

1972

An Examination of the Relationship Between Social Class and Crime

Carl H. Plath
Eastern Illinois University

Recommended Citation

Plath, Carl H., "An Examination of the Relationship Between Social Class and Crime" (1972). *Masters Theses*. 3913.
<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/3913>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

PAPER CERTIFICATE #2

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates who have written formal theses.

SUBJECT: Permission to reproduce theses.

The University Library is receiving a number of requests from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow theses to be copied.

Please sign one of the following statements.

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

April 8, 1973
Date

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University not allow my thesis be reproduced because _____

Date

Author

AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN SOCIAL CLASS AND CRIME

(TITLE)

BY

CARL H. PLATH

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1972

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE CITED ABOVE

April 8, 1973
DATE

April 9, 1973
DATE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION.	1
DESIGN OF THE INQUIRY	22
DATA AND ANALYSIS	34
CONCLUSION.	47
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	53

I. INTRODUCTION

The major focus of this thesis is to examine the relationship between social class¹ and criminal behavior² in an empirical fashion. This researcher's interest in this relationship was stimulated by an article by Steven Box and Julienne Ford (1971). They examined some prominent theories relating social class and crime in the discipline of sociology which indicated that a negative relationship existed between the two aforementioned variables. They concluded by stating that this "common knowledge" belief was empirically questionable for reasons that this researcher will discuss later in the thesis. The importance of this article for this researcher was to stimulate interest in this specific area of sociology. Personal recollections also served to sharpen interest into the investigation of the relationship between social class and crime.

This author's first impressions of the judicial system were contradictory. In the schoolroom the writer learned that, ideally, the judicial system³ is "blind." That is, the judicial system acts on all citizens without regard to race, creed, color, age, social class, sex, etcetera. Yet, this writer's personal experiences as a teenager seemed to contradict this ideal. The writer has been apprehended by police due to their belief that the writer was possibly

guilty of infractions of the law. However, the writer was never arrested. This writer was also aware of the arrests of friends and acquaintances for alleged infractions of the same laws. While the writer considered himself only fortunate at the time, through hindsight a pattern of arrests seems to have occurred. Friends and acquaintances from middle class neighborhoods were detained as often as the writer and were arrested as rarely. However, those friends and acquaintances from lower class neighborhoods, though detained as often as previously mentioned others, were arrested more frequently than middle class friends and acquaintances. Detentions were usually due to alleged traffic violations, illegal possession of alcohol, and acts of vandalism. A contradiction seemed to occur between the ideal of equal justice for all and the inequity of arrests for lower class friends and acquaintances for illegal actions that both this writer and all of his friends and acquaintances were guilty of with the same frequency. Why should middle class friends and acquaintances receive stern warnings while lower class friends and acquaintances were being arrested? Was the variable of social class operating within this impressionable context? These questions should hopefully be answered through the examination of the relationship between social class and criminal behavior.

From these introductory remarks, the thesis will examine the relationship between social class and criminal behavior in the following manner. An examination of the

theories of some prominent sociologists will be presented. This examination will include a critique of their methods. Of particular interest is the use by these sociologists of official crime statistics which may be negatively biased toward lower class individuals. The significance of this topic will also be emphasized. The theoretical framework and hypotheses will be drawn from the aforementioned sociologists with attention directed at correcting some methodological deficiencies.

A sample of traffic law arrestees will be drawn from Corn County, located in a midwestern state during the year, 1970, for reasons which will be elaborated upon. A computer analysis of the data will be included as a way to discover whether social class and criminal behavior are related variables.

Review of Literature

This section of the thesis has a manifold purpose. The theoretical framework will be established through a review of the research of some prominent sociologists which pertains to the study of the relationship between social class and criminal behavior. A critique of their conceptualizations and methods will enable this writer to both strengthen his theoretical frame of reference and indicate the significance of the study of this relationship.

A review of sociological literature by this writer indicates that little empirical research has attempted to relate social class and criminal behavior. In a recent review of literature, Box and Ford (1971) investigated the theories of some noteworthy sociologists that relate social class to criminal behavior. The two authors stated that these noted theoreticians negatively relate the two variables. This writer has contributed to their partial discussion of these theories of criminal behavior.

Box and Ford (1971:32-33) begin their discussion with Robert K. Merton's⁵ "Anomie" theory. Merton relied on official crime statistics⁶ to verify his contention that lower class individuals have higher crime rates than middle and upper class individuals. He believed that lower class desires for material wealth created a "strain" toward crime in order to attain this end. Merton maintained his position while simultaneously noting the research of Edwin H. Sutherland⁷ and others which note that significant criminal activity exists at other levels of social strata.

Some theories pertaining to the social problem of juvenile delinquency also maintain an over-attention to the supposedly disproportionate failings of the lower class to live within the legal structure as compared with the "law abiding" middle class. Miller (1958:5-19) constructed a theory of gang delinquency by defining the lower class as a subculture of the larger society. The subculture contained

acceptable behavior patterns which are unacceptable to the larger society. The resulting conflict, therefore, created a disproportionate number of lower class arrests and convictions when compared with the other social classes of the society. Miller's conceptualization of "focal concerns" was an attempt to psychologically identify those psychological variables which could rationalize the delinquent behavior of lower class gang members. This writer criticizes Miller for attributing his "focal concerns" to only lower class gang members and failing to note that these concerns could exist within the minds of all adolescents and could be also acted out in a fashion similar to the activities of lower class gang members.⁸ Whether Miller's stress on lower class juvenile delinquency is an example of class bias⁹ is, of course, open to conjecture. The interest generated by the mass media toward the juvenile gang during the 1950's may have focused the attention of Miller among others on the lower class gang.

Box and Ford (1971:32) criticize Cohen's¹⁰ social-psychological approach to the explanation of juvenile delinquency for two major reasons. He ignored the delinquent acts of middle class youth and stressed the social ills that beset the lower class. This writer notes the problem of verifying "reaction formation" as a cause of delinquency through an empirical analysis. This writer would personally find it extremely difficult to operationalize Freudian concepts in a scientific manner. However, Cohen's analysis of

the negative relationship between social class and criminal behavior may have a degree of "face value" validity and is, therefore, useful to this writer to a degree.

By elaborating on Merton's Anomie theory, Cloward and Ohlin¹¹ may be guilty of similar erroneous assumptions regarding criminal statistics.¹² Box and Ford (1971:32) criticize differential opportunity theory by noting that Cloward and Ohlin, while noting the differential distribution of delinquent activities, feel that the high social costs¹³ of urban, lower class, juvenile delinquency makes their overconcern for lower class gangs justifiable. This writer, after reading Sutherland (1949), wonders whether the social cost of crime is not higher in the social classes above the lower class. Their concern with lower class crime would appear to be misplaced.

A serious problem throughout this review of theory pertinent to this thesis has been an underlying assumption that statistical information about criminal behavior has been assumed to be an accurate representation of the criminal population. This factor seems to be a serious weakness in past criminological theory. This writer believes that only an understanding of the weaknesses in official crime statistics can allow the use of this form of information on criminal behavior and social class. Therefore, this writer intends to analyze some of the problems in official crime statistics.

Problems in Official Crime Statistics

The sociological theories which have been previously cited draw inferences from official crime statistics.¹⁴ The theories appear to affirm the well-known belief that social class is negatively related to criminal behavior. However, one can question how accurately crime statistics reflect the amount of crime, who are the offenders, what affect the police have in crime statistics, and what other techniques are available which may accurately determine the social class distribution of criminal behavior. The succeeding paragraphs deal with some findings related to the biases in crime statistics.

