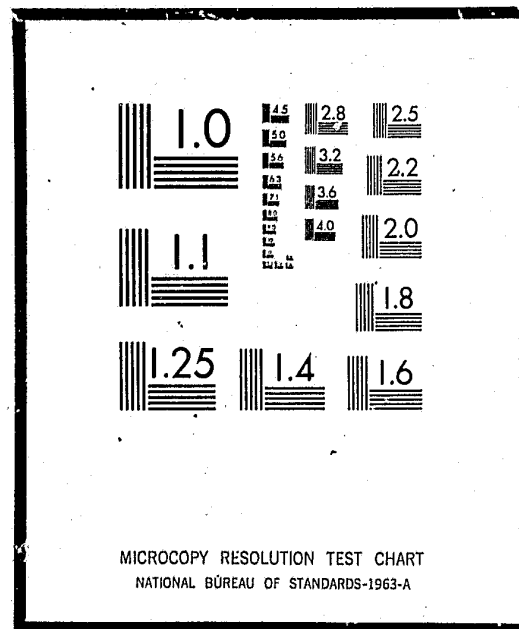


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## CORRELATES OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD LEGAL SANCTIONS

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The Metropolitan Criminal Justice Center operates the Pilot City Program in Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach, Virginia. Established in September, 1971, the Center is a research and program planning and development component of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. The Center's Pilot City Program is one of eight throughout the nation funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the U. S. Department of Justice. The basic purpose of each Pilot City project is to assist local jurisdictions in the design and establishment of various programs, often highly innovative and experimental in nature, which will contribute over a period of years to the development of a model criminal justice system. Each Pilot City team is also responsible for assuring comprehensive evaluation of such programs, for assisting the development of improved criminal justice planning ability within the host jurisdictions, and for providing technical assistance to various local agencies when requested.

This monograph draws upon the MCJC's Criminal Justice Attitude and Victimization Survey, which was administered in the winter of 1973-74. The monograph was presented to the Western Sociological and Anthropological Association on December 29, 1974.

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## CORRELATES OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES

### TOWARD LEGAL SANCTIONS

Only the most preliminary attempts have been made to account for what appear to be substantial variations in the type and degree of formal legal sanctions that the general public defines as appropriate for criminal offenders. Moreover, even the small body of literature that does examine public opinion on legal sanctions has typically restricted its attention to either the role of special interest groups in the formulation, modification, and enforcement of specific types of criminal laws (Sutherland, 1950a, 1950b; Hall, 1952; Thorelli, 1955; Lindesmith, 1959; Becker, 1963; Gusfield, 1963; Chambliss, 1964; Roby, 1969; Duster, 1970; Quinney, 1970) or the extent to which there is consistency between public opinion, the statutory provisions of criminal law, and the manner in which the legal codes are actually applied (Smigel, 1953, 1956; Rose and Prell, 1955; Newman, 1957; Gardiner, 1957; Gibbons, 1963, 1969; Ronney and Gibbons, 1966; Makela, 1966; Parker, 1970; Boydell and Grindstaff, 1971a, 1971b, 1972, 1974a, 1974b). The few exceptions that can be found to these shortcomings in previous research are either overly descriptive (cf. Thomas, Cage, and Foster, 1974), narrowly focused on public support for capital punishment (cf. Vidmar and

Ellsworth, 1974), or both.

The fact that public opinion is so closely intertwined with the behavior of legislative bodies, law enforcement activities, and judicial decision-making makes it imperative that a more thorough understanding of the determinants of public opinion toward the imposition of sanctions be developed. Toward that end, in this paper we will attempt to extrapolate from the conceptual model reported in a recent examination of the determinants of public support for the death penalty in our analysis of correlates of public opinion toward formal legal sanctions. More specifically, Thomas and Foster (1975) have argued that variations in levels of public support for capital punishment need not require explanations which revolve around such personality traits as authoritarianism or dogmatism. Instead, they have suggested that support for the imposition of the death penalty can be related to the influence of two general clusters of variables. First, public opinion polls have consistently shown that crime has become a major concern for many citizens, a concern that is characterized by both a belief that the rate of crime is rising rapidly and a fear that they may become the victims of criminal offenses. Second, partly a function of the belief that crime rates are rising and that victimization is becoming increasingly probable, many citizens appear willing to accept the utilitarian argument that the goals of general and specific deterrence are effectively and efficiently served by the imposition of

