

THE ECOLOGY OF URBAN UNREST: THE CASE OF ARSON—NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, JULY 1967

DR. DANIEL E. GEORGES

*Assistant Professor
The University of Texas
Institute of Urban Studies
Arlington, Texas*

ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of correlations between arson and forty-one population and housing variables, both during the year as well as during the Newark Riot of 1967. Correlations are sought for arson and socio-economic characteristics which include race, ethnicity, unemployment by sex, density, transience, and occupation.

Arson is viewed, both as an integral phase of riot behavior and as a criminal act committed independent of any form of collective violence. A review of the classification of collective violence is presented which includes communal, commodity, and escalated riots, treason, insurrection, rebellion, belligerency, insurgency, and revolution.

Collective violence is viewed as a persisting pattern in the American social fabric and arson as an integral phase of that pattern.

The case study of Newark 1967 is turned to for a comprehensive analysis of possible causative and correlative factors of arson as both a form of violent collective behavior and as a criminal act independent of collective violence.

Correlation analysis, both the use of multiple correlation and partial correlation techniques, reveals that the correlation between arson and the preponderance of blacks in a given area appears to be remotely significant for Newark during the year 1967. However, the incidence of arson during the riot period was not as strongly correlated with the preponderance of blacks within a given social space as was the correlation between arson incidents and the numerical preponderance of blacks within a given residential space for the year 1967.

Conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data presented within this study suggest that social scientists must seriously re-evaluate those theories which assume that violence and blackness are linearly correlated without evaluating the existence of intervening variables. This study also suggests that we re-evaluate "Riffraff and Economic Deprivation

Theories" of violence, and pay closer attention to theories and hypotheses which attempt to locate the initial location of the disorder and the subsequent diffusion process.

The year 1967 was a very "good" year for collective violence; in fact, *The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* listed one hundred and sixty-four disorders as having occurred in one hundred and twenty-eight cities. Newark was one of eight cities classified as having experienced a Type I or major disorder; why it happened is still open to debate. This study will attempt to shed some light upon possible correlative factors both before and during those five violent days in July.

The Newark "riot" was selected as the subject of this study for the following reasons:

1. the availability of socio-economic statistics on housing and population characteristics;
2. the severity of the violence (only the Detroit riot of 1968 equals the Newark violence in terms of property damaged, persons killed or injured, and/or number of riot participants, during the period 1950-1970); and
3. the ever-increasing trend of black numerical dominance in American cities, a trend Newark was well on the path of fulfilling in 1967.

Intent of the Study

Arson, the crime of deliberately burning buildings and other property, is at least as old as urban violence itself. Works such as Sloan's *Our Violent Past*, William A. Heaps' *Riots U.S.A., 1765-1970* [1], Joseph Boskin's *Urban Racial Violence in the Twentieth Century* [2], and others, document the persistence of acts of arson in American collective urban violence.

The original intent of this project was to analyze the relationships among race and ethnicity, looting, sniping, and arson during the historic events of the summer of 1967. Ideally, an inquiry into the patterns of urban collective violence would be concerned with:

1. the identification and location of diverse racial and ethnic groups within the black ghetto, with ethnicity denoted by region of birth, national origin, dialect, consumption patterns of both foodstuffs and artifacts, native language and attire;
 2. the classification and spatial location of the sundry types of collective violence, e.g., sniping, arson, looting, rioting, etc.;
- and

3. the diffusion of ideas by regional or national ethnic media and indigenous ghetto sources (written, oral and visual), in addition to the dominant communication media which might have advocated, described, or fostered rioting or insurrection in Newark.

Unfortunately, municipal records on crime, sniping, the racial-ethnic composition of the population, and looting were not available for study. Detailed accounts of the events that took place in 1967 remain in the classified documents section (not open to the public) of the Trenton State Library, unavailable for study despite the passing of six years since the occurrence of these events. The continuing crisis within the Newark Police Department marked by the recent controversy over the appointment of a black Chief of Police and the current investigation of the Board of Education of Newark, under indictment for fraud and embezzlement, have precluded use of those records; while a comprehensive attempt at the survey analysis of ethnic-racial traits and identification as well as the content analysis of the varied news and communication media existent in Newark at that time was precluded because of cost. Thus I have concentrated the analysis on acts of arson as a significant form of collective violence.

The Classification of Collective Violence

There have been numerous attempts at formulating a definitive taxonomy or classification scheme for collective violence in general, and for riot behavior in particular. Nonetheless, at the time of this writing, the social sciences have still not arrived at such an agreed-upon taxonomy. Hence, we will use the standard accepted definition of riot in American common law which has remained unchanged since September 12, 1849, when it was written by Judge Charles P. Daly in the New York City Court of General Sessions.¹ Judge Daly was presiding at the trial of ten persons charged with riot or conspiracy to riot during the Astor Place Riot of 1849. In his address to the jury, Judge Daly said:

Any tumultuous assemblage of three or more persons brought together for no legal or constitutional object, deporting themselves in such manner as to endanger the public peace and excite terror and alarm in rational and firm-minded persons, is unlawful . . . and whenever three or more persons, in a tumultuous manner, use force or violence in the

¹ An even more complicated legal definition of riot, recognized as authoritative and all-inclusive for Federal cases, is found in the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

execution of any design wherein the law does not allow the use of force, they are guilty of riot [1].

Nonetheless, one should be aware of the work of Morris Janiwitz, who in a University of Chicago study notes the riots of the World War I period and its aftermath could be called “communal” or “contested area” riots [2].

They involved an ecological warfare because they were a direct struggle between white and Negro areas: an incident would break out between whites and Negroes often in a public place such as a beach or in an area of unclear racial domain; tension and violence would then spread quickly throughout the larger community. The deaths and injuries were thus the result of direct confrontation and fighting between white and Negro civilians. The whites generally invaded Negro areas where the residents were predominantly newcomers. The restoration of law and order involved the police in separating the two groups and in protecting the enclaves of Negroes from whites [2].

One can note that arson was extensive during these disorders. Whites would often set fires to homes of blacks, shooting them down as they attempted to flee the burning buildings, as happened during the East St. Louis Riot of July 2, 1917. This pattern of white-initiated arson and gunfire was also common during the anti-Chinese violence of the west coast, e.g., the Los Angeles Anti-Chinese Riot of October 24, 1871.