One problem deals with the amount of criminal behavior known to the police.¹⁵ A 1965 survey (President's Commission, 1968:96-100) of three metropolitan areas found that a large number of crimes are not reported to the police and, therefore, do not appear in official crime statistics. Personal injury crimes were reported to interviewers twice as often as these crimes appear in the Uniform Crime Reports. Forcible rapes were reported three and a half times more often than in the Uniform Crime Reports. Significant underreportage in the Uniform Crime Reports also occurs in such categories as robbery, burglary, aggravated assaults, and larcenies over \$50. The most prevalent reasons that victims did not report these crimes to the police according to the victim interviewees were:

1. Fear of reprisal,
2. Did not want to take the time,
3. Too confused or did not know to report,
4. Felt it was a private matter or did not want to harm the offender, and,
5. Police were believed to be ineffective or the police would not want to be bothered.

This under-reporting of crime can possibly skew the statistical bases of some social theories attempting to explain crime. Another possible bias could be in the specific "crime category" itself.

Sutherland (1949:8-9) noted that middle and upper class crime typically does not appear in official crime statistics. These persons escape detection possibly because they are more powerful, financially and politically, than lower class persons. Sutherland points out this differentiation of reaction that the judicial system has for lower or middle class criminals by stating:

These statistics are biased in two respects: (a) Persons of the upper socioeconomic class are more powerful politically and financially and escape arrest and conviction to a greater extent than persons who lack such power, even when equally guilty of crimes. Wealthy persons can employ skilled attorneys and in other ways influence the administration of justice in their own favor more effectively than can persons of the lower socioeconomic class. Even professional criminals, who have financial and political power, escape arrest and conviction more effectively than amateur and occasional criminals who have little financial or political power. This bias, while indubitable, is not of great importance from the point of criminological theory.

(b) Much more important is the bias involved in the administration of justice under laws which apply exclu-

sively to business and the professions and which therefore involve only the upper socioeconomic class. Persons who violate laws regarding restraint of trade, advertising, pure food and drugs are not arrested by uniformed policemen, are not often tried in criminal courts, and are not committed to prisons: their illegal behavior generally receives the attention of administrative commissions and of courts operating under civil or equity jurisdiction. For this reason such violations of law are not included in the criminal statistics nor are individual cases brought to the attention of the scholars who write the theories of criminal behavior. The sample of criminal behavior on which the theories are founded is biased as to socioeconomic status, since it excludes these business and professional men. This bias is quite as certain as it would be if the scholars selected only redhaired criminals for study and reached the conclusion that redness of hair was the cause of crime (Sutherland, 1949:8-9).

Sutherland continues in White Collar Crime (1949) his analysis of criminal behavior in the middle and upper classes by noting the large number of offenses that have been detected by legal authorities and the treatment of these offenses once detected by legal authorities. Sutherland's early analysis pointed to a problem identified more clearly by contemporary criminologists, the discretionary power of the police.

A typical crime is one where any number of persons can be suspected of committing the crime. The problem for police is to narrow the universe of possible criminals to a manageable number which the police can cope with. The police must be able to separate possible criminals from non-criminals and concentrate their time and energy in apprehending criminals rather than arresting innocent people. Matza (1969:181-186) noted that in a typical burglary, police normally search for people known to the police, not to the victim. In a murder case the opposite is usually the

case. The necessity of reducing the number of suspects of criminal behavior is, of course, apparent. How police stereotype a possible criminal may affect crime statistics, particularly if the usual "criminal type" is a member of the lower class.¹⁶ The ideational stereotype of the "typical criminal" is one type of restriction of police activity.

There are other restrictions on the police which bear on the issue of discretionary power.¹⁷ Quinney (1970: 101-136) noted six general categories of restrictions. They are:

1. The lawful rights of citizens restrict the policeman's procedural rights;
2. Police are limited by their time, personnel, and equipment;
3. The ambiguous wording of legal statutes can either provide a large variation in arrests or, due to uncertainty, severely limit the power of arrest;
4. A policeman constantly faces danger and is in a position of authority thereby creating a man ideologically different from most citizens;
5. The organizational demands of the legal bureaucracy affect the manner in which policemen may enforce a statute;
6. The lack of the reporting of crimes by victims, the possible consequences of making an arrest, and outmoded laws create pressures on policemen which force them to decide which laws shall be enforced and who shall be arrested.¹⁸

These restrictions not only serve to affect criminal investigations but may also bias official crime statistics.

As has been previously noted, official crime statistics are dependent on the types of crimes tabulated, the number reported, the number of people arrested, and restric-

tions on police behavior. Some sociological theories which use these statistics may show the same bias. If these theories are, in turn, used by the police to identify possible criminals, a circular effect may be occurring. Sociologists, in theorizing a negative relationship between social class and crime, may be affecting the discretionary power of police to arrest which, in turn, substantiates sociological theory. How police discern "criminals" is a necessary concern because this might be a place in which this circular effect could be broken.¹⁹

An example of the police reactions to possible criminals is demonstrated by the Meyerhoff's study (1964: 328-336) of an urban middle class gang. Using the technique of participant observation, the Meyerhoffs found that gang members modeled their behavior roles after their parental and/or adult models. In this sense, their deviant activities were similar to their adult models. Middle class gang members were not social deviants but were acting out normal class expectations of conduct. The intelligence and social skills that these delinquents possess aids them in evading detection and/or arrest. If confronted by the police, gang members escaped arrest by showing the proper reverence of authority and by voicing fears of what an arrest record might do to their future professional career potential. The police may feel that it is more important to give a stern warning to a middle class teenager who cannot differentiate between a felony and a prank than arrest that middle class teenager

and possibly ruin his future. The Meyerhoff's state that this pattern may continue at the adult level. That is, middle class persons are given warnings rather than arrests for alleged deviant behavior. Policemen may feel that the consequences of arrest are negative for a middle class person's behavior pattern while arrest consequences are neutral or positive for lower class behavior patterns. This writer believes that this differential use of the police power of arrest, as evidenced in the Meyerhoff study, may not only exist for the Meyerhoff's juvenile gang, but also affects the statistical bases of some sociological theories which negatively relate social class to crime. Some empirical studies which use the self-reporting of deviance rather than official crime statistics show only a slightly inverse relationship between social class and deviant behavior.

One empirical study using the self-reporting interview technique was carried out in Flint, Michigan by Gold (1966:27-46). The researcher found an inverse relationship between the two variables of 2:1 to 1.5:1. He concluded that the statistical relationship of 5:1 exaggerates the negative relationship between social class and criminal behavior. However, Gold also stated a belief that those delinquents most in need of correctional treatment did come into contact with the legal authorities more often than those teenagers who only occasionally were guilty of delinquent behavior. It must be noted that Gold's data was drawn from one city and that his findings may be, therefore, peculiar

to that area only. His findings do question the statistical bases of some sociological theories.

In considering the possible deficiencies in the statistical bases of some sociological theories, this writer questions the theoretical substantiations of the well-known belief that social class and criminal behavior are negatively related. This thesis has not been sufficiently validated in the mind of this writer. Official crime statistics may not be measuring the amount of criminal behavior in the society. Reference group theorists have made note of this problem.

