of a crime is an act that contravenes the original criminal law. However, if we consider the broader social processes that give it meaning, it is apparent that, there is much more to defining crime, than simply referring to the text of a statute. "Law can be said to have a distinctly social bases; it both shapes—and is shaped by—the society in which it operates "(Comack & Brickey, 1991:15)." A host of social forces and events shape how we conceive certain behaviors and influence our choice of intervention strategies in this respect, the process of determining what constitutes an infringement of a law and then how we deal with that behavior is ongoing, fluid and dynamic. These determinations are not necessarily characterized by high levels of consensus, let alone based on absolutes (Bittle, 2006).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various scholars have observed that the way we understand and respond to certain behaviors is more a reflection of how society is structured than an indication of inherent problems with individual who are labeled as criminals. In the 1940's for example, Edward Sutherland introduced the concept of white-collar crime and, in the process, challenged the prevailing notion that crime was unequally a lower-class phenomenon. Other critical scholars followed, exploring the definition of crime and its control, revealing considerable gap and tensions between the written law and the law as is it lived and enforced (Bittle, 2006).

If criminal are characterized as black, poor, or young, then a significant proposition of the class that struggles with the failures of the economic system can be repressed by the Criminal Justice System. Also, by constructing a picture of who is most likely to be a criminal, those who use the rhetoric create stereotypes which they can use in their fear-mongering, scape-goating by the Criminal Justice System can also feed anti-immigration attitudes and policies and deflects people's attention from the failure they are experiencing in the system.

For all these reasons, the law and order panic must be seen for what it is: a means of perpetuating racism which provides an ideological cover for the failures of the systems supports the maintenance of the ruling class and functions as a tool of social control which divides working class people (Bender, 2005).

On the other hand, the law and order agenda of right wing politicians continues to shape perceptions that crime, particularly violent crime, is spiraling out of control. As a result, while other areas of government appending are cut back, criminal justice continues to be a burgeoning industry. In fact, the crime control industry has exploded in countries like the United States, where state and local governments today, spend more on the criminal justice system than on education (Blunder, 2005).

There is certainly no escaping the relationship between the question of race and crime. In addressing the issue, it is almost impossible to talk honestly about the interaction of the two without offending or even angering both majority and minority group members. The truth is much too terrible—race and racism continue to shape American life and the Criminal Justice System (Pettitway, 2006).

A parallel model of a minority group's response to the ravages of community violence, particularly among its youth, is worthy of comparison. In the early 1990's, a group of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) decided to address the escalating and devastatingly waves of violence, particularly among African American males across the United States. The psyche of young people in communities of color in those days was aptly captured by Louis Stokes, retired Congressman from Ohio, who noted that young people who live in crime-ridden environments are beginning to accept violence as a way of life. Instead of planning their future, they are planning their funerals ... because they anticipated their death before reaching the age of 20. The Congressman went on to express his disgust with the state of affairs when he noted that, "it is a sad day in America when its children are preoccupied by the possibility of premature death due to violence (Podney & Johnson, 2006:1).

It was within this background in 1992 that a group of sixteen (16) HBCU presidents signed a memorandum of understanding to establish the consortium of Research and Practicum on minority males, which later became known as the Minority Male. With initial funding of \$4,335 million from the Office of Minority Health, Department of Health and Human Services, the Min-Male consortium under the administration of a management team located at Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio, launched a three year cooperative agreement (1994 – 1997), known as A Series of Models to Prevent Minority Male Violence, after establishing Family Life Centers on or near the Campuses of nineteen (19) colleges and universities to provide violence prevention services to at-risk minority youth. The Min-Male project was redesigned in 1997 by the Office of Minority Health to bring about a more structural approach

to evolution and its four component curriculum; academic development, personal development, career development and cultural enrichment. The newly redesigned program was renamed the Family and Community Violence Prevention (FCVP) Program (Rodney & Johnson, 2006).

Today, the FCVP Program is one of America's most comprehensive and dynamic initiatives, which is designed to combat youth violence from minority and traditionally marginalized populations. From an almost 100% African American cohort consisting overwhelmingly of adolescent boys in 1994, two FCVP programs are truly culturally and ethically diverse initiatives which are serving both under 12 and 12 and over male and female youth in equal proportions. Between the years 1999-2000 and the 2003-2004 program years, the percentage of African America dropped from 81 to 54, while that of Native American increased from 3 to 14. Over the same period, the percentage of Hispanic/Latinas increased from 8 to 21, while mixed (Multi-Racial) increased from 2 to 6. The program's longevity spans almost 12 years and has received approximately \$70.0 million dollars in federal support (Rodney & Johnson, 2006).