During the World War II period, “the pattern of rioting underwent a transformation which has taken full form with outbreaks in Watts in 1965 and Newark and Detroit in 1967. For a lack of a better term, there has been a metamorphosis from ‘communal riots’ to ‘commodity riots’ [2].”

The commodity riot was a riot which began within the Negro community, not at the periphery. It did not involve a confrontation between white and Negro civilians. It was an outburst against property and retail establishments, plus looting . . . [3].

and, during its later stages, arson.

The third major form which a riot may manifest is an escalated riot, a form of a commodity riot in which the dispersal of small arms and rifles is widespread and sniper fire is present. The point at which a “simple” commodity riot becomes an escalated riot is extremely difficult to ascertain. For our purposes we can assume that a riot is included within the realm of “escalated” violence when both sides of the conflict are armed and engaged in deadly combat. (Nonetheless, one must note that the primary target of the violence is property and/or authority figures such as policemen

or firemen, who act as the actual or symbolic representative of government and/or as a perceived "alien" oppressive force, e.g., white merchants in a non-white neighborhood; whether or not this "oppressive, alien" force is objectively "oppressive" and/or "alien" is irrelevant as long as the residents of the neighborhood perceive them to be.)

Thus the essence of riot behavior or of a riotous offense is that it is an unlawful assemblage of three or more persons acting in a violent manner not sanctioned by the law.

Newark: Its Economic and Human Resources, 1965-1967

In recent years, Newark has failed to produce even \$120 million annually for its schools and municipal functions. In fact, general revenue for the year ending December 31, 1965 was \$116,295,000 and for the year ending December 31, 1966 total resources were \$118,360,100 [4, 5]. Unfortunately, comparative statistics for other New Jersey municipalities were unavailable to me at this time.

Upon closer scrutiny of the city's resources, one notes that the city's chief source of revenue, the property tax, has reached prohibitive proportions and now contributes to the problem by driving employers and homeowners out of the city. In fact, Table 1 reveals that Newark relies on its property tax to raise \$7 out of every \$10 of total revenue, whereas cities in other states of

Table 1. Where the City Dollar Comes From: Newark and Cities of Comparable Size

	<i>17 Cities of 500,000 to 999,999 people</i>	<i>21 Cities of 300,000 to 499,999 people</i>	<i>Newark</i>	<i>Sample of 17,690 Cities of less than 50,000 people</i>
General Revenue				
From State Government	17.9 ^d	13.9 ^d	13.0 ^d	16.0 ^d
From Federal Government	8.3	3.9	9	2.5
From Local Government	1.3	4.8	1.6	1.9
Local Property Tax	40.5	36.2	69.4	39.8
Other City Sources	32.5	41.3	15.1	39.9
Totals	\$1.00.	\$1.00.	\$1.00.	\$1.00. ^a

^a Rounded off.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City Government Finances in 1965-66; GF No. 12, p. 7, 36.

comparable size, in the aggregate, raise \$4 out of \$10 in this manner. (See Table 1.)

One should also note that debt limitations and practical considerations prohibit further borrowing. In 1966, the cost of Newark's debt was in excess of 10 per cent of all municipal expenditures.² The wisdom of using debt financing for constantly recurring government capital needs has been questioned by the State Tax Policy Commission. In fact, the State Tax Policy Commission has recommended steps toward putting school construction in the state on a "pay as you go" basis [6].

Not only is the city of Newark experiencing extreme difficulty in raising enough revenue for its schools and municipal services, it is especially badly off in terms of state assistance. Within New Jersey, it receives a smaller proportion, relative to total revenues from the state, than other New Jersey cities (see Table 2).

Table 2. Sources of State and Local Revenues:
National Averages, New Jersey and Newark

<i>Revenue source</i>	<i>Fed. govt. %</i>	<i>Prop. taxes %</i>	<i>Other taxes %</i>	<i>Miscel. revenues %</i>	<i>From state govt. %</i>	<i>From local govt. %</i>	<i>Totals %</i>
National Averages							
State	25.1	1.8	61.1	10.9	—	1.1	100.0
Local	2.6	44.9	6.6	15.1	30.8	—	100.0
New Jersey							
State	22.8	.2	57.8	16.2	—	2.9	99.9
Local	2.3	66.2	6.0	11.1	14.4	—	100.0
Newark	.9	69.4	8.4	6.8	13.0	.16	100.0

Source: Census data, in Census, Governmental Finances in 1965-66, GF No. 13, P. 31;— City Government Finances in 1965-66, GF No. 12, P. 7.

If one examines the condition of housing within the municipality of Newark, one notes that over 40,000 of the city's 136,000 housing units were described as substandard or dilapidated in a recent Model Cities Application [7]. Thus, almost a third of the city's supply of homes is bad, and it is poor people, mostly blacks and Spanish-speaking people, who live there.

² In 1966, Newark spent \$6,804,900 on interest and retirement of school and municipal bonds (\$2,273,800 in interest). This is six per cent of total expenditures.

SPRING, 1967

An analysis of the spring unemployment rate for Newark reveals a white male unemployment rate of 10 per cent and a black unemployment rate of 14.6 per cent. These rates alone would be cause for alarm. However, when we examine the unemployment rate for adolescent males, both black and white, we get the following rates: 37.8 per cent for blacks and 25.7 per cent for whites (see Table 3). This, of course, would raise the possibility of having large numbers of youths out on the street with little to occupy their time. In interpreting the high unemployment rate for black males we should remember that in seeking jobs the black carries with him a severe educational disadvantage. At a time when many firms consider a high school diploma a prerequisite for employment, 65.1 per cent of the black men in Newark above twenty-five years of age have not completed 12 years of school. For further documentation of the debilitating nature of Newark's employment characteristics, see Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Unemployment Rate Among Males
In Newark, Spring 1967

<i>Age</i>	<i>Whites</i> %	<i>Negroes</i> %
16-19	25.7	37.8
20-24	6.8	6.5
25-54	2.8	6.9
55-64	5.1	7.1

Source: Newark, New Jersey; Population and Labor Force, p. 13.