Quinney (1970:244) defines reference group theory as related to criminal behavior as persons who act within the context of a group due to the anticipated consequences of their actions. How an individual acts within a group is dependent on a number of volatile factors. This definition is similar to Matza's (1964:27-30) soft deterministic approach to the development of criminal behavior. An individual's behavior is governed according to the amount of freedom and constraint the individual experiences. The delinquent, according to Matza, may "drift" into and out of deviant behavior patterns. An important aspect of this theory to this thesis can be found in the concerns of both previously cited authors' concern with the possible consequences of a deviant act. While middle class and lower class individuals may pursue dissimilar criminal careers, regarding traffic offenses there may be a similarity in purpose and view of possible consequences of their actions within the

social groups they refer to as a standard for their behavior. A traffic offense may be viewed by the offender as being an ineffectual threat to his social standing within his reference group and may be viewed by the offender as an example of his personal conflict between the two concepts of freedom and constraint allowed or denied him by his reference group.

In review this author has summarized some of the more serious deficiencies of crime statistics most often used in studies of crime. The literature presented noted that underreportage of criminal behavior commonly occurred due to the victim's lack of reporting a crime, the policeman's use of discretionary power in determining whether an individual should be arrested due to his deviant behavior, or the criminally inclined individual's own ability to evade arrest and conviction. The individual's social class has appeared to be an important variable in past research in determining the types of crime committed by individuals of a particular social class and the frequency of crimes committed by members of a social class. In reviewing this literature, this author felt that the various theories of social class tend to be broad enough to allow a considerable variation of behavior throughout the social class spectrum. Yet, the hypothesis that social class is inversely related to criminal behavior has appeared to be either an underlying assumption or a conclusion of many studies of criminal behavior.

Theoretical Framework

Some theories relating social class and crime have been previously mentioned.²⁰ Those criminological theories which were cited appear to support the assumption of a negative relationship between social class and criminal behavior. However, determining acceptable definitions of what is social class and what is crime within this theoretical framework have been difficult to derive.²¹

Social class may be generally defined (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969:384) as being "a large category of people within a system of social stratification who have a similar socioeconomic status in relation to other segments of their community or society." This concept will be operationalized through Hollingshead and Redlich's (1958) index of social position. For the purposes of this research, the social class system was dichotomized into the three higher class categories and the two lower class categories. Indexes measuring residence, occupation, and education developed and/or adapted by Hollingshead and Redlich (1958:387-393) were used to place law violators into the two, broad social class categories.²²

For this thesis crime will be defined as based on the violation of formal norms (i.e., ordinances and statute law). Sutherland (1945:132-139) cited a sociological and legal school of thought that defined crime by two abstract criteria which provided a, ". . . legal description of an act as socially injurious and legal provision of a penalty for the act." Sellin (1965:3-9) posited a similar definition of crime by stating that, "the criminal law may be regarded as

in part a body of rules, which prohibit specific forms of conduct and indicate punishments for violations." Sellin pointed out that the conduct prohibited by "crime norms-criminal laws" determines the kind of rules enacted and the kind of sanctions that are attached to their violation. Relating Sellin's and Sutherland's definitions of crime to this research, traffic law violations would be subsumed by their definitions.

The above definitions of crime are somewhat controversial among sociologists. For example, Marshall and Clark (1965:15) defined three classes of crime, treason, felonies, and misdemeanors. Yet, the authors excluded the violation of municipal ordinances as misdemeanor crime because the governmental body does not have the degree of authority as the state holds. This author contends that the degree of authority of the governmental body and the degree of the crime are beside the point. The positions of Sutherland and Sellin, in this writer's view, more clearly define crime.

To compensate for the differential effects of crime categories on arrests, misdemeanor traffic arrests and convictions were used to gather data. Since traffic offenders are rarely found innocent of their crimes, traffic offenses are considered by this researcher to be useful in gathering information on the criminal behavior patterns of Americans. However, a traffic violation and subsequent conviction is rarely considered a serious threat to the individual's occupational or social position. This researcher believes that police officers in Corn County arrest persons incident to the individual's violation of a traffic law or ordinance and

not the potential arrestee's behavior pattern.

Corn County was selected as the site for this research for four main reasons. It was easily accessible to this researcher and well-known to him. This researcher was familiar with the behavioral patterns of police officers in Corn County and, to the best of his knowledge,²⁴ felt them to be uncorrupted and relatively unimpressed by external symbols of social class membership. Corn County has a variety of social forces within its boundaries. Through college students and faculty members from urban areas, the site has an urban flavoring while maintaining its rural tradition. Finally and most importantly, Corn County lacks a public transportation system for the use of the lower class, thereby necessitating the ownership and ability to drive private vehicles by most citizens of Corn County.

Hypotheses to be Tested

The null hypotheses to be tested are:

1. Social class membership will not affect the number of traffic arrests and penalties in Corn County during the first two months of 1970.
2. Sex will not differentially affect the number of traffic law violations and penalties in Corn County during the first two months of 1970.
3. Neither urban nor rural residence will differentially affect the number of traffic arrests and penalties in Corn County during the first two months of 1970.

The alternative hypotheses are:

1. Social class will inversely affect the number of traffic arrests and penalties in Corn County during the first two months of 1970.

2. Sex will differentially affect the number of traffic arrests and penalties in Corn County during the first two months of 1970.
3. Either urban or rural residence will affect the number of traffic arrests and convictions in Corn County during the first two months of 1970.

The addition of sex and residence was made because of the availability of this data from traffic court records and to discover whether either of these two variables might be intervening variables between social class and criminal behavior.

Social class was assumed to be the independent variable while criminal behavior was assumed to be the dependent variable. Sex and residence are also assumed to be independent variables.

Summary

The preceding section is intended to provide the reader insight as to what this researcher intends to undertake, a study of the relationship between social class and crime. Previous research related to this interest has been presented and discussed. Skepticism should be noted in this author as to the well-known belief that social class is negatively related to crime.

Arrest and adjudication process data will be gathered in Corn County for the calendar year, 1970. Social class will be correlated to arrest and adjudicatory process data for all individuals who have been legally discovered as allegedly being suspected of illegal behavior, defined as being arrested.

This research may provide insight into the relationship of social class and crime and whether all people are treated equally in the eyes of the law.

CHAPTER I FOOTNOTES

¹Social class is a concept which can be noted for its variety of definitions. To obtain a definition of social class which appeared to be generally acceptable, this author referred to a dictionary.

²For the purposes of this research, a legalistic definition of criminal behavior has been selected. By legalistic, this author meant that criminal behavior was broadly based on formal norms. For further discussion, see Quinney (1970:15-25).

³The judicial system was defined as all agencies and aspects of the legal means of social control. For a schema of this system, see the President's Commission (1968:72-73).

⁴For a complete discussion of this question and possible explanatory hypotheses, see Quinney (1970:217-20) and Walter B. Miller (14,1958:5-19).

⁵See Robert K. Merton's Social Theory and Social Structure (New York: Free Press, 1957).

⁶Official Crime Statistics frequently misrepresent the social class distribution of criminal behavior due to the selection of the particular law violations which are tabulated. See Quinney (1970:218-20) for a brief overview of this problem. A more thorough discussion is presented later in this chapter.

⁷See Edwin H. Sutherland's, "Is 'White Collar Crime' Crime?" (American Sociological Review, 10, 1945:132-39) or White Collar Crime (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1949) for a discussion of whether white collar crime is crime.