Recent human experience on the global scale, is characterized by unprecedented levels of violence. One estimate at the three quarter mark of the century set the human death toll since 1900 at 100 million (Albott, 1972), and this was before the Iran-Iraq and Kuwait wars, before Kwanda, Bosnia and other brutalities of the last two decades. There are lessons to be learned from extreme cases of evil, some bad and troubling lessons (Birdsall, 1996).

Day to day experiences are the phenomena of our existence, its now material. They are what we "know", even without conscious awareness of that knowledge. The significance of these mundane experiences becomes established over the long term as they come to reflect cumulative, cultural views. Some of the patterns of daily experience speak to geographers. They draw on or connect with our interests in location, landscape, human environment interaction, and spatial expressions of human behavior (Birdsall, 1996).

Each of us makes behavioral choices everyday, the consequences of which accumulate within us and in others. As powerful a pull on our attention are the extreme examples of moral behavior, their distance from the experiences of most of us keep us detached from their meaning while we live our daily lives. As members of a human society, the most important choices we make are those that guide how we behave toward each other, and how we interact without thinking. Through these choices, we demonstrate our assumptions about what is good and what is evil. Our choices are, in effect, guided by a map of moral alternatives a map of which we are not aware. Through our everyday interactions, we trace the moral geography of our lives (Birdsall, 1996). In creating a conceptual orientation, that distances ourselves from the world, and adapting to the creation through the construction of inauthentic landscapes, we

have lost an essential touchstone. This loss is evident in the revolution of our regards for each other and for the world.

Beyond its other features, western culture has also diminished the value of the immaterial facets of our being. We have withdrawn credibility from those aspects of our lives that reverberate with the human spirit. "What is unique and modern about Western civilization is the extent to which it has been shaped by the quest for mastery of the material condition of human existence". (Adams, 1989:589).

Western culture loss of credibility in the immaterial facets of our personal and communal existence is reflected in the general attitude that what matters is what can be seen, touched, measured, controlled. In the everyday, this means we assign meaning and value to things (Sack, 1992). We give political and economic support to those who promise that "things" can be better if only "others" will do this or do that. Alternatively, we believe evermore fervently in what we "know" or hope is for the best.

Human behavior is affected, by both genetic inheritance and by experience. The ways in which people develop are shaped, by social experience and circumstances within the context of their inherited genetic potential. The scientific question is just how experience and hereditary potential interact in producing human behavior (Chapter 7: Human Society, 2005).

Each person is born into a social and cultural setting; family, community, social class, language, religion—and eventually develops many social connections. The characteristics of a child's social setting affect how he or she learns to think and behave, by means of instruction, rewards and punishment as examples. This setting includes home, school, neighborhood, and perhaps, local religions and law enforcement agencies. Then there are also the child's most informal interactions with friends, other peers, relatives, and the entertainment and news media. How individuals will respond to all these influences, or even which influence will be the most potent, tends not to be predictable. There is, however, some substantial similarity in how an individual responds to the same pattern of influences—that is, to being raised in the same culture. Furthermore, culturally induced behavior pattern, body language, and forms of humor, become so deeply imbedded in the human mind that they often operate without the individuals themselves being fully aware of them (Chapter 7: Human Society, 2005).

What is considered to be acceptable human behavior varies from culture to culture and from time period to time period. Every social group has generally accepted ranges of behavior for its members, with perhaps some specific standards for subgroups, such as adults and children, females and males, artists and athletes. Universal behavior may be considered either merely amusing, or distasteful, or punishably criminal. Some normal behavior in our

culture may be considered unacceptable in another. For example, aggressively competitive behavior is considered rude in highly cooperative culture (Chapter 7: Human society, 2005).

The class into which people are born affects what language, diet, tastes and interest they will have as children, and therefore influence how they will perceive the social world. Moreover, class affects what pressures and opportunities people will experience and therefore affects what paths their lives are likely to take—including schooling, occupation, marriage, and standard of living. Still, many people live lives very different from the norm for their class. (Chapter 7: Human society, 2005).