legal sanctions. Thomas and Foster hypothesized that perceptions of increasing crime rates, fear of victimization, and a belief in the efficacy of legal sanctions interact with one another in such a fashion as to encourage relatively high levels of support for capital punishment, a hypothesis that was strongly supported in their analysis of attitudes toward capital punishment among a sample of 839 residents of the Daytona Beach area of Florida.

A basic limitation of the Thomas and Foster study is that their attention was directed toward attitudinal support for a particularly extreme type of legal sanction. The extent to which their model can account for support for other types of sanctions remains unresolved. Further, their dependent variable was a measure of attitudes toward capital punishment rather than a measure of the specific type of sentence that their respondents defined as appropriate. Because of the potential variance between attitudinal support for any type of sanction and an assessment of the appropriate sentence for a specific offense, one must question the extent to which the variables employed by Thomas and Foster can facilitate predictions of actual sentencing decisions. Our expectation is that Thomas and Foster's basic hypothesis of a linkage between perception of crime rates, fear of victimization, a belief in the efficacy of sanctions, and the degree of sanction that various offenses are perceived to merit will be supported. We would anticipate, however, that

the quality of the predictions obtained will become less accurate when a broader spectrum of offenses is examined and when specific sentencing decisions are obtained rather than measures of attitudinal support for general types of sanctions.

#### Research Methodology

In order to examine the extent to which the variables described by Thomas and Foster can serve as predictors of the degree of sanctions that are viewed as appropriate for a variety of offenses by the general public, we have abstracted the necessary data from a larger volume of information obtained in the course of a survey conducted in the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach, Virginia late in 1973. The data collection sequence included an introductory letter in which the purpose of the study was briefly described. This letter was mailed to 9,178 randomly selected households in the four-city area. Shortly thereafter each of these households received an initial questionnaire which, if not promptly returned, was followed by a reminder letter and, where necessary, a second questionnaire. A relatively large proportion of the households originally selected for inclusion in our sample had to be deleted because of deaths, serious illness, and migration, migration out of the area being by far the most frequently encountered cause of sample shrinkage. Of the 7,229 households that

we were able to contact, properly completed questionnaires were received from 46.1 percent ( $N = 3,334$ ). Although this rate of return seems to fall within the normal range when compared with the available reports on mailed questionnaires (Luck, Wales, and Taylor, 1970; Boyd and Westfall, 1972; Carpender, 1974; Etzel and Walker, 1974; Veiga, 1974), it should be noted that a comparison of the characteristics of our sample with comparable information provided in the 1970 census materials showed that those who were older, white, better educated, higher in occupational prestige, and relatively affluent were more likely to return completed questionnaires than were other cohorts in the population. The manner in which the major variables employed in this research were operationalized is discussed below and sample items from each of the attitude scales are provided in Appendix A.

#### Perception of Crime Rates

Direct or indirect experience with victimization, media coverage and emphasis, statements by governmental officials, and related factors all encourage citizens to view crime as a problem of rapidly increasing proportion. Our expectation is that those who perceive crime to be increasing are more likely to view relatively harsh sanctions as appropriate than are those who feel that crime is less problematic. In order to measure perceptions of crime rates we constructed a Likert-type attitude measure that contained four items which were selected from a larger pool of potential items. In selecting items for this measure as well as each of the other attitude scales we

correlated each item score with an initial summated scale score. Any item-to-scale correlation that was not equal to or greater than .50 dictated the deletion of that item from the final scale. A final summated scale was computed on the basis of the items that met the selection criterion.<sup>1</sup> The mean of the final scale was 11.717 with a standard deviation 2.65. The lower the scale score on this measure, the lower the perceived crime rate.