⁸See two articles by Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization" (American Sociological Review, 22 (December), 1957:664-70; and "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values," (American Sociological Review, 26 (October), 1961:712-19), for a further critique of Miller's theory of lower class gang deviancy.

⁹Quinney (1970:220) stated that the formulation of criminal behavior was based on middle class standards which may be in conflict with lower class standards. Therefore,

deviant lower class behavior may be more readily defined as being illegal than middle class deviant behavior. The underlying assumption is that the legal system formalizes middle class standards in the legal code at the expense of the lower class.

¹⁰For a complete discussion of Albert K. Cohen's theory of a delinquent subculture, see Cohen's, Delinquent Boys (Glencoe: Free Press, 1955).

¹¹Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin's elaboration on Merton's "Anomie" theory, labelled "differential opportunity theory," can be reviewed in the above authors', Delinquency and Opportunity (Glencoe: Free Press, 1961).

¹²See Gilbert Geis' article, "Statistics Concerning Race and Crime," Crime and Delinquency, (April, 1965:142-50) for a brief overview of some problems in crime statistics as related to the theories of Merton and Cloward and Ohlin. The next section of this chapter of this thesis also clarifies this statement.

¹³By "social costs" this author interpreted Cloward and Ohlin as referring to the large amount of private and public money which was spent and/or lost due to lower class criminal activities. These costs are incurred both by crime victims and the taxpayer.

¹⁴This writer defined official crime statistics as those crimes reported in the Uniform Crime Reports which are gathered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and published annually.

¹⁵Austin L. Porterfield's, Youth In Trouble (Fort Worth, Texas: Leo Polishman Foundation, 1946) noted that his sample of college students in Texas averaged eleven criminal acts per middle class student. These acts were unknown to law enforcement agencies.

¹⁶For an understanding of the general working personality of the police, see Jerome H. Skolnick's, Justice Without Trial (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966).

¹⁷For another view of the issue of "discretionary power" as viewed within the context of the American legal system, see the President's Commission, The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society (New York: Avon Books, Inc., 1968).

¹⁸For a more complete discussion of the application of criminal definitions on individuals by legal authorities, see Richard Quinney's The Social Reality of Crime (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970:101-204).

¹⁹The "vicious circle" or "self-fulfilling prophecy" concept as been explained respectively by Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962) and Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (revised edition, New York: The Free Press, 1957).

²⁰See Steven Box and Julienne Ford's, "The Facts Don't Fit: On the Relationship between Social Class and Criminal Behaviour" (The Sociological Review, 19, 1 (February), 1971:31-52).

²¹See Richard Quinney's, The Problem of Crime (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1970:4-8) for some definitions of crime. Quinney's book contains an excellent overview of the historical development of the conception of crime.

²²The utility of Hollingshead and Redlich's (1958: 387-93) social class indexes to this author are discussed in more depth later in this study.

²³"Corn County" is a euphemism for a county in a midwestern state. The alias was used in order to insure the availability of court records to future researchers without unnecessary delays. Corn County is similar to the setting described by Joseph P. Lyford's, The Talk In Vandalia (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962). An important difference between Lyford's research and Corn County is the small state university located in Corn County. The names of school yearbooks and newspapers were not divulged for similar reasons.

²⁴The author has resided in Corn County for most of his life. The author was personally familiar with some of the police officers in Corn County.

II. THE DESIGN OF THE INQUIRY

The design of this inquiry is a pilot sampling of traffic offenses in Corn County during January and February of 1970. Previous research (Sutherland, 1949) has indicated that the middle and upper classes are generally found to be illegally engaged in "white collar crimes" while the lower class seems inclined towards more personalized crimes such as robbery and assault as reported annually by the Uniform Crime Reports.¹ With these indications and other previously noted findings in mind, this researcher attempted to compare the criminality of the two major social classes through the investigation of a particular crime category, misdemeanor traffic violations. This crime category appeared, to this researcher, to be a useful common denominator of the social classes, thereby making a comparison of the criminality of the two social classes possible. To make this comparison, a number of major factors must be taken into account in order that misdemeanor traffic offenses could be viewed as a common denominator between the two social classes.

The location of Corn County and the transportation facilities available in this area are important factors in determining whether misdemeanor traffic offenses are a common denominator in comparing the criminality of the lower

and the middle social classes. Unlike major metropolitan areas, Corn County does not have a public transportation system. It does have some taxicab companies but these companies are used sparingly in the area due both to expense and the availability of private automobiles. The lack of a public transportation system seems to necessitate the ownership of most of the residents of an automobile. The necessity of ownership of an automobile is evident for both the lower and middle social classes.² The location of Corn County is important because it is not near any large, metropolitan areas. The anonymity of large, metropolitan populations is missing. Although many of the college students residing in Corn County are from metropolitan areas, the smallness of the university does not connote anonymity, rather most college students have friendship circles and a relative few are unknown by many other persons in the area. Those individuals with occupations in law enforcement are viewed, by this observer, as being honest and trustworthy. The history of the area has not been marked by police scandals related to misdemeanor traffic violations or other crime categories. There is, according to this observer, a sense of community and a feeling of accountability of all individuals as to how their behavior affects others in the area.³ This researcher, despite his knowledge of many individuals in the area, suffered some serious difficulties in locating traffic law violators in Corn County.

Of the 485 traffic violators recorded in Corn

County during the first two months of 1970, this researcher was able to positively identify and locate 110 offenders. There are many reasons for this discrepancy. Most importantly, this researcher did not have the time nor the resources to locate all of the traffic offenders. Another problem was the lack of information regarding residence, age, and occupation in Corn County traffic offense statistics. This deficiency was partially overcome through the utilization of telephone directories, high school and college yearbooks, and the personal recognition of some names by this researcher.

The latter mentioned sources of information have their own built-in deficiencies in locating traffic offenders and classifying them by social class membership. For instance, lower class individuals may forego the luxury of a telephone and the picture in the school yearbook. This may place more middle class offenders in the pilot sample than normal and make findings from the sample suspect. Juveniles and housewives may also be eliminated because their names are usually not listed in telephone directories. Again, college students may not have telephones listed in their names nor appear in college yearbooks. Traffic offenders from outside of Corn County who are arrested within this political boundary may also be difficult to locate and classify into social class.

There is an advantage in ascertaining the social class of some traffic offenders. Some traffic offenses are

directly related to a lower class occupation--truck driving. Overweight or improper license violations can be related to the offender and his social class. This occupational classification does have its drawbacks. It, of course, omits salesmen, those who commute from home to work or to market places, and vehicles used for recreational purposes.⁵

This researcher was able to use his personal experiences to locate and classify many traffic law violators. By being both a lifelong member of the university community and of the Corn County area, this researcher was able to identify and classify by social class many individuals that would have escaped the notice of an observer unfamiliar with the people of Corn County. These individuals included housewives, college students, juveniles, and individuals who live either a transient existence or who have moved out of Corn County between the time of their arrest and conviction during the first two months of 1970 and the time the data was gathered in early 1972. Through boyhood, work, and educational experiences and social gatherings, this researcher believes he had a balanced knowledge of both middle class and lower class members of Corn County so that this qualitative experience was equalized throughout both the middle and lower divisions of the social class variable.⁶

When this researcher had located the sufficient background data to classify traffic law violators by social class, indices developed by Hollingshead and Redlich (1958: 387-97) as refined from an earlier index of Warner, et al.