At this point in the discussion, the researchers would like to turn your attention to age as a factor in crime. That young people commit crime at a high rate is no revelation. Age is so fundamental to crime rates that its relationship to offending is usually designated as the “age-crime curve”. This curve, which for individuals typically peaks in the late teen years, highlights the tendency for crime committed during an offender’s younger years and to decline as age advances (Blumfield, 1994).

For example, figures on rates of robbery and burglary, broken down by age, indicates that for both these crimes, the peak age of offending has been about 17, after which there is a rapid decline as the offender gets older. For burglary, the rate falls to half the peak by age 21, whereas, the falloff for robbery is somewhat slower, reaching half the peak is by age 25. The age specific patterns are about the same for the year 1992 as they were in 1985 and again in 1994 (Blumfield, 1994).

The age specific patterns for murder present quite a different pattern; the trends for this crime have changed appreciably in the past decade. For a long period—1965 to 1985—the age at which the murder rate was highest remained fairly stable, with a flat peak covering ages 18 to 24. In other words, during this 20 year period, people in this age group were the most likely to commit murder and it was in the age group of mid- 30s that the rate dropped to half the peak. Then, in 1985, an abrupt change began to take place, with the murder rate moving to a sharp peak at age 18 instead of the more traditional flat peak covering the entire 18 to 24 age group (Blumfield, 1994).

There are important race differences in involvement in murder, both in the rate itself and the change since 1985. Among African-American males ages 14 to 17, murder rates have been about four to five times higher than among white males of the same group, although, for both groups, the rates had remained fairly stable from the mid-1970’s until the mid-1980. Then, beginning in about 1985, the rates then rose for both groups, though the growth rates was much faster among blacks. For white males in this age group, their annual rate of murder was 8.1 per 100,000 in the period 1976 to 1987, after which, almost

doubled in the next four years (from 7.6 in 1987 to 13.6 in 1991). In those four years, the arrest rate for murder by black males in this age group rose even faster, more than doubling from 50.4 to 111.8 per 100,000 (Blumfield, 1994).

The public also has a vague sense of a link between the growth of juvenile violence and drugs. In part, this derives from recognition that, especially in the past decade, a major factor affecting many aspects of criminal behavior has been the illicit drug industry and its consequences. Beyond the offenses of drug crime link has been described as taking several forms: (1) Pharmacologically/psychologically driven crime induced by the properties of the drug. The most widely recognized connection is between alcohol and the violence it induces; (2) Economic/compulsive crimes, committed by drug users to support their habit; (3) Systematic crime, which includes the crimes committed as part of the regular means of doing business in the illicit drug industry (Brumfield, 1994).

Drug arrests of blacks have accelerated and reflect a major recruitment of sellers to market crack, which required much more strict transaction. The racial difference in arrest rates indicate the extent to which drug enforcement has focused on blacks more than on whites (Blumfield, 1994).

Los Angeles, June 14, 2001 (UPI), the Justice Department announced Wednesday, that in 2000, violent crime was down a striking 46% from its peak in 1994, which was during the crack epidemic. This result was according to the annual National Crime Victimization Survey of 160,000 Americans. But, has the tremendous reduction in violence been accomplished at too high of a price in terms of the greatly increased numbers of imprisoned blacks and Hispanics? (Sailer, 2001).

The National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (www.NCIAnet.org), a liberal think tank advocating less imprisonment, has released a new report, *Masking the Divide*: that argues that, the overuse of incarceration is causing severe and potentially irreparable divisions in society. It wants society to turn the Criminal Justice System off its racist path and begin to repair the damage it is causing (Sailer, 2001).

The NCIA argued that this high rate of imprisonment of blacks and Hispanics is unfair. Whites seem to go to jail in smaller numbers than their share of serious crimes would indicate. During the 1990s, whites committed 56% of violent crimes and 62% of felonies in the United States, according to the Justice Department statistics. (Sailer, 2001).

Indeed, imprisoning huge numbers of people for crack related offenses was followed by a remarkable decline in violent crime in the 1990s. Some statistical analysts, such as the University of Chicago economist Steve Levett, argued that the growth of imprisonment accounts for half of the drop in crime

(Sailer, 2001).