#### Fear of Victimization

Should individuals perceive crime to be an increasing problem, it is only logical to expect that they will come to believe that their probability of being victimized is also increasing. Our expectation is that fear of victimization will also be a predictor of the relative harshness that is reflected in the sentencing decisions which are viewed as acceptable by various cohorts in the population. The more fearful individuals are, the more severe the sentences they will define as appropriate, particularly given the fairly pervasive belief that punishment is an effective means of dealing with such behavioral problems. A nine-item Likert scale was developed to measure fear of victimization. The mean of the scale was 26.073 with a standard deviation of 6.33. The lower the scale score on this measure, the lower the fear of victimization.

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<sup>1</sup>For a more complete discussion of this technique of item analysis as well as a comparison of this method with several alternatives, see Thomas, Williams, and Nelson, 1974.



### Attitudes Toward Punishment

Attitudes toward punishment represent a very difficult cluster of attitudes to measure because of the complexity of the conceptual problem that they pose. For this reason, we elected to develop two general measures. One scale attempts to measure a fairly broad willingness to employ punishment in a fashion unrelated to what the goal of the punishment might be; the other focuses on the extent to which punishment is viewed as an effective means of attaining the goal of deterrence. With regard to the deterrence issue, there is clearly adequate justification to discriminate between the belief that sanctions will inhibit an individual from engaging in some proscribed behavior again in the future (specific deterrence) and the belief that the imposition of sanctions on one person or group of persons will inhibit others who have not been sanctioned from engaging in comparable behavior (general deterrence). Thus, two sub-scales were derived from the general measure of the perceived effectiveness of punishment. The four-item measure of general willingness to employ punishment has a mean of 12.397 with a standard deviation of 2.43. The lower the scale score on this measure, the lower the willingness to employ punishment. The seven-item measure of the perceived deterrent effectiveness of punishment has a mean of 26.028 with a standard deviation of 4.78. The lower the scale score on both this measure and the two sub-scales derived from it, the lower the

perceived effectiveness of punishment.

#### Severity of Sanctions

By far the most difficult to construct of our measures was the severity of sanctions scale. The basic problem we confronted was that each respondent was asked to assign a minimum, average, and maximum sentence to an offender within each of seventeen separate offense categories.<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this analysis we wished to create a single variable from this substantial block of data, a variable which would allow us to array our respondents along a continuum that reflected his degree of severity with regard to the sentences assigned. In order to do so we focused only on the average sentences. Each of the seventeen average sentence distributions were then dichotomized at their respective medians and the respondent was assigned a score of "1" for each sentence he assigned which exceeded the median sentence of the offense type being examined and a "0" if his sentence was less than the median. These weights were then summed across the seventeen offenses. Because a substantial number of respondents

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<sup>2</sup>The offenses we considered were car theft, drunk in public, possession of marijuana, selling drugs to a minor, a homosexual act with a consenting adult, gambling, armed robbery, burglary, a public official taking a bribe, assault and battery, assault and battery with a weapon, murder, theft of something worth more than \$100(grand larceny), income tax fraud, prostitution, rape, and an extra sentence for using a weapon in committing any offense. The only information provided on the offender was that he was (1) guilty, (2) a first offender, (3) an adult. For each of these offense categories no sentence or a minor fine and probation were assigned a numeric value of zero years; less than a year in jail was defined as .5 years; sentences of from 1 to 45 years were not recoded; and sentences of more than 45 years, life imprisonment, and the death penalty were assigned a value of 45 years.

failed to assign a sentence for one or more of the offenses, it was necessary to adjust the scale scores for missing data.<sup>3</sup> This was accomplished by creating a ratio in which the numerator was set equal to the sum of the weights for all offenses for which the respondent assigned a sentence and the denominator was equal to the total number of sentences assigned. This ratio may be defined as the proportion of the total sentences assigned by each respondent which exceeded the median sentence lengths assigned to these offenses by the total sample. The lower the scale score on this measure, the lower the proportion of severe sentences assigned by the respondent.