(1940) and further adapted by this researcher to fit the needs of this thesis were utilized to classify the members of the sample by social class categories. The three major indices of social position, residence, occupation, and education were utilized with some adaptations. These adaptations consisted of collapsing multiple positions within the three indices into two categories. For instance, positions in the educational index were collapsed into individuals with high school diplomas or more education and individuals lacking a high school diploma or known equivalency. The occupational index was divided into those with lower "white collar" positions upward and those with upper "blue collar" positions downward. Residential index positions were dichotomized based on type of neighborhood in which the housing is located and the condition of the housing. This classification became categorized as residences considered average or better and those residences considered fair or worse.

A further adaptation of Hollingshead and Redlich's (1958:387-94) index of social position was necessitated because of the restrictions of time and financial resources placed on this researcher. The adaptation was to use a minimum of one social index when the above-named restrictions affected the ability of this researcher to place a number of the sample in any other index. For instance, a member of the sample who violated a traffic violation such as being "overweight" could safely be placed in the occupational index as lower class; however, his placement in the educa-

tional index as a middle class person but information related to his past, present and future occupation or his residence might be difficult to obtain. By far, the most serious, limiting factor was the lack of financial resources which could have facilitated the search for residential and occupational information for those traffic law violators who were located through other sources as living in fairly distant metropolitan areas.

The residential index was further elaborated by an interest of this researcher as to whether urban or rural residences would affect the sample distribution of traffic violators. Interest was also directed at whether urban or rural residences would affect the relationship between social class and criminal behavior as related to traffic law violations.

Traffic violations were also divided into two categories based on the severity of the punishment for the traffic offense. The interest of the researcher was whether there was a significant difference between the two social classes and the penalties assessed by traffic court for their traffic law offenses. The traffic offense penalties were categorized as those paying ten dollars and costs for their offense and those paying larger fines, receiving jail sentences, probationary periods, or revocation of their driver's license privileges.

The secondary source of the data, Corn County traffic violation records during January and February, 1970, was

utilized for a number of reasons. This researcher was out of the country during this period of time. Therefore, this researcher did not have a personal knowledge of any particular case. This measure hopefully eliminated a possible source of bias. The use of two months of a full year was undertaken mainly to facilitate data gathering and to release these traffic records bound for a full year and beyond to others who might desire access to them. Also, any selection of a point of time should not affect the major hypothesis of an inverse relationship between criminal behavior and social class. The winter months were selected in order to reduce the number of arrests of travelers passing through Corn County, thereby reducing an "outsider effect" in the number of traffic law violators in the sample. In addition, hazardous driving conditions will reduce the number of arrests due mainly to careless driving habits viewed by this researcher as usually occurring during warmer months when hazardous weather conditions are reduced considerably, thereby reducing an omnipresent fear of danger in the driver of losing control of his vehicle. The use of "speed traps" by police is generally infrequent during the winter months while "speed traps" are more prevalent during the warmer months. The use of winter month traffic violations can thereby reduce the number of speeding violations which are usually recorded during warmer months.

In conclusion of this section, this researcher designed the inquiry as a pilot study investigating the

relationship between social class and criminal behavior. Traffic law violations were chosen as an example of criminal behavior and Corn County records chosen in order that both social class categories would have an equal opportunity and ability to commit this type of crime. The time period of January and February, 1970 revealed 485 traffic law offenders of which 110 were classified and placed in the sample. The Social class of the traffic law violator was determined through the use of an educational, occupational, and/or residential index. The pilot study used secondary sources of information primarily due to the easy accessibility and inexpensiveness of this type of data. Another consideration of this researcher is based on the belief that this type of research can be replicated on a larger scale and in other areas by other researchers. Because of a lack of time and money and also because of the nature of a pilot study, there are threats to the validity to this test of the previously stated hypothesis that should be clarified.

Limitations of this Research

Campbell and Stanley (1963:1-12) explained several threats to the validity of this type of pilot study as well as to research designs of this nature. The major concerns of this researcher were the problems of mortality and selectivity as related to the sample of the pilot study. Selectivity (Campbell and Stanley, 1963:9) involves the differential recruitment of individuals into the sample. Mortality

(Campbell and Stanley, 1963:9) refers to the differential loss of individuals from the sample. The major question is how the original sample of 485 persons was drawn and how this sample evolved into a size of 110.

Selectivity, as a type of threat to the validity of this pilot study, may have affected the original sample of 485. This sample may be atypical for many reasons. Cold, snowy weather with resulting hazardous driving conditions may both reduce the number of drivers and make drivers more cautious. Both of these factors may reduce the number of arrests for this period of time. This may be particularly true for those drivers who use their automobiles for recreational purposes or other non-occupation reasons. The average number of arrests for Corn County during a two month period during 1970 was 568. While the sample size of 485 is below the average, the lack of speed traps and vacationers in the Corn County area during this time may account for a large portion of the difference in the two figures to the extent that any remaining difference between the sample size and the average number of arrests may be negligible. Of course, we may only hypothesize as to whether the sample size was representative or whether the selecting of this particular time period jeopardized the internal validity of this pilot study. The mortality rate of this original sample appeared to pose a more serious threat to the internal validity of this pilot study.

The mortality factor reduced the original sample of

485 to the working sample of 110. This represented a loss of over 75% of the original sample. Mortality represented itself in the sample due mainly to the lack of more detailed residential information in Corn County court records. Traffic law offenders were identified by city or township residence only. This information was only useful to this researcher in placing individuals in either urban or rural areas and as a steppingstone in further investigation through other secondary information when available. The loss of 365 individuals was due mainly to the lack of identifying information. Those lost included wives, children, transients, travelers residing in areas remote from Corn County, and those with common last names. The loss of these violators from the original sample may have differentially affected the social class. However, this researcher believes that this pilot study is still valuable. The mortality factor was a problem for achieving the empirical validity of this pilot study and subsequent research should take this problem into account. However, the primary purpose of this research was assumed not to be seriously affected.

Both of these threats to the validity of this pilot study affected the attempted randomness of the sample as well as temporal and financial problems. The final sample used can only be safely described as a judgmental or purposive one. Miller (1970:56-58) noted that a purposive sample is one in which practical probability sampling procedures cannot be undertaken. Therefore, a sample was sought by the researcher which appeared to be representative

of a typical population. This pilot study can be viewed as an attempt to represent the population of Corn County. Two necessary conditions, that possible errors will not seriously affect results and that probability sampling can be viewed as a practical impossibility, have been met by this researcher when the contents of this chapter are reviewed. While variability and bias cannot be empirically measured, it is the judgment of this researcher that he had a satisfactory knowledge of the people of Corn County based upon his lifelong participant observation and that the sample selected fairly represents this population.

Summary

This discussion has concerned itself with the methods that this researcher used in designing and carrying out this pilot study. Corn County traffic court records for the first two months of 1970 were utilized in gathering the data used in this sample as well as other secondary sources and personal recollections. Violators were categorized as to their social class, degree of penalty, sex and residence. The major threats to the validity of this pilot study, mortality and selectivity, were discussed. The type of sample used, a purposive one, was discussed. In conclusion, this researcher believes that while the pilot study has faults in the design, the overall purpose of this research has been met.