The smallest difference in the black to white imprisonment rate was found in liberal Hawaii, only 2.9 to 1. This may have something to do with many members of Hawaii's small African American community being active or retired members of the U. S. Armed Forces. After Hawaii, though, the next 10 states closest to black—white racial equality in imprisonment rates were all southern or Western states that voted for George W. Bush. For example, highly conservative Mississippi and south Carolina each imprisoned blacks only six times more often than whites per person, compared to the national average of nine times more often. Eighteen of the 20 states with the least disparity between blacks and whites voted for Bush in 2000. These low average racial ratios are driven in part by the tendency of whites in Republican states to get themselves thrown in prison more often than whites in Democratic states. The highest white imprisonment rates tend to be in old frontier states of the Wild West. The most often locked up whites are in Alaska, followed by Oklahoma, Nevada, Arizona and Texas (Sailer, 2001).

Across all races, the fewest prisoners per capita were found in cold weather, mostly white states of Minnesota, North Dakota and Maine. Cold weather tends to discourage street crime. In contrast, the mostly black District of Columbia had by far, the highest overall imprisonment rate. The next most locked up citizenry was found in Texas, the state with sizable fractions of both Africa Americans and Hispanics, along with a white population that is for alone average in finding itself behind bars. Not even frigid weather could keep Alaskans from winding up in prison almost as often as Texas. The seemingly mild little state of Delaware come next for highest imprisonment rate, followed by spicy Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Nevada, Mississippi, Arizona and supposedly starchy Connecticut.

DATA AND METHODS

All data, except for Religion Adherence Rates, come from the 2007 County and City Databook. Religion adherence rates come from the Association of Religion Data Archives. Our sample size initially began with 3141 cases (U.S. counties and independent cities), but data for some variables (crime rates in Illinois counties and voting percentages for presidential candidates in AK boroughs) are not available. This reduced our sample size for some analyses to 2916 cases.

Our dependent variables are total crime, violent crime, and property crime rates. The total crime rate is measured as the number of crime incidents per 100,000 population. The violent crime rate is measured as the number of violent incidents against persons (such as murder, robbery, assault, and rape) per 100,000 population. The property crime rate is measured as the number of

incidents involving property (such as theft, vandalism, and arson) per 100,000 population.

Our main independent variables used in the analyses are those that measure aspects of culture. These variables are Religious adherence rates, Percent Republican, and Net immigration. Religious adherence rates are measured as the number of full-fledged members of religious organizations who are regular attendees of religious congregations, for all religions combined, per 1000 population. In some analyses, this variable is further divided according to type of religion involved.

Mainline Christian adherence rates are measured as the number of full-fledged members of Mainline Christian denominations (such as Presbyterian USA, Evangelical Lutheran, United Methodist, and Episcopalian) who are regular attendees of religious congregations, per 1000 population. Evangelical Christian adherence rates are measured as the number of full-fledged members of Evangelical religious denominations (such as American Baptist, Assemblies of God, and Pentecostal) who are regular attendees of religious congregations, per 1000 population. Catholic adherence rates are measured as the number of full-fledged members of Catholic denominations who are regular attendees of religious congregations, per 1000 population. Muslim adherence rates are measured as the number of full-fledged members of the Muslim Estimate who are regular attendees of mosque services, per 1000 population. Jewish adherence rates are measured as the number of full-fledged members of Orthodox, Reconstructionist, or Reform Judaism groups who are regular attendees of synagogues, per 1000 population. We expect that higher rates of religion adherence, in general, will be negatively associated with crime rates.

Percent Republican is measured as the percent of voters in the 2004 presidential election that voted for George W. Bush. Since Republican candidates regularly campaign that they are tough on crime, we expect that crime rates will be negatively associated with percent Republican. Net immigration is measured as the total number of persons added to the population due to migration from nations from outside the U.S. We expect net immigration to be positively associated with crime rates, due to a possible clash of between foreign and American cultures and American distrust of foreigners.

Other variables included in the analyses as control variables are Sex ratio, Percent ages 15 to 24, Percent foreign born, Racial composition, Percent Hispanic, Percent urban, Per capita income, Unemployment rate, percent high school educated, Percent college educated, and Region. These are variables that have long been cited in the literature as having impacts on crime rates. Sex ratio is measured as the number of men per 100 women. Men tend to commit more crimes than women. Percent ages 15 to 24 is measured as the number of individuals aged 15 to 24, divided by the total population, times 100. Higher rates of crime commission have been found for younger populations than older

populations. Percent foreign born is the number of individuals born outside of the US to non-American parents, divided by the total population, multiplied by 100.