Table 4. Highest Grade Completed for Newark Residents 25 Years and Older

	<i>White males</i> %	<i>Negro males</i> %
Less than 8 years	15.0	22.2
8 years	17.6	12.4
9-11 years	17.6	30.5
12 years	28.0	27.6
Some College	5.0	4.5
College graduate or more	16.8	2.8
	100.0	100.0

Source: Newark, New Jersey; Population and Labor Force, Spring 1967, p. 9

One further comment is called for in reviewing the statistics on black unemployment. The *Report for Action* notes that in addition to the educational gap, the Negro is faced with the fact that most jobs are distant from his home [8]. Jobs, especially the white-collar variety, are held ordinarily by white commuters, whereas the Negro population must look to the suburbs and beyond for employment. The job sites for Negroes are increasingly outside the central city. But the economics of housing and prejudice in the suburbs make it difficult for the Negro to move near his job.

In brief, the spring of 1967 was marked by very real economic problems, which could serve as possible sources for urban unrest in Newark.

Critical Events: The Prelude to Violence

Newark, in the summer of 1967, was apparently ripe for collective disorder, for the preceding years were highlighted by numerous incidents which pitted black citizenry against white municipal authorities. In fact, the Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorder noted:

. . . the evidence of deteriorating conditions in the ghetto; of increasing awareness of and frustration with these conditions among its residents; of the emergence of outspoken groups that focused these feelings; and of miscalculations, insensitive or inadequate responses by established authority [8, p. 104].

Mayor Hugh J. Addonizio told the Commission:

It's not so hard to understand (the violence). The material was there in the form of problems in housing, education, and the effects of generations of neglect and bigotry. The atmosphere was right, because of mistakes, because of misunderstandings, and because of the insanity of a few misguided fools who believe riots are a healthy exercise for America [8, p. 104].

If one noted the approach of the summer of 1967, it was easy to notice the gradual deterioration of relations between the black community and City Hall following a series of controversies and incidents: the arrest of picketers during the Clinton Hill Meat Market protest in early April; the medical school controversy; the Parker-Callaghan dispute; and the July eighth fight between fifteen blacks and the East Orange and Newark police on the Newark-East Orange border.

THE CLINTON HILL PROTEST

Many of Newark's black citizens retained feelings of anger and hostility toward the municipal government due to the municipal government's attempt to move them from their homes in the Clinton Hill neighborhood in 1961. In fact, the Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council and its supporters had attempted to stop the Clinton Hill Urban Renewal Project, in 1961, because both blacks and whites did not want to be moved from their homes. During the subsequent protest by the neighborhood council and civil rights groups, who referred to urban renewal as "Negro removal," seven protesters were arrested.

Negative feelings toward the municipal government might have subsided had it not been for the renewed hostilities over the same issue between the municipal government and the citizenry of Clinton Hill, in 1964, which was highlighted by SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) involvement at the bequest of Professor Stanley Winters of the Newark College of Engineering in support of the neighborhood council. The *Report for Action* notes that:

. . . by the end of the summer of 1964, the SDS group had organized in Newark (concentrating on demonstrations and litigation with landlords, picketing of tenements, the issuing of leaflets charging police brutality, and the calling for housing demonstrations), and when the students left town local people became full-time organizers [8, p. 11].

There are many possible explanations for the renewal of hostilities at this time, but perhaps the most basic reason for the increase in tension and negative feelings blacks felt toward the municipal government was not due to specific conditions in Newark, but rather to a heightened black awareness of "oneself," of one's blackness, and of the power that an ethnic or racial group can assert through unified action, be that action violent or non-violent. For the summer of 1964 was the time when major violence erupted in many Eastern cities, e.g., the riot in Harlem which was followed quickly by riots in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn; Rochester, N.Y.; Philadelphia; and—New Jersey—Patterson, Elizabeth, Jersey City and Keansburg.

THE MEDICAL SCHOOL CONTROVERSY

In early 1967 Newark's black community had become aroused by Mayor Hugh Addonizio's proposal to remove twenty-two thousand persons, most of whom were black, from the Central Ward in order to clear a one-hundred-fifty acre tract for a state

medical-dental college. The black citizens of the area claimed that they had not been properly consulted and that adequate provisions were not made for their relocation; nor would they benefit from the proposed reuse of the land. The black response to Mayor Addonizio's proposal was a counter-proposal of a one-hundred-eighty-five acre area in the Fairmount Urban Renewal Project, which the blacks considered the worst slum area in the city. Black militants, among them Colonel Hassan (also known as Albert Osborne) of the Black Liberation Army, Central Ward Democratic Chairman Eulis Ward, the Reverend Levin West and others called for a rally to protest the administration's proposal.

THE PARKER-CALLAGHAN DISPUTE

In May of 1967 City Hall announced, much to the dismay of Newark's black population, that a Mr. James Callaghan, a high school dropout who later received a high school equivalency certificate by studying at night, was to be named Secretary to the Board of Education. The black community, with the support of Newark's major newspapers, had supported a young black Certified Public Accountant, Mr. Wilbur Parker, a holder of both a bachelor's and master's degree from Cornell. The Board of Education deferred a decision on the appointment, and on May 29, Fred Means, acting president of the Negro Educators of Newark said, "The Negro Community is in turmoil over this injustice. If immediate steps are not taken, Newark might become another Watts [8, p. 15]."

The Report for Action notes that the Board of Education finally took up the matter at a meeting on June 26. The meeting opened at 5:00 P.M. There were seventy speakers. It ended at 3:23 A.M. The final decision was that Mr. Arnold Hess (the current secretary of the Board of Education) would stay in his job for another year [8, p. 14].

THE MUSLIM DISORDER

On July eighth East Orange and Newark police raided a Muslim home on the East Orange-Newark line. The police alleged they had responded to reports of noise coming from the Muslim home that had created a disturbance of the peace. However, neighbors and others who resided nearby reported no such disturbance and claimed that the police had been gathering in the neighborhood for more than an hour before forcibly entering the premises and beating some of the Muslims who had come there to practice Karate.