CHAPTER II FOOTNOTES

¹That the lower class seems inclined towards committing more violent crime appears evident through newspaper coverage of crimes and in sociological research. For instance, see Miller's, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," (Journal of Social Issues, 14 (November), 1958:5-19) as an example of a theoretical approach to lower class crime. One may also note that recent politically motivated campaigns against "Crime in the Streets" seems inordinately concerned with crimes normally committed by lower class individuals and groups.

²This was noted by this researcher through participant observation of Corn County residents.

³Police in Corn County do allow a certain amount of gambling in private clubs and drinking parties organized by university fraternal and sororal organizations.

⁴For a better understanding of the feeling of community in small, midwestern towns, see Lyford's The Talk of Vandalia, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962.

⁵This writer intended to mediate statistical inferences due to the problem of representativeness in the sample. Inferences were in the nature of generalizations aimed at discovering whether the findings of this pilot study indicated that further research would be rewarding to the discipline of sociology and the study of social deviance.

⁶For examples of qualitative methods, see William J. Filstead, editor, Qualitative Methodology's Firsthand Involvement with the Social World (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1970).

III. DATA AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The major concept to be tested is whether an inverse relationship exists between social class and criminal behavior. Minor hypotheses were developed as the data for testing the primary hypothesis was gathered. Because of the purposive sampling procedure employed to test this primary hypothesis, this researcher was unsure as to whether the sample would be adequate in testing these minor hypotheses. These minor hypotheses were developed as the independent variables of sex and residence were included in the data. These two variables were utilized more for the possibility of their being intervening variables affecting the relationship between social class and criminal behavior than for the possibility of sex and residence acting independently on the dependent variable, criminal behavior.

Reference group theory was one of the sociological theories utilized in this pilot study. As related to the focus of this pilot study, reference group theory (Quinney, 1970:244) can be defined as individuals who carry out certain actions within a group context according to the expected group reactions of the individual or individual's behavior. This researcher suggests that group negative reactions to the criminal behavior of a traffic violation

will be both minimal and equal, for either social class in which the individual violator belongs to or is classified into by this researcher. However, current belief states that the lower class group have a more minimal negative reaction to a lower class individual's behavior than the middle class group's reaction to the deviant behavior of one of its members. Furthermore, a lower class individual's deviant activity may be more severely sanctioned by the judicial system than a middle class individual's deviant behavior. The assumption is that the judicial system may attempt to equalize formal and informal punishment by stressing formal punishment on the lower class individual while minimizing formal punishment on the middle class individual because of the expectation that the middle class individual's social reference group will more severely sanction his deviant behavior as a traffic violator than the lower class violator's social group would. These theoretical assumptions were conceptualized through an adaptation of Hollingshead and Redlich's (1958) index of social position and Corn County traffic court records of January and February, 1970.

From an original group of 485 traffic violators were classified by social class, sex, residence, and traffic violation and penalty for a working sample size of 110. The criminal behavior variable was dichotomized by penalty into two groups, those with the typical fine of ten dollars and costs and those with a differing penalty. Sex was determined by both name or, in the case of neuter first name, by

personal recognition of the violator. Residence was determined by noting the city in which the violator was listed in traffic court records and through secondary sources of information such as telephone directories, school yearbooks and personal knowledge. The social class of traffic law violators was determined through knowledge of the individual's educational background, occupation, and/or place of residence.

While the major purpose of including the variables of sex and residence was to discover whether they might intervene in the relationship between social class and criminal behavior, sub-hypotheses were developed because of this researcher's curiosity regarding their relationship to criminal behavior in general and traffic law violations and penalties in particular. One sub-hypothesis was concerned with the effect of a traffic violator's sex. The hypothesis is that sex of the violator should have no difference in those arrested or in the degree of punishment. The other sub-hypothesis stated that there should be no difference among traffic-law violators as to whether they resided in urban or rural areas.

With this brief review of the material presented in the first two chapters, one can now proceed to the data gathered from the sample and the analysis of this data as related to the hypotheses being tested.

The Data

Data was gathered from a sample size of 110 traffic law violators in Corn County during January and February of 1970. The purposive sample was assumed to be ideal for this pilot study by this researcher despite previously mentioned, inherent weaknesses in the sample.

The dependent variable, traffic law violations was divided into two categories, those violations punished by fines of ten dollars and costs and those violations with punishments in excess of ten dollars and costs including jail sentences, probation sentences, and loss of drivers license privileges. Sixty-four individuals in the sample received fines of ten dollars and costs. Forty-six persons in the sample received punishments greater than ten dollars and costs. Fifty-eight percent of the sample was in the first category while forty-two percent of the sample fell into the latter category. The Gallup organization as reported in Goldman (1969:213-18) considered this difference between these percentages to be within the allowance for sampling error in this sample size.

The major independent variable, social class, was dichotomized into categories of middle class and lower class. There were 45 middle class individuals in the sample, accounting for 41% of the sample size. The lower class was represented by 65 traffic-law violators or 59% of the sample. According to the guidelines set by the Gallup organization (Goldman; 1969:213-18) this is within a confidence limit of

.05 of this size of sample but verges on the extreme edge of this limit. An explanation of the nearness of the lack of confidence of course lies in the assumption that more lower class individuals reside in Corn County than middle class individuals. Hence, it is to be expected that more lower class individuals will be represented in the sample.

The remaining two variables, sex and residence, had such an extreme variation between their respective variables that this researcher considered further analysis to be illogical for the purposes of this pilot study. However, a partial analysis is to be presented later in this chapter. There were ninety-six males and fourteen females in the sample. Ninety members of the sample resided in urban areas while twenty members of the sample lived in rural areas.

The relationship between social class and traffic law violations was analyzed.¹ The data was categorized by social class and the type of penalty received. The percentage results can be seen in the table below.

TABLE I

<u>SOCIAL CLASS</u>	<u>TRAFFIC LAW VIOLATION PENALTY</u>		Row Marginal
	\$10	\$10 and Above	
MIDDLE CLASS	56% (25)	44% (20)	45
LOWER CLASS	60% (39)	40% (26)	65

$$X^2_{df=1} = 2.572, P > .20 < .10$$

As can be seen, there is a relatively small percentage difference between the social classes and the penalties that the respective social classes received for their traffic law violations. The lack of a large percentage difference contradicts the accepted notion stated by this researcher in the first alternative hypothesis that there should be an inverse relationship between social class and crime. The chi-square test of independence was applied to the test with a significance level of 0.05 established.² The χ^2 value was greater than the accepted significance level which further threatened the credibility of this alternative hypothesis. Based on the data gathered in this sample, the null hypothesis that there is not a differential effect on the number of arrests and extent of penalty because of social class appears to be a more plausible explanation for the data gathered. It should also be remembered that the percentage difference between the representation of the social classes in the sample was within the limits of representativeness but verges on being unacceptable. Before further analysis of this relationship is undertaken, this researcher decided to present the relationships between sex and traffic law violations and penalties and the relationship between residence and traffic law violations and penalties.