Racial composition is divided into the following racial groups: African American, Native American, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Other Races. Caucasian racial group is used in the analyses as the reference group. Hence, Percent African American is measured as the number of individuals who identify themselves as having that ancestry, divided by the total population, multiplied by 100. Percent Native American is defined as the number of individuals identifying themselves as having ancestry from American Indian tribal groups, divided by the total population, multiplied by 100. Percent Asian/Pacific Islander are the total number of individuals possessing that ancestral background, per 100 population. Percent other races are the number of individuals identifying themselves as not being White, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, or Native American, per 100 population. Percent Hispanic is measured as the number of individuals with a Spanish heritage, per 100 population. Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be arrested and convicted of crimes than whites are.

Percent urban is measured as the number of persons residing within an urban area, per 100 population. Per capita income is measured as the total income of all persons in an area, divided by the total population, to provide an average amount of income per person. Lower income areas tend to have higher crime rates than other areas. Unemployment rates is defined as the number of persons actively seeking employment, but have not found it, divided by the total labor force, times 100. Unemployment rates are positively associated with crime rates.

Percent high school educated is defined as the percentage of the population that is aged 25 years and older that have a high school diploma or a GED. Percent college educated is defined as the percentage of the population that is aged 25 and older that possesses a Bachelor's level or more advanced degree. Higher levels of education are negatively associated with crime rates. Region is divided into four categories: South, West, North Central and Northeast. A county or independent city is classified as being in the South if it is located within the states of Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Kentucky, or Arkansas. A county or independent city is classified as being in the West if it is located within New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada or Utah. A county or independent city is classified as being in the North Central region if it is located within Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio. Counties and independent cities located within all other states are classified as being in the Northeast region, which serves as the

reference group in the analyses. Literature suggests that Southerners have a history of high rates of gun ownership and violence than persons from other regions (Schmallegger, 2012).

Analyses used in the study are means and standard deviations for variables, Pearson's correlations, and weighted least squares regression. Weighted least squares regression is used to adjust the relative weights of cases in the analyses, so that locales with smaller populations will influence the results less than places with larger populations.

RESULTS

Table 1 displays the means and standard deviations for the variables used in this study. On average, the total crime rate for a county is approximately 2618 incidents and varies by 1722 incidents. The violent crime rate for a county averages approximately 263 incidents and varies by 242 incidents. The property crime rate for a county averages approximately 2353 incidents and varies by 1555 incidents. On average the religious adherence rate is 628 and differs on average by approximately 215. The religious adherence rate is on average, highest for Evangelical Christians (approximately 228), but is lowest for Muslims (approximately 0.84 full-time adherents). On average, sixty percent of voters in a county voted for George W. Bush in 2004, and this percentage differs on average by approximately 13 percent. The net immigration to counties averages around 2436 and differs on average by 17,240.

The sex ratio averages around 99 men, per 100 women, and differs on average by 9 men per 100 women. On average, 14 percent of the population in a county is between the ages of 15 and 24 years. It differs on average by 3 percent. Percent foreign born averages around 3 percent and differs by almost 5 percent across counties. On average, approximately 9 percent of the population is African American and this percentage varies by 14 percent across places. Approximately 6 percent of the population in a county is Hispanic and this varies by 12 percent. Approximately 40 percent of the population in a county is comprised of urban residents. The percentage of urban residents across places differs on average by 31 percent. The per capita income averages around \$17,513 and differs by \$3943 across places. The unemployment rate is on average near 6 percent, but differs on average by approximately 3 percent across places. On average, almost 61 percent of the population has a high school education and almost 17 percent have a college degree or more. These rates differ on average across places by 7 and 8 percent, respectively. Last, forty-five percent of counties are located within the 17 state region classified by the Census as the South, with 24 and 25 percent of counties located in the West and North Central regions respectively.