BLACK EXCLUSION FROM MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT AND AGENCIES

The lack of non-whites in positions of authority in municipal government and agencies was a constant source of black resentment toward the white-dominated municipal government. Although Newark's population in 1967 was 52 per cent black and 10 per cent Puerto Rican and Cuban, non-whites comprised a numerical minority of the municipal work force, giving credence to black militant assertions of white occupation of a non-white inner-city colony of the poor, the powerless, and the black. The following tables and discussion document the extent of the white domination of key municipal agencies such as the police department, the fire department, the city council and the Newark public school system. The Newark Police Department had had considerable difficulty in recruiting qualified persons. The manpower problem is apparently the result of fewer applicants (each year), fewer qualified applicants and more resignations. In fact, the recruitment rate has declined while the resignation rate has increased. The *Report for Action* notes that:

. . . from 1930 to 1940 resignations averaged one a year; from 1945 to 1955, the average was ten a year. In 1967, about sixty-five men left the force—twenty-five by resignation. This is in addition to early recruitment and leaves of absence. . . . Whatever recruiting techniques are used, the crucial factor in attracting well-qualified job applicants will be their evaluation of the rewards and the challenges compared with the risks and the frustrations of the job. In Newark, the rewards are very limited. Policemen interviewed for this study agreed that the biggest problem in recruiting is the salary level. As of January 1, 1968, a patrolman's beginning salary was \$6,951. The maximum, after five years, was \$8,002 [8, pp. 24-25].

Of crucial significance is the fact that black policemen also feel that they are more severely disciplined than their white colleagues; and that statistics concerning department discipline gives credibility to this belief. In fact,

. . . in a police force that is 10 per cent Negro the proportion of blacks brought up on charges in 1967 (through late November) was 36 per cent. (Out of twenty-eight men brought up, ten were blacks.) And of the five men who have been dismissed since 1962, three were blacks. Three others were dismissed in 1961 [8, p. 30; 9].

If one notes the distribution of blacks throughout the ranks of Newark's police department, in 1967, one is immediately made aware of the absence of blacks in positions of authority (Table 5).

Table 5.

	<i>Negro</i>	<i>Present strength</i>	<i>Authorized quota</i>
Chief of Police	0	1	1
Deputy Chief of Police	0	7	7
Inspector	0	9	9
Captain	1	28	28
Lieutenant	4	98	98
Sergeant	4	96	102
Patrolman	136	1,140	1,273

In fact there were only one hundred and forty-five blacks and one Puerto Rican in the department. These one hundred and forty-five Negroes and one Puerto Rican served a city with a population that was at least 52 per cent black and about 10 per cent Spanish speaking. Of those blacks who were on the force, all but nine held the lowest rank, patrolman. Equally regrettable was the lack of success in the recruitment of blacks and Puerto Ricans. Although twenty-four blacks joined the department over a twelve-month period during 1962-63, only nine were appointed by December 1967.

Although a Community Relations Bureau existed at Police Headquarters, blacks received little satisfaction from filing charges of police brutality at the Inspection Office of the Police Department. Police Department statistics for the last two years presented in the *Report for Action* show that twenty-one such complaints were brought in 1966 and nine in 1967. But in no case has a policeman been brought up on charges for excessive use of force against a citizen while on duty.

In assessing this record, "the Police Department notes that policemen frequently resign from the force after committing an offense rather than face charges [8, p. 36]." According to the police the frequency of this practice cannot be determined, although they admit that it happens often.

THE CITY COUNCIL

Newark's black population has a long history of being under-represented on the city council. In 1967, seven of nine members were white. One should also note that most of the blacks interviewed by the staff of former Governor Richard J. Hughes' Select Commission on Civil Disorder believed that the city council

was unresponsive to the desires and aspirations of its black constituency.

THE NEWARK FIRE DEPARTMENT

No ethnic-racial breakdown is available for the Newark Fire Department for the year 1967. Nonetheless, after interviewing various members of Newark Fire Director Redden's office as well as the Newark Arson Squad (none of whom knew of a black holding the rank of Captain, Inspector, Assistant Director or Deputy Director in 1967), it is safe to conclude that blacks did not hold positions of a policy-making nature within the Newark Fire Department.

One must note that the essence of assertions of neglect and/or persecution is not the objective truth of such a belief, but rather the phenomenological nature of such a belief. One is oppressed if one believes oneself to be. Nonetheless, statistical data tend to lend credibility to the common belief shared by blacks that a white "army" of occupation controls every facet of the economic, political and social life of the black ghetto.

THE NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Newark, like cities throughout the country, suffers from a shortage of well-trained, highly motivated teachers. The *Report for Action* notes that regular teachers are selected in Newark on the basis of education credits and a qualifying examination administered by the Board of Education and developed by the Educational Testing Service, Inc., of Princeton, N.J. The cut-off point on the test score is the fifteenth percentile. Negro and Spanish-speaking candidates traditionally score lower on standardized, verbally oriented tests.

The *Report for Action* states that there were thirty-five hundred teachers in the Newark public school system, of whom one-fourth were Negro, and that a majority of the Negro teachers held temporary teaching certificates and served on a substitute basis. Most of them lived in Newark, while a great majority of the white teachers lived outside of Newark. Equally distressing was the fact that in a system in which some fifty of seventy-five schools had a majority of Negro pupils, there were no operating black principals and only one black vice principal. (Two former black principals were on the staff of the superintendent of schools.) As in the case of teachers, oral interviews figured prominently in promotional

tests for principals and vice principals, in addition to promotional examination scores.

Arson: The Newark Riot—6 P.M. July 13 to 6 P.M. July 17

Figures 1 and 2 reveal that the areas with the highest frequency scores for arson in 1967 were not necessarily the areas with the highest frequency scores during the Newark riot. In fact, the census tract with the greatest number of arson incidents in 1967 was without the occurrence of a single recorded incident during the July disorder.³

An examination of correlation coefficients reveals that an insignificant correlation coefficient of .224 exists for arson during the year and arson during the riot, if we consider a .490 *r* value as a lower limit of significance. Such a finding forces us to ask if significantly similar socio-economic, racial-ethnic and/or political factors were existent in Newark during these two time periods, or if the incidence of arson is linearly correlated with a specific triggering incident and diffusion process, rather than with socio-economic, racial-ethnic population characteristics.⁴

ARSON CORRELATED WITH RACE/ETHNICITY

Only three positive *r* values are revealed when arsons during the 1967 riot are correlated with a specific racial and/or ethnic characteristic such as mean percentage Negro, Puerto Rican, Austrian-German, East European and Irish within a given census tract, and only the *r* value of .421 for arson with blacks is even remotely significant if we accept a .490 *r* value as the lower level of significance. It is important to note that when partial correlation coefficients are obtained for the relationship between arsons and

³ Census tract 59 had thirteen recorded acts of arson during the year 1967 (excluding the riot period) and no recorded incidents of arson during the riot period. Similar observations should be noted for census tracts 68 and 81, which recorded eight incidents of arson during the year and none and one incident during the riot period, whereas census tract 29 shows the opposite relationship, with the occurrence of only two reported acts of arson in 1967 and eight reported acts of arson during the riot period.