The relationship between sex and traffic law violations and penalties was next analyzed. The null hypothesis was that sex would not differentially affect the number of traffic-law arrests and penalties in Corn County during the

first two months of 1970. Because of the small number of females in the sample, any attempt to affirm or reject the null hypothesis or the alternate hypothesis was rendered undesirable by this researcher. The alternate hypothesis was that sex would differentially affect traffic-law violations and penalties in Corn County during the first two months of 1970. A table was constructed in order to visualize the results. Table II showed the relationship in the sample between sex and traffic law violations and penalties as follows:

TABLE II

<u>SEX</u>	<u>TRAFFIC LAW VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES</u>		
	\$10	\$10 and Above	
MALE	57% (55)	43% (41)	96
FEMALE	64% (9)	36% (5)	14

$\chi^2_{df=1} = 2.402, P > .20 < .10$

At first appearance the table appeared similar by percentage and χ^2 measures as the first table showing the relationship between social class and traffic law violations and penalties. However, the low number of females, particularly in the fourth cell, severely weakened any possible meaning in the results of this test. Runyon and Haber (1967: 210-11) noted that the chi-square test is subject to distortion because of a low number of members of a cell such as found by the cell depicting the number of females receiving penalties greater than a fine of ten dollars and costs. In

the final analysis, this researcher decided that the data drawn in this sample was not sufficient to warrant a test of the hypotheses presented. Further, this researcher considered that a test to investigate the role of sex as an intervening variable between the relationship of social class and criminal behavior would not be justified for the reasons previously stated. It should be noted that females are rarely arrested when compared to male arrest rates.³

The analysis of the relationship between residence and criminal behavior had reservations similar to those expressed in the relationship between sex and criminal behavior. The null hypothesis was that residence would not differentially affect traffic law violations and penalties. The alternative hypothesis stated that residence would differentially affect traffic law violations and penalties. Table III presented the results of this test as follows:

TABLE III

<u>RESIDENCE</u>	<u>TRAFFIC LAW VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES</u>		Row Marginal
	\$10 and Costs	Above \$10 and Costs	
URBAN	54% (49)	46% (41)	90
RURAL	75% (15)	25% (5)	20

$\chi^2_{df=1} = 4.594 \quad P > .05 < .02$

While the chi-square was significant at the .05 level, the low number of subjects in the fourth cell showing the number of rural subjects receiving fines of more than ten

dollars and costs led this researcher to reject this test as a suitable test of the null and alternative hypotheses. For this reason, the use of the residence variable as an intervening variable between the relationship of social class and crime was considered by this researcher as being of negligible value and was, therefore, discarded as was the sex variable.⁴ What remained was an analysis between the relationship of social class and criminal behavior without any other measurable variable being included as a part of this pilot study.

Returning to the data as shown in Table I, this researcher noted that the data indicate that the null hypothesis of there not being a relationship between social class and criminal behavior should be accepted. According to the results of this pilot study, the alternative hypothesis that there is an inverse relationship between social class and criminal behavior as depicted in traffic law violations and penalties should not be affirmed. However, this researcher had some reservations in affirming the null hypothesis and, therefore, rejecting an assumption of the relationship between social class and criminal behavior that has been the underlying assumption of countless pieces of sociological research.

The first reservation dealt with replication. This researcher believes that the pilot study as carried out here should not be replicated. Researchers in other locales may have access to better information from traffic court records

which can only increase the size of the sample and allow for a more rigorous prediction of a traffic-law violator's social class. Better data will enable the development of more independent variables which can strengthen research of this nature.

Another reservation pertained to whether the sample was representative of the Corn County population and travelers in that area. This researcher assumed that the sample was representative based on his knowledge of the area as related to the social class variable. It was felt that various threats noted earlier in this research negated each other. This balance was also an assumption. However, an assumption did not necessarily connote empirical knowledge.

A further reservation was that the chi-square test at a significance level of .05 may not clearly reject the null hypothesis. Considering the small size of the judgmental sample, the chi-square test may merely be a reflection of the weaknesses of the previously mentioned assumption. Considering the nature of this pilot study, this researcher felt that there is a possibility that, by chance, this sample fell into that five percent region. The data did not necessarily reflect the expected outcome of this research as stated in the first null hypothesis. However, only future replication efforts can justify this reservation.

On the positive side, this pilot study may have reflected a peculiarity in the Corn County system of justice: that traffic law violations by members of a social class are

treated equally with fines and other penalties being levied without notice of the offender's social rank. If this is in fact the case, then this pilot study has indicated a path in future research into the relationship between social class and crime. If both social classes have an equal opportunity to commit the same type of crime, then the notion that social class is inversely related to criminal behavior may be rejected and replaced by an hypothesis that social class is not in itself a determining factor in criminal behavior. Furthermore, this hypothesis can be tested and these tests can be replicated with similar and predictable results.

In summary, the data appeared to affirm the null hypothesis that social class would not differentially affect the number of traffic arrests and penalties in Corn County in 1970. While this null hypothesis was stated in a non-directional manner, the common belief that social class is inversely related to criminal behavior was also rejected. The other two null hypotheses could not be sufficiently tested because of weaknesses in the data collected. The first alternative hypothesis that social class inversely affects traffic law violations and penalties appeared to be rejected by this pilot study. The other two alternative hypotheses could not be affirmed or rejected because of weaknesses in the data related to the independent variables of sex and residence. This researcher stated some important reservations in affirming the first null hypotheses. These reservations dealt mainly with methodological

considerations and the justification of the assumptions of this researcher during the process of developing a theoretical frame of reference, the purposive sample, and in the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER III FOOTNOTES

¹For a description of survey research and analysis of percentage data, see Morris Rosenberg's, The Logic of Survey Analysis (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968).

²For an explanation of nominal relationships and strengths of relationships see Hubert M. Blalock's, Social Statistics (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1960).

³This author noted that very few females are arrested in Corn County. The author noted this as a life-long participant observer in Corn County. Those females that were arrested usually resided outside of Corn County and were attending classes at the university. Because of time limitations, an investigation into the number of arrests of members of the college community as opposed to the surrounding community was not undertaken. This researcher often suspected that members of the college community were arrested for traffic law violations at a larger rate than members of the surrounding community. However, this hypothesis was not pursued by this researcher at this time. Future research into the relationship between sex and misdemeanor law violations might be illuminating as well as a study of arrests for misdemeanor violations in a small college community.

⁴Future research testing this hypothesis could be informative. Police may show deferential treatment toward rural members of an agricultural community while being more strict with members of the urban community in an essentially rural area. This researcher considered further research in this direction to be parenthetical to the purpose of this thesis, however, and this tangential research was deleted. In the future this writer hopes to carry out research in this direction.

IV. CONCLUSION

This pilot study has found reason to continue and broaden research into the well-known hypothesis that social class is inversely related to criminal behavior. Much of past sociological research into criminal behavior was based on this hypothesis used as an underlying assumption. Examples of some of this sociological research were stated in the first chapter. This researcher had previously accepted this premise, as I suppose, other sociologists have in carrying out their research. While this pilot study did not absolutely refute this well-known hypothesis, the necessity of further research on an expanded, more rigorous basis was indicated by the result of this research. This concluding chapter has a dual purpose. It will briefly review the body of this research. It will also suggest where further research can be carried out and how this research can be undertaken.

Box and Ford (1971) published an article that served as an impetus for this research. The first chapter reviewed their article dealing with the relationship between social class and criminal behavior. Some important pieces of sociological literature dealing with this hypothesis were reviewed with attention to their weaknesses. Some sociological theories related to this research were also reviewed.

After noting the deficiencies in criminal statistics as utilized in past research, the author stated the null and alternative hypotheses to be tested by this pilot study. The major hypothesis was that social class membership will differentially affect the number of traffic arrests and penalties in Corn County during the first two months of 1970. The alternative hypothesis for this null hypothesis was that social class membership would not differentially affect the number of traffic arrests and penalties in Corn County during the first two months of 1970. The other null and alternative hypotheses dealt with the respective effects of sex and residence on traffic arrests and penalties during the first two months of 1970 in Corn County. These other hypotheses were developed parenthetically to the original hypotheses due to the development of the pilot study and the possible availability of data to test these sub-hypotheses.