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlations between the independent

variables and the dependent variables. Religious adherence rate has a weak, negative and statistically significant association with total crime rate. A similar result occurs when examining religion adherence rate's association with property crime. The association between religion adherence rate and violent crime rate is weak and statistically non-significant. These results support the hypothesized relationship between religion adherence and crime.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Variables^a

Variables	Means	Standard Deviations
Total Crime Rate	2617.69	1721.86
Violent Crime Rate	263.39	241.72
Property Crime Rate	2353.44	1555.05
Religious Adherence Rate	628.52	214.75
Mainline Christian Adherence Rate	143.05	113.97
Evangelical Christian Adherence Rate	228.20	168.85
Catholic Adherence Rate	137.15	148.71
Muslim Adherence Rate	.84	3.50
Jewish Adherence Rate	2.77	13.15
Percent Voted Republican	60.26	12.56
Net Immigration	2435.89	17240.07
Sex Ratio	99.29	9.44
Percent Ages 15 to 24	14.28	3.17
Percent Foreign Born	3.47	4.87
Percent African American	8.81	14.37
Percent Native American	2.33	7.65
Percent Asian/Pacific Isl.	1.12	2.90
Percent Other Races	.24	.28
Percent Hispanic	6.39	12.10
Percent Urban	40.12	30.99
Per Capita Income	17513.01	3942.88
Unemployment Rate	5.82	2.87
Percent High School Educated	60.85	7.02
Percent College Educated	16.53	7.79
South	.45	
West	.24	
North Central	.25	

^a Sample size ranges between 2946 and 3141 for the above variables, due to missing values for some variables for some cases (e.g. crime rates for IL counties and religious adherence rates for AK boroughs)

When Religious adherence rate is divided by religion group, only the Catholic adherence rate has negative, statistically significant associations with crime rates. All other religion groups adherence rates have positive (and for the most part, statistically significant) associations with crime rates. These results are the opposite of what we had predicted.

The sex ratio has a negative, weak and statistically significant association with crime rates. This is the opposite of what most of the literature suggests. As more men are present in a county, the crime rate declines. Percent of the population ages 15 to 24 has positive, weak and statistically significant associations with crime rates. This is in agreement with what previous literature says about age and criminal conduct. With the exception of Native Americans (weak and non-significant impacts), the presence of racial minorities has positive, weak and statistically significant associations with crime rates. The largest of these correlation coefficients is the association between Percent African American and Violent crime rates ($r=0.40$). Likewise, Percent Hispanic has a positive, weak and statistically significant association with crime rates. These results, for the most part, support what previous research has suggested.

Table 2: *Relationships between Cultural, Demographic and Socioeconomic Variables and Crime Rates: Pearson Correlations*

Independent Variables	Total Crime Rate	Violent Crime Rate	Property Crime Rate
Religious Adherence Rate	-.08**	-.01	-.09**
Mainline Christian Adherence Rate	-.27**	-.28**	-.26**
Evangelical Christian Adherence Rate	.01	.05**	.00
Catholic Adherence Rate	-.05**	-.05*	-.05**
Muslim Adherence Rate	.21**	.24**	.19**
Jewish Adherence Rate	.15**	.19**	.13**
Percent Voted Republican	-.21**	.25**	-.19**
Net Immigration	.18**	.21**	.16**
Sex Ratio	-.13**	-.08**	-.14**
Percent Ages 15 to 24	.12**	.05*	.12**
Percent Foreign Born	.30**	.26**	.29**
Percent African American	.27**	.40**	.24**
Percent Native American	-.03	.03	-.04
Percent Asian/Pacific Isl.	.23**	.15**	.23**
Percent Other Races	.31**	.31**	.29**
Percent Hispanic	.17**	.17**	.16**
Percent Urban	.58**	.39**	.57**
Per Capita Income	.18**	.06**	.19**
Unemployment Rate	.17**	.22**	.16**
Percent High School Educated	-.21**	-.25**	-.19**
Percent College Educated	.24**	.11**	.24**
South	.15**	.23**	.13**
West	.06**	-.01	.06**
North Central	-.19**	-.23**	-.17**
N	2916	2924	2925

** $p < .01$ and * $p < .05$ 2 tailed test

Percent urban has a positive, moderate and statistically significant association with crime rates. This finding agrees with what we hypothesized.

Per capita income has a weak, positive, significant association with crime rates. This is the opposite of the relationship that we expected to find. Perhaps areas with high incomes provide opportunities for crime commission, such as the theft of possessions or robbery of those perceived to have money or valuables on their persons. The unemployment rate has a positive, weak and statistically significant relationship with crime rates. This result agrees with the findings of previous literature. Percent high school educated has a significant negative relationship with crime, while percent college educated has a positive significant association with crime rates. Receiving a high school education creates more job opportunities for individuals to pursue as alternatives to crime commission. Areas with high rates of college educated may have more possessions available for criminals to appropriate from their owners.