⁴ Nonetheless, there is very little reason to assume that socio-economic conditions in 1967 were exactly the same as in 1960. For a detailed listing of all variables utilized, see the unpublished dissertation by Daniel E. Georges [10]. It should also be noted that levels of significance are not noted in this brief chapter because I utilized all of the census tract information available on the Newark SMSA as well as the complete Arson Log of the Newark Fire Department. In brief, I utilized the entire "universe" of statistical information available from the above sources rather than a sample drawn from those sources.



Figure 1. Arsons in Newark, 1967.



Figure 2. Arsons in Newark during the riot.

black residential location controlling cumulatively for Puerto Ricans, male unemployment, female unemployment, density and family income of less than \$3,000 per year the r values steadily decrease to .204. This finding strongly suggests that arson and black residential location, although positively correlated during the Newark disorder, is subject to numerous intervening variables.

What is more interesting, when black residential location and arson is correlated, is the fact that the correlation between arson during the year (excluding the riot period) with blacks is greater than the correlation between arson during the riot period and those census tracts manifesting a numerical preponderance of blacks (respective r values of .539 and .421). This would suggest that although negative socio-economic and political conditions existed during both time periods, an additional factor was existent during the riot period which might have decreased the correlation between census tracts with a preponderance of blacks and arson. I would suggest that this mitigating variable or variables might have been the location of a triggering incident involving the police or other white authority figures or the location of white-owned or managed stores.

Of primary concern in this study is not whether or not the ghetto rioter, or more specifically in this case the arsonist, is from the same neighborhood in which he commits his act, but rather, whether the neighborhood or census tract in which he opts to commit the crime of arson is ethnically and/or racially homogeneous. I would theorize that racial/ethnic homogeneity in itself might be a mitigating factor in terms of the occurrence of arson. That with the increase in ethnic/racial homogeneity, one also gets an increase in the sense of neighborhood or community. And with this increase in the sense or spirit of neighborhood and community one also develops positive non-legal social control factors which bring about a decrease in crime and other deviant disruptive social acts.

BROKEN HOMES: THEIR EFFECT UPON ARSON

A very significant role is played by broken homes in modifying the correlation between arson during the riot or arson during the year within areas manifesting a preponderance of blacks by controlling for the occurrence of families headed by a female. The mitigating role played by broken homes is especially true for the riot period, i.e., the r values for arson during the year and arson during the riot period, excluding the year, were .539 and .421 respectively. However, when we control for households headed by

a female, the correlation coefficient is reduced to .393 and .155. We cannot be certain as to why this effect exists, or whether or not intervening variables unknown to us are also existent. Possible reasons for the mitigating effect of controlling for female-headed families is the absence of proper supervision by parents when the mother is at work, or perhaps the child's adherence to a deviant anti-social role-set.

CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPANCIES FOR ARSONS DURING THE NEWARK RIOT⁵

Ideally, a study of this type would provide a classification or list of the types of establishments which served as the target for arson. Such a list, because of the intrinsic nature of arson—the fact that a fire may be set in one building and spread to another—is necessarily incomplete and inaccurate. In fact, if one reviews the undated memo of Captain Joseph T. O'Brien, Arson Squad, to Newark Fire Department Director, John P. Caufield, one would note that O'Brien's table, listed as Table 6 in this study, lists twelve categories of occupancies in which sixty-nine fires occurred. However, on the same page O'Brien only lists sixty-two fires, and thus we must assume that at least several of the sixty-nine fires listed were multiple listings for the same address (Table 7).

Table 6. Classification of Occupancies for Arsons
During the Newark Riot

Factories	8	Restaurants	3
Clothing Stores	7	Grocery	4
Miscellaneous	11	Drugs	3
Tavern & Liquor	6	Furniture	4
Dwellings ^a	14	Bedding & Uph.	5
Hardware	3	Luggage	1

^a This includes both vacant and occupant dwellings.

Nonetheless, the Newark Fire Department did declare arson in the case of sixty-nine out of three hundred and sixty-four fires which occurred during the riot period. However, as mentioned above this list is incomplete and inaccurate and thus I would contend that one is unable to accurately note the similarity or

⁵ One must note that the listing of arson incidents for the Newark disorder was incomplete, for many more fires (and no doubt arsons) were part of the riot scene. The list presented as Table 7 notes only those incidents investigated by the Newark Arson Squad.

Table 7. Newark Riot: Major Arsons, July 13 to July 17, 1967

<i>Date</i>	<i>Number of Arsons</i>
July 13th, Thursday (6:00 P.M. to midnight)	3
July 14th, Friday	35
July 15th, Saturday	10
July 16th, Sunday	10
July 17th, Monday (until 6:00 P.M.)	4
Total	62

dissimilarity between arson targets during the riot period and throughout the year 1967, excluding the riot period. Nevertheless, if one decides to peruse the available arson statistics for the Newark riot one would note that only twenty per cent of the occupancies attacked by arsonists were in the dwelling category. Hence, it is safe to conclude that property rather than people was the object of attack during the Newark disorder.

One should also note that fires, declared acts of arson during the riot, were concentrated along the main thoroughfares in Newark's ghetto areas, yet in many cases arson was spatially distinct from looting (see Figure 3). Unfortunately, reliable data on looting was unavailable for my perusal and thus I cannot, at this time, offer an explanation for this phenomenon.