The method of this research was a purposive sampling of cases of traffic arrests and penalties during the first two months of 1970 in Corn County. It was assumed by this author that the sample represented Corn County based on the author's knowledge of the area and the people residing there and traveling within its boundaries. Possible deficiencies in the sample rested in the lack of randomness in the sample. The most serious threats to the validity of the sample lay in the methodological problems of mortality and selectivity (Campbell and Stanley, 1963:1-12) as explained in Chapter two.

The dependent variable, traffic-law violations and penalties, was tabulated through the use of traffic court records. This crime was selected as an example of criminal behavior because of this researcher's assumption that both lower and middle class members of Corn County had an equal opportunity to be arrested and penalized for this crime regardless of social status, economic resources, and socio-political pressures in Corn County.¹

The major independent variable, social class, was empirically defined by the adaptation of Hollingshead and Redlich's (1958) Index of Social Position. This writer assumed that any one of the three indexes based on education, occupation, or residence would be sufficient evidence to place the traffic law violator in his social class. The information for locating the social class of the subjects of this research came from readily available materials and the personal knowledge of this researcher.

There were some overt benefits from using these methods. From a point-of-view of time and expense, this pilot study was relatively inexpensive. This feature was considered beneficial to this researcher because of the severe handicaps he suffered in this area. Another benefit as seen by this researcher was the ease in which this and future research in this area could be replicated or expanded by other interested social researchers who are not endowed with large research grants.

The sample size of 110 was considered sufficient by

this writer in order to test the hypotheses of this pilot study and analyze the results gained from this data. The data appeared to accept the null hypothesis which stated that social class would not affect criminal behavior. However, because of the nature of a pilot study and the resultant methodological problems, this researcher felt that it was unwise to reject the alternative hypothesis that social class does not differentially affect traffic law violations and penalties. The other hypotheses were not analyzed except to note that the data available were not suitable to test these hypotheses as first expected. In the final analysis, this researcher found that this pilot study indicated the possibility that future, more elaborate research in this area might be fruitful. The interests of the discipline of Sociology and those interested in the phenomena of deviant behavior can be served by more elaborate research into the relationship of social class to criminal behavior. The underlying assumption of much of the past research in this area has been that social class was negatively related to criminal behavior. Until a more elaborate test of this traditionally accepted hypothesis has been undertaken its validity cannot be assumed.

Future research will be aimed at a more rigorous testing of the relationship between social class and criminal behavior. This researcher hopes to locate an area or city that meets the criteria of an equal opportunity for social class members to commit a traffic law violation and be

penalized. Traffic court records vary from one area to another area in their descriptions of traffic law violators. This researcher hopes to locate an area where records containing information about violators include age and address of the violator. The use of census and property tax records would also be necessitated as this researcher would not have the use of personal knowledge of arrested individuals to rely on. Data would be collected over a period of a year to allow for seasonal differences in the number and type of arrests as well as possible differences in the penalties assessed by traffic courts to traffic law violators. Research into other crimes such as shoplifting, as an example, may be useful in discovering other types of deviant behavior that is equally accessible to members of both of the major social classes in the United States. The use of only one type of criminal behavior was assumed to be an acceptable device for the purpose of this pilot study although one type of illegal act, of course, does not define all types of criminal behavior either quantitatively or qualitatively. Future research should contain a number of crimes that all social classes have an equal opportunity to commit. The use of participant observation techniques would also be necessary in order to judge the relationship between police and possible law violators. For example, the use of interviews, self-reports, and participant observations of the interaction between a law officer and a potential arrestee would allow this author to gain a deeper understanding into who is arrested, what violation he is charged with, and how the judicial system reacts to the arrested.

CHAPTER IV FOOTNOTES

¹This assumption can only be tested by riding with police patrols. Expensive cars may be ignored by police. See Skolnick's Justice Without Trial (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966) for an understanding of a policeman's "working personality" and the effect that status symbols might have on his discretionary power to arrest or not arrest.

REFERENCES

- Blalock, Hubert M.
1960 Social Statistics. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Box, Steven and Julienne Ford
1971 "The Facts Don't Fit: On the Relationship Between Social Class and Criminal Behavior." The Sociological Review 19 (February): 31-52.
- Campbell, Donald T. and Julian C. Stanley
1963 Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company.
- Cloward, Richard E. and Lloyd E. Ohlin
1961 Delinquency and Opportunity. Glencoe: Free Press.
- Cohen, Albert K.
1955 Delinquent Boys. Glencoe: Free Press.
- Filstead, William J.
1970 Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement with the Social World. Chicago: Markham Publishing Company.
- Geis, Gilbert
1965 "Statistics Concerning Race and Crime." Crime and Delinquency (April): 142-50.
- Gold, Martin
1966 "Undetected Delinquent Behavior." Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 31, 1: 27-46.
- Goldman, Peter
1970 Report from Black America. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc.
- Hollingshead, August B. and Frederick C. Redlich
1958 Social Class and Mental Illness. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Labovitz, Sanford and Robert Hagedorn
1971 Introduction to Social Research. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

- Lyford, Joseph P.
1964 The Talk in Vandalia. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers.
- Marshall, William L. and William L. Clark
1965 "The Legal Definition of Crime and Criminals" in The Sociology of Crime and Delinquency edited by Marvin E. Wolfgang, et al. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 15.
- Matza, David and Gresham Sykes
1961 "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values." American Sociological Review 26 (October): 712-19.
- Matza, David
1964 Delinquency and Drift. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Matza, David
1969 Becoming Deviant. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Merton, Robert K.
1957 Social Theory and Social Structure. New York: Free Press.
- Meyerhoff, Howard L. and Barbara G. Meyerhoff
1964 "Field Observations of Middle Class 'Gangs'." Social Forces 42 (March): 328-36.
- Miller, Delbert C.
1970 Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement. New York: David McKay and Co.
- Miller, Walter B.
1958 "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency." Journal of Social Issues, 14: 5-19.
- Myrdal, Gunnar
1962 An American Dilemma. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers.
- Porterfield, Austin L.
1946 Youth in Trouble. Fort Worth, Texas: Leo Polishman Foundation.
- President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice
1968 The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society. New York: Avon Books.

- Quinney, Richard
1970 The Problem of Crime. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co.
- Quinney, Richard
1970 The Social Reality of Crime. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Rosenberg, Morris
1968 The Logic of Survey Analysis. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Runyon, Richard P. and Audrey Haber
1967 Fundamentals of Behavioral Statistics. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.
- Sellin, Thorsten
1965 "A Sociological Approach to the Study of Crime Causation" in The Sociology of Crime and Delinquency edited by Marvin E. Wolfgang, et al. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 3-9.
- Skolnick, Jerome H.
1966 Justice Without Trial. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Sutherland, Edwin H.
1945 "Is 'White Collar Crime' Crime?" American Sociological Review 10: 132-39.
- Sutherland, Edwin H.
1949 White Collar Crime. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Sykes, Gresham M. and David Matza
1957 "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency." American Sociological Review 22 (December): 664-70.
- Theodorson, George A. and Achilles G. Theodorson
1969 Modern Dictionary of Sociology. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co.