South has a positive, weak and statistically significant association with crime rates. This finding agrees with the hypothesized relationship. West has a very weak positive, but statistically significant, association with Total and Property crime rates. There is really no relationship between West and Violent crime rates. North Central has a weak negative and statistically significant association with crime rates.

Table 3 presents the results from the weight least squares regression analyses. Like the correlation results, Religious adherence rate has a negative and statistically significant impact on crime rates. For example, a one person per 1000 increase in full-fledged religious adherents decreases total crime rates by approximately one incident. Percent voted Republican has a significant negative impact on violent crime rates only. An additional percent of voters supporting the Republican presidential candidate decreases the violent crime rate by almost one incident. Net immigration has a negligible impact on crime rates. These results tend to support our hypothesized expectations.

Sex ratio and percent of the population ages 15 to 24 significantly reduce crime rates. These results differ from what the correlations found and what the literature hypothesizes about these relationships. A one man increase in the sex ratio reduces total crime rates by almost 17 incidents. A one percent increase in population aged 15 to 24 years reduces total crime rates on average by almost 44 incidents.

The presence of racial minorities (especially African Americans) tends to increase crime rates. Percent Hispanic only significantly raises Violent crime rates. Per capita income tends to significantly reduce crime rates by a small amount (.01 to .05 incidents per a one dollar increase). This result is the opposite of what the correlations produced, but agrees with what we had hypothesized.

All other variables have positive, statistically significant impacts on crime rates. For example, a one percent increase in the unemployment rate raises

the total crime rate by 39 incidents. A one percent increase in high school educated raises the total crime rate by 38 incidents. This result differs from those produced by the correlations and from what we hypothesized. Being located in the South raises the crime rate by almost 1160 incident more than being located in the Northeast. This finding agrees with the correlations produced and with what the previous literature argues.

Table 3: *Impacts of Cultural, Demographic and Socioeconomic Variables on Crime Rates: Weighted Least Squares Regression Analysis Results*

Independent Variables	Total Crime Rate		Violent Crime Rate		Property Crime Rate	
	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta
Religious Adherence Rate	-1.05**	-.13	.10**	-.09	-.97**	-.13
Percent Voted Republican	-1.75	-.01	-.96*	-.05	-.72	-.01
Net Immigration	.01*	.01	.01**	.08	.00	-.01
Sex Ratio	-16.94**	.09	-1.19**	-.04	-16.08**	-.09
Percent Ages 15 to 24	-43.87**	-.08	-9.32**	-.12	-35.07**	-.07
Percent Foreign Born	31.09**	.09	1.95	.04	27.45**	.09
Percent African American	24.66**	.21	5.69**	.34	19.06**	.18
Percent Native American	3.89	.01	2.27**	.06	1.45	.01
Percent Asian/Pacific Isl.	-.66	.00	-5.53**	-.06	5.74	.01
Percent Other Races	338.92*	.05	159.60**	.17	214.40	.04
Percent Hispanic	4.59	.03	1.62**	.08	3.86	.03
Percent Urban	29.22**	.52	2.54**	.33	26.48**	.53
Per Capita Income	-.05**	-.11	-.01**	-.17	-.04**	-.11
Unemployment Rate	39.06**	.06	.67	.01	37.74	.06
Percent High School Educated	38.46**	.15	3.96**	.11	35.45**	.16
Percent College Educated	28.95**	.13	3.35**	.11	27.01**	.14
South	1159.59**	.34	109.12**	.23	1044.02**	.34
West	791.49**	.19	52.19**	.09	706.93**	.18
North Central	626.51**	.16	35.78*	.06	582.19**	.16
Constant	1003.14		235.45		815.90	
R Square	.440		.378		.419	
N	2916		2924		2925	

** p<.01 and * p<.05 2 tailed test; a=Actual value is the number reported above, times 10

Table 4 presents the results from weighted least squares regression analyses, with the Religious adherence rate divided according to religious group. For total crime rates, Mainline Christian, Catholic, and Jewish adherence rates have negative and statistically significant impacts. Evangelical Christian and Muslim adherence rates have positive, but statistically insignificant impacts on Total crime rates. Percent voting Republican has a negative, statistically significant impact on Total crime rates.