THE COVER OF DARKNESS

The perusal of Table 8 reveals that the vast majority of the acts of arson took place under the cover of darkness. This, no doubt, was due in part to greater ease in avoiding detection by municipal, state and federal social control forces (and not necessarily the avoidance of public detection, as might be the case during the year when collective violence is not as normative). Table 8 reveals that forty-two of the known sixty-two acts of arson, or 67.7 per cent of the arson, occurred during darkness (I am assuming that the period of darkness was from 8:00 P.M. to 4:59 A.M.) and that fifteen acts of arson, or 24.2 per cent, occurred between noon and 7:59 P.M. (see Figure 1 for arsons in Newark during the riot).

Table 8 also reveals that one hundred and thirty-five, or 50.4 per cent of the known incidents of arson during the year occurred during darkness and that one hundred and two arsons, or 38.1 per cent of the arsons, occurred between noon and 7:59 P.M., as opposed to only 24.2 per cent which occurred during the same hours during the

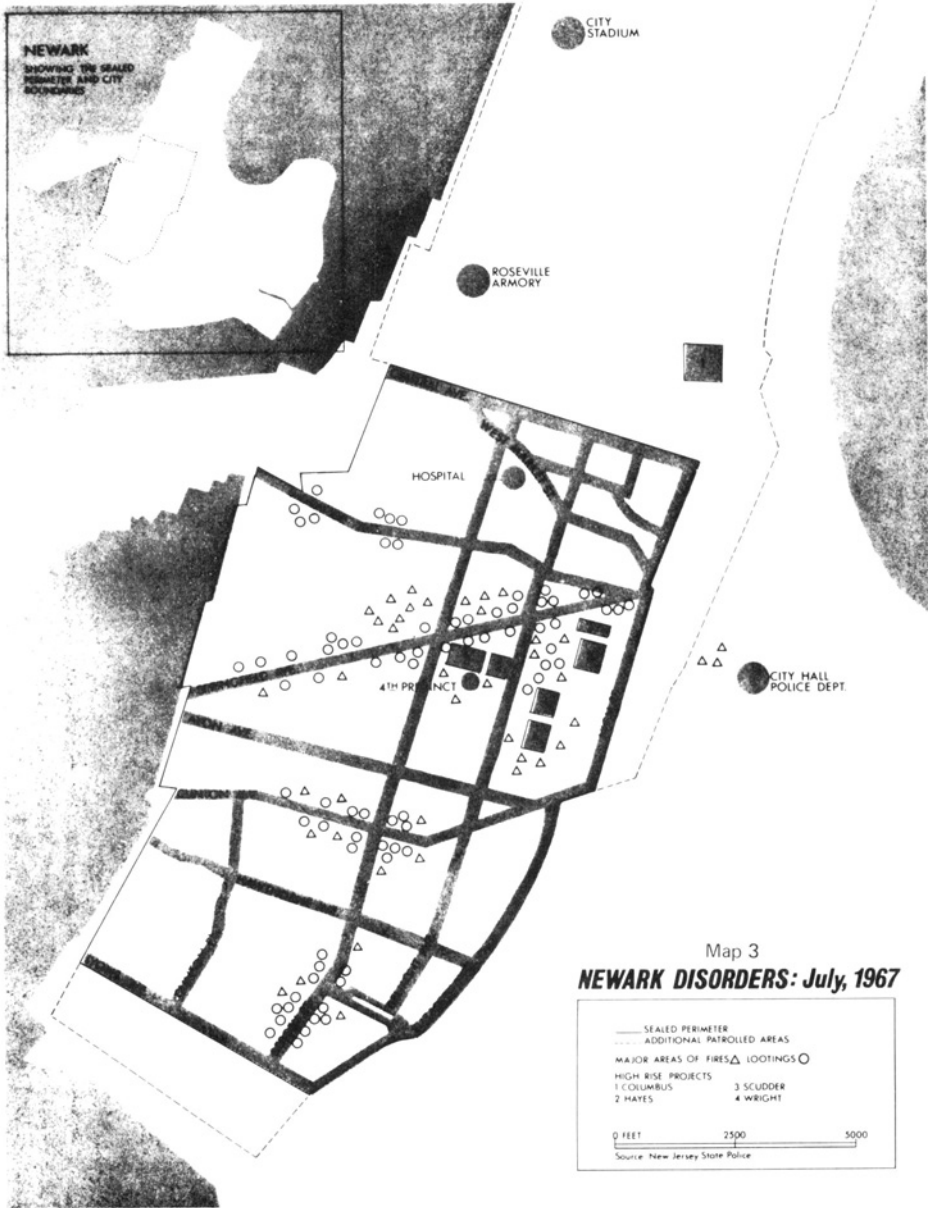


Figure 3. Newark disorders: July, 1967.

Table 8. Time Breakdown of Arsons During the 1967 Newark Riot: July 13 to July 17, and During the Year, Excluding the Riot^a

<i>Time</i>	<i># of arsons during the riot</i>	<i># of arsons during the year</i>
Midnight to 1:00 A.M.	7	9
1:00 A.M. to 2:00 A.M.	2	18
2:00 A.M. to 3:00 A.M.	6	13
3:00 A.M. to 4:00 A.M.	5	12
4:00 A.M. to 5:00 A.M.	2	7
5:00 A.M. to 6:00 A.M.		2
6:00 A.M. to 7:00 A.M.	1	3
7:00 A.M. to 8:00 A.M.	1	1
8:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M.	1	4
9:00 A.M. to 10:00 A.M.		5
10:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.	2	8
11:00 A.M. to Noon		8
Noon to 1:00 P.M.		17
1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M.	2	9
2:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.	2	13
3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.	2	10
4:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.	1	18
5:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.	1	12
6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.	4	13
7:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.	3	10
8:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.	4	20
9:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M.	4	18
10:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M.	8	15
11:00 P.M. to Midnight	4	23
Total	62	268

^a Only two hundred and fifty-two of the reported arsons for the year 1967 (excluding the riot period) were plotted spatially; sixteen arsons could not be located for a street address because of illegible script or the renaming of streets.

Newark riot. (See Figure 2 for arsons in Newark during 1967, excluding the riot period, and also Figure 4 which illustrates the time breakdown of arson during both periods.)