#### Analysis and Findings

The purpose of our analysis is to evaluate the extent to which perceptions of crime rates, fear of victimization, and attitudes toward punishment provide a means by which our understanding of variations in levels of public support for legal sanctions may be extended. Should any of these variables prove to be useful predictors of the sentencing choices of those in our sample, it would also become important to evaluate the relative importance of the predictor variables. Because perceptions of crime rates and fear of victimization are conceptualized as indicators of a cluster of variables that reflect public

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<sup>3</sup>Any respondent who failed to provide sentences for at least five of the seventeen offenses was deleted from the analysis.

evaluations of the seriousness of the crime problem rather than orientations toward the use or perceived utility of punishment, our findings with regard to the two sets of variables are discussed separately. The necessary statistical information on the relationships between perceptions of crime rates, fear of victimization, and severity of sentencing is provided in Tables 1 and 2.

//INSERT TABLES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE//

Table 1 shows a low but significant relationship between perceptions of the crime rate and severity of sentencing ( $\gamma = .114$ ). The distribution of the cases in the cells of the table attests to the tendency for those who perceive the crime rate to be increasing slowly or not at all to be relatively lenient in their sentencing patterns. Among the respondents who had the lowest scores on the perception of crime rates scale, for example, 30.9 percent fell into the least severe quartile of the sentencing measure and only 18.8 percent obtained scores in the most severe quartile. Thus, the expectation that those who did not perceive crime to be a problem of increasing proportion would not be severe in their sentencing patterns is upheld, but the strength of the linkage between the two variables is weak. Similarly, the results presented in Table 2 show a slight but significant degree of association between fear of victimization and severity of sentencing

(gamma = .138). The percentage distributions in Table 2 are almost an exact duplicate of those noted in Table 1 and they provide at least some support for our expectation that those who are least fearful of victimization will be the most lenient with regard to the severity of their sentencing patterns. Taken together, these two correlates of severity of sentencing support our expectation that those who perceive the crime problem to be serious will view relatively harsh sentences as more appropriate than will those who view crime as less problematic, but the strength of the associations can only lead to the conclusion that evaluations of the magnitude of crime as a problem are not a major determinant of sentencing patterns.

Tables 3-6 present our findings on the hypothesized linkages between a general willingness to employ punishment as a reaction against those convicted of criminal offenses, perceptions of the effectiveness of punishment, the two sub-scales developed as measures of the perceived general and specific deterrent effect of punishment, and severity of sentencing patterns. In each of the four tables the level of association noted between the independent and dependent variables is consistently higher than that noted in the previous segment of our analysis, and an examination of the percentage distributions reveals a remarkable similarity between the tables. Table 3 shows that our expectation of more severe sentencing patterns among those most willing to employ punishment is supported.

Among those who were most supportive of punishment for criminal offenders, 35.6 percent had particularly severe sentencing patterns while only 13.9 percent provided sentences that were relatively lenient. Conversely, 38.2 percent of those who were unwilling to support the use of punishment assigned very lenient sentences as opposed to only 15.1 percent of that group who assigned severe sentences. This pattern is duplicated in the tables which focus on the perceived effectiveness of punishment. In Table 4, for example, 15.1 percent of those who perceived punishment to be relatively ineffective supported the use of serious sanctions, but more than twice that proportion, 33.7 percent, of those who viewed punishment as effective supported severe sanctions.

//INSERT TABLES 3 THRU 6 ABOUT HERE//

Our findings on the relationship between the several dimensions of attitudes toward punishment and severity of sentencing patterns lead us to conclude that willingness to apply sanctions and the belief that sanctions are effective as either a general or a specific deterrent to crime are moderately good predictors of the sentencing patterns exhibited by the members of our sample. Further, the comparable findings noted when our measure of attitudes toward the effectiveness of punishment was subdivided into measures of general and specific deterrence suggest that

our respondents may not make a distinction between these conceptually distinct dimensions of the purpose of imposing sanctions.