Table 4: *Impacts of Cultural, Demographic and Socioeconomic Variables on Crime Rates: Weighted Least Squares Regression Analysis Results*

Independent Variables	Total Crime Rate	Beta	Violent Crime Rate	Beta	Property Crime Rate	Beta
	B		B		B	
Mainline Christian Adherence Rate	-1.73**	-.11	-.23**	-.11	-1.53**	-.11
Evangelical Christian Adherence Rate	.17	.02	.01	.01	.13	.01
Catholic Adherence Rate	-1.75**	-.15	-.13**	-.08	-1.69**	-.16
Muslim Adherence Rate	4.25	.01	3.65**	.05	-1.19	-.03 ^a
Jewish Adherence Rate	-4.91*	-.04	.75*	.04	-4.83*	-.04
Percent Voted Republican	-8.75**	-.06	-1.48**	-.08	-7.23**	-.06
Net Immigration	.01 ^a	.01	.01***	.07	.00	-.01
Sex Ratio	-14.89**	-.08	-1.02*	-.04	-14.22**	-.08
Percent Ages 15 to 24	-46.94**	.09	-9.48**	-.13	-37.89**	-.08
Percent Foreign Born	35.29**	.10	1.39	.03	31.78**	.10
Percent African American	19.53**	.16	5.08**	.31	14.41**	.13
Percent Native American	3.78	.01	2.07**	.05	1.60	.01
Percent Asian/Pacific Isl.	-3.00	-.01	-5.59**	-.06	3.68	.01
Percent Other Races	303.59*	.05	134.23**	.15	202.42	.03
Percent Hispanic	9.39**	.07	2.15**	.11	8.42**	.07
Percent Urban	28.67**	.51	2.40**	.31	26.11**	.52
Per Capita Income	-.04*	-.08	-.01**	-.18	-.03*	-.08
Unemployment Rate	40.35**	.06	.48	.01	38.94**	.07
Percent High School Educated	46.45**	.19	5.29**	.15	42.16**	.19
Percent College Educated	34.81**	.16	4.10**	.13	32.04**	.16
South	728.12**	.21	88.92**	.19	631.90**	.20
West	534.08**	.12	45.81**	.08	454.29**	.12
North Central	493.67**	.12	40.32*	.07	447.60**	.12
Constant	578.02		172.72		466.86	
R Square	.452		.386		.432	
N	2916		2924		2925	

** p<.01 and * p<.05 2 tailed test; a=Actual value is the number reported above, times 10

For Violent crime rates, Mainline Christian and Catholic adherence rates have statistically significant, negative impacts (.23 and .13 incidents, respectively). Muslim and Jewish adherence rates have positive, significant impacts on Violent crime rates (3.65 and .75 incidents, respectively). Perhaps because these individuals are the target of hate crimes, their presence increases the opportunities for violent acts. Evangelical Christian adherence rates have no significant impacts on violent crime rates. Percent voting Republican has a significant, negative impact on Violent crime rates. Net immigration has a tiny

positive, but statistically significant impact on Violent crime rates.

For Property crime rates, Mainline Christian, Catholic, and Jewish adherence rates have negative, statistically significant impacts (1.53, 1.69 and 4.83 incidents, respectively). Muslim adherence rates have a negative, but statistically insignificant impact on Property crime rates. Percent voted Republican also reduces Property crime rates by 7 incidents.

No major differences between Tables 3 and 4, in terms of the results produced, for the other variables. Sex ratio, Percent ages 15 to 24, and Per capita income tend to significantly decrease crime rates. Other variables such as Percent African American, Percent Hispanic, Percent Unemployment, Percent Urban, Percent High School and College educated, and all geographic regions (relative to the Northeast) have positive and statistically significant impacts on crime rates.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this paper was to look at the impact of culture on crime. Previous research showed race and racism continue to shape American life and the Criminal Justice System (Pettitway, 2006). The paper expanded on previous research by looking at other aspects of culture including religion, immigration, ethnicity, income, education, sex, and geography on crime. Results showed religious adherence rate had a weak, negative, and statistically significant association with total crime rate. A similar result occurred when examining religion adherence rate's association with property crime. The association between religion adherence rate and violent crime rate was weak and statistically non-significant. The sex ratio had a negative, weak, and statistically significant association with crime rates. Percent urban had a positive, moderate, statistically significant association with crime rates. South had a positive, weak and statistically significant association with crime rates. Future research should consider using primary data to examine the impact of these variables on the culture of crime.

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