Thus it is safe to conclude that the cover of darkness is more conducive to arson (although one cannot preclude the existence of possible intervening variables). Nonetheless, an attitude of scholarly cynicism is applicable when perusing Table 8 for it is impossible to determine if the time breakdown is accurate, for are we actually analyzing the temporal pattern of when the fire was set, when it was reported, or when it was discovered? For a fire could be set at

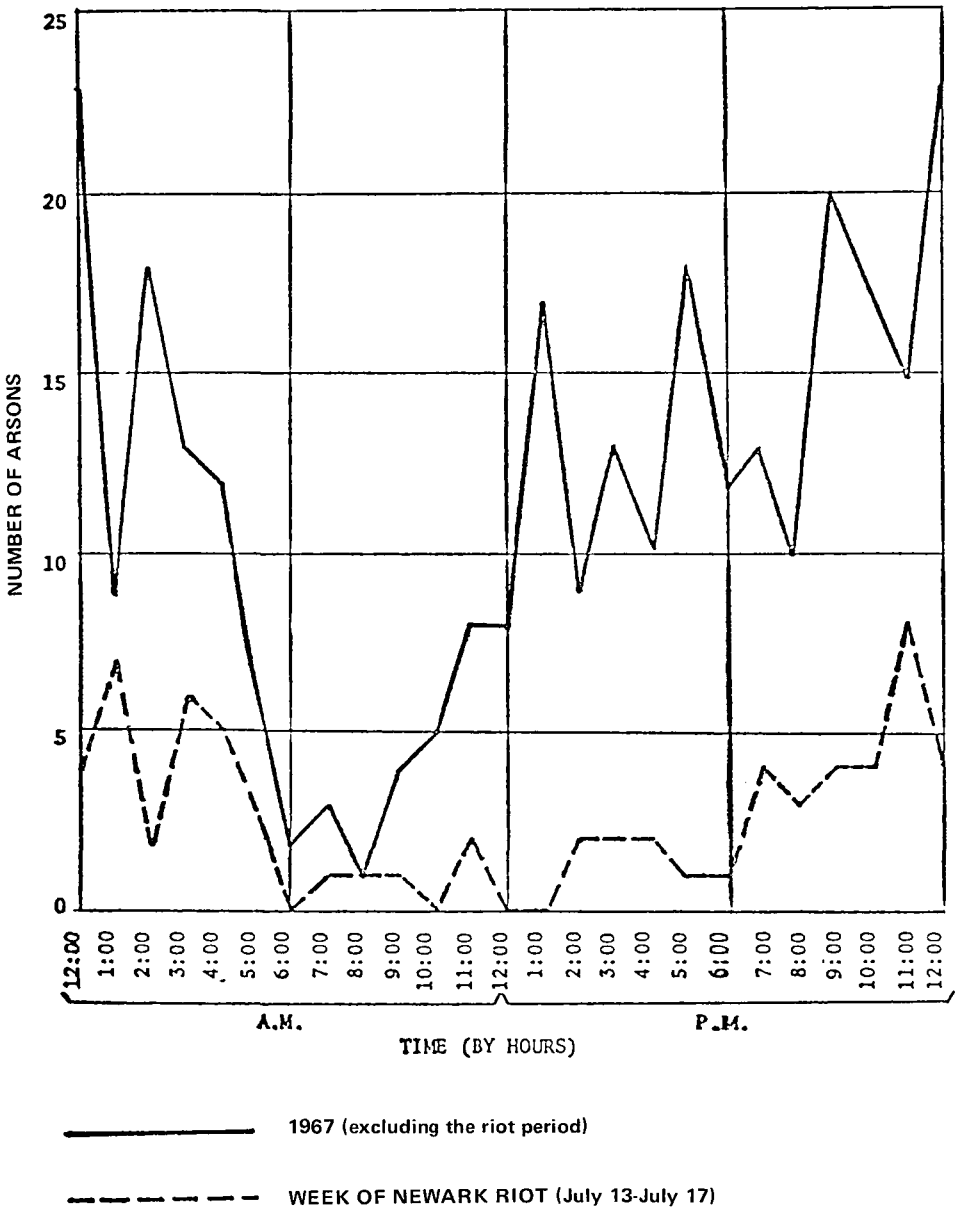


Figure 4. Arsons: Time breakdown.

7:45 P.M., discovered at 7:55 P.M., and, because of general confusion or a desire not to get involved (and possibly investigated by the Fire Department and police for setting it), reported at 8:10 P.M.

Conclusion

The correlation between arson and the preponderance of blacks in a given area appears to be significant for Newark during the year 1967. However, one must note the intervening role played by income, shared residential space with other low status ethnic groups, male and female unemployment, population density, and the existence of families headed by females.

Of equal significance is the fact that the incidence of arson during the riot period was not as strongly correlated with the preponderance of blacks within a given social space as was the correlation between arson incidents and the numerical preponderance of blacks within a given residential space for the year 1967. Such a finding forces one to re-evaluate the merit of arguments and theories which assume that violence and blackness are linearly correlated without evaluating the existence of intervening variables, which might include the location of the initial triggering incident.

Of special interest was the positive correlation between economic deprivation, measured by income, and the occurrence of arson either during the year or during the riot period (respective r values of .494 and .298, .256 and .235, and .428 and .385, when incomes below \$1,000, \$3,000 and \$4,000 are examined); which strongly suggests that social scientists re-evaluate "Riffraff and Economic Deprivation Theories" of violence while paying close attention to theories and hypotheses which attempt to locate the initial location of the disorder and the subsequent diffusion process.

In concluding, the Newark disorder appeared to be a Type 1—Major Commodity Disorder,⁶ possibly escalated, for it was impossible to ascertain whether or not the sniping was truly extensive on the part of the black citizenry of Newark. For the *Report for Action* noted numerous incidents of social control forces mistakenly engaged in firefights with other social control forces, as well as numerous unconfirmed incidents of sniping. I must also add that the mass media as well as black militants and so-called "responsible" black leadership were quick to romanticize the violence with references to black revolt, revolution, rebellion,

⁶ Major Disorders (Type 1 Disorders)—These were characterized generally by a combination of the following factors: (1) many fires, intensive looting and report of sniping; (2) violence lasting more than two days; (3) sizeable crowds; and (4) use of National Guard or federal forces as well as other control forces.

insurrection, insurgency, etc., when in reality the violence, although severe, lacked overt conspiratorial or seditious intent; for there were no calls for the overthrow of the government nor were there any reports of black nationalist or revolutionary violence nor of clandestine propaganda agitation during the disorder. To assume that the commodity violence which occurred in Newark in July 1967 was the first stage of a forthcoming or existent black revolt is to reinterpret the objective conditions of violence which existed at that time.

If we use arson as an index of the violence which occurred during the disorder we are compelled to note linear correlations between arson and poverty denoted by variables 18, 19 and 20, during the year excluding the riot period (r values of .494, .256 and .428) which are more significant than the correlation between arson in tracts with large numbers of people with incomes below \$1,000, \$3,000 and \$4,000 during the riot period.⁷

	<i>Income below \$1,000</i>	<i>Income below \$3,000</i>	<i>Income below \$4,000</i>
Arson During Riot	.298	.235	.385
Arson During 1967	.494	.256	.428

Of special note is the fact that the correlation between poverty and arson is greatest at the below \$1,000 level and at the below \$4,000 level for both time periods being studied. This might suggest that dire poverty is a causative factor in selecting an arson target area but so is the prospect of greater affluence.

The idea of the poor, the wretched of the earth, rising up to smash or at least challenge the oppressor, and/or wealthier sectors of society, is not new. Marxist socialists and communists such as Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky and James B. Cannon of the Socialist Workers Party have forwarded this idea in numerous talks and papers. Perhaps those suffering of dire poverty rebel and express their frustration through violent acts such as assault, robbery, arson, murder or collective violence. This frustration and violence could be turned inward toward members of their own eth-class or outward toward the owners of the means of social control, product and/or distribution, e.g., the property and person of the retailers or factory owners. Perhaps the violence, or in this case the arson,

⁷ Variables 18, 19 and 20 refer to mean percentage families with less than \$1,000 income/yr., mean percentage families with less than \$3,000/yr. and mean percentage families with less than \$4,000 income/yr. respectively.

performed by these people, was their way of expressing frustration and rage over their socio-economic position. Nonetheless, the mystery surrounding the involvement of people in census tracts with mean family incomes between \$3,000 and \$4,000 still remains. Technically, they are not poor, for their earnings place them above the poverty line adhered to by the U.S. government in 1967.⁸ Nevertheless, an income of from \$3,000 to \$4,000 for a family of two or more in a Northeastern city will not provide many, if any, luxuries. Perhaps the first "luxury" purchased on time would be a television which screams the dreams of middle-class America through advertisements, e.g., a fast, beautiful new car, a beautiful, if not fast, woman, attired in the latest styles, a \$60,000 home and a pedigreed dog worth \$400. These television observers are faced with the reality of watching a dream unfold on television while living a nightmare in a slum-ghetto. They may ask the question, why do some have so much and others like themselves have so little? The case of relative deprivation probably holds for those earnings \$4,000 to \$6,000, however I have not collected statistical data on this group, and thus I will not offer conjectures at this time.

The most basic methodological shortcoming of this work, as with most studies of violence, poverty and race, is the scale employed. Ideally the data to be analyzed should be on a city block level, and thus large scale. However, most comprehensive studies of population, violence and housing characteristics are compiled on a relatively small level, the census tract level or smaller. Another basic methodological weakness continues to be the absence of relevant data for the period immediately preceding the outbreak of violence, and thus information collected on a decennial basis is turned to.

Our goal was to note, among other things, the spatial extent of arson for both the riot period and the year 1967 excluding said period. In essence, our goal was to note the socio-economic and ethnic-racial characteristics of the neighborhoods which experienced arson during the year 1967 and to observe whether or not these

⁸ Numerous poverty definitions and lines have been recognized in the United States. However, since 1964, the most commonly used and now official set of poverty lines is the one developed by Millie Orshansky of the Social Security Administration (SSA) of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The Orshansky (SSA) poverty line takes into account family size, composition, farm-nonfarm residence and proportions of income required to purchase a minimum adequate diet. Thus, in short, the SSA poverty line utilizes the \$3,000 poverty line forwarded by the President's Council of Economic Advisers, which uses a \$3,000 poverty line unadjusted for family size and other characteristics.

areas manifested certain characteristics which may have predisposed them to the act of arson, either during the year or during the riot period. Further research might survey convicted arsonists in an attempt to note where the arsonist lived and why the arsonist chose a particular site for his or her act as well as the motivation for the act. Future research should also include information on the existence of abandoned and/or condemned buildings, so that one might note the correlation between arson and those dwellings.

In closing, it should be noted that the correlation between arson and the preponderance of blacks in a given area has been substantiated by this study, although socio-economic factors play a mitigating role in this relation. What is most needed, however, is further research into the nature of the black urban existence, which would help identify and explain those factors which are unique to the black urban experience, and correlated with arson both during a disorder as well as during a period of relative normality. It is also hoped that future research into the realm of collective violence in general, and arson in particular would attempt to correlate the spatial distribution of arson with sniping, looting and other acts of civil unrest.

REFERENCES

1. W. A. Heaps, *Riots U.S.A., 1765-1970*, Seabury Press, New York, p. 3, 1966.
2. J. Boskin, *Urban Racial Violence in the Twentieth Century*, Glencoe, Beverly Hills, Calif., p. 116, 1969.
3. M. Janowitz, *Social Control of Escalated Riots*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, pp. 9-10, 1968.
4. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *City Government Finances in 1965-66*, GF No. 12, p. 36.
5. *Financial Report, City of Newark, New Jersey*, Part I, pp. 10, 11, 15.
6. *Eighth Report of the Commission on State Tax Policy*, p. 15, 1955.
7. *Newark Model Cities Application, Part 2(b)*, Table 1.
8. Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorders, State of New Jersey, *Report for Action*, Robert D. Lilley, Chairman, State of New Jersey Printing Office, Trenton, N.J., 1968.
9. W. K. Tabb, *The Political Economy of the Black Ghetto*, Norton, New York, 1971.
10. D. E. Georges, *The Ecology of Urban Unrest: The Case of Arson, Newark, New Jersey*, July 1967.