The associations noted between perceptions of crime as a social problem, attitudes toward various aspects of punishment, and the severity of sanctions believed to be appropriate for the criminal offenses being examined might or might not be equally relevant for those with different social background and demographic characteristics. To determine whether these correlates of sentencing behavior retain any predictive utility when other potentially important characteristics are held constant, we controlled for the influences of sex, age, ethnicity, educational attainment, income, and occupational prestige. The results of these controls are presented in Table 7.

//INSERT TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE//

Initially, it should be noted that severity of sentencing was largely unrelated to sex ( $\gamma = -.009$ ), age ( $\gamma = .053$ ), ethnicity ( $\gamma = -.066$ ), education ( $\gamma = -.088$ ), or income ( $\gamma = -.034$ ), and only slightly related to occupational prestige ( $\gamma = -.105$ ). This, in turn, implies that the relevance of these characteristics for sentencing patterns is slight. We would not, therefore, expect that these variables would significantly alter the importance of our indices of the priority of the crime

problem or attitudes toward punishment as predictors of sentencing patterns. This expectation is generally supported by the conditional correlations presented in Table 7. To the extent that there are difference between the zero-order and conditional associations, the salience of our predictor variables tends to be slightly greater among those respondents who are younger, better educated, higher in occupational prestige, and male. The predictive utility of perceptions of the crime rate and fear of victimization, in addition, are somewhat greater among our black respondents. Overall, however, the introduction of these control variables does not seem to significantly alter the associations between our independent and dependent variables, and those variations between original and conditional associations that can be observed certainly do not support the possible hypothesis that the original associations are spurious because of the influence of any of these controls.

The fact that we have been able to demonstrate that perceptions of the crime problem and attitudes toward punishment have low to moderate associations with severity of sentencing patterns, associations that remain fairly stable when several social background variables are held constant, does not yield any information on the extent to which this set of predictor variables can account for variance in severity of sentencing. The moderate magnitude of both the zero-order and conditional associations would clearly suggest that the proportion of explained variance would not be particularly strong. To better assess this



implication we computed a single multiple regression equation that employed a step-wise solution in the determination of the order in which the predictor variables would be entered into the equation. This approach was employed in order to obtain some indication of the relative importance of the several independent variables as well as an evaluation of the amount of variance in severity of sentencing that can be attributed to the influence of these variables. The multiple correlation coefficient we obtained was .297. The order of importance of the predictor variables, as determined by the magnitude of the standardized regression coefficients, was general attitudes toward punishment (beta = .174), perception of the effectiveness of punishment (beta = .137), perception of the crime rate (beta = .043), and fear of victimization (beta = .038). This supports our earlier inference that the two general dimensions of attitudes toward punishment fair better as predictors of sentencing patterns than do the two alternative measures of the perceived magnitude of the crime problem. Further, despite the significant linkages between our punishment and severity of sentencing scales and the rather logical expectation that attitudes toward punishment would serve as useful predictors of severity of sentencing patterns, the proportion of explained variance that is attributable to our independent variables remains relatively low.

### Summary and Conclusions

Previous research has paid, at best, minimal attention to the determinants of public opinion toward the imposition of legal sanctions. The purpose of this paper has been to explore the extent to which a set of variables identified in previous research as useful predictors of levels of public support for capital punishment might also provide a means by which variations in the severity of sentencing preferences of a large sample of private citizens could be better understood. Toward that end, the average sentences assigned to a set of seventeen separate offenses were employed to create a severity of sentencing measure which was then correlated with perceptions of crime rates, fear of victimization, willingness to employ punishment as a response to criminality, and perceptions of the effectiveness of punishment as a means of deterrence.

Our analysis showed that the predictor variables are correlates of severity of sentencing patterns, that the levels of association noted do not seem to be significantly influenced when relevant social background and demographic variables are held constant, and that the measures of attitudes toward punishment fair better as predictors of sentencing patterns than do those designed to quantify our respondents' evaluations of the problem presented by criminality. The magnitude to these associations, taken either separately or as components of a single predictor equation, is considerably less than what we had anticipated. Indeed,

we are at something of a loss when we attempt to account for the fact that the coefficient of multiple correlation was only .297 when our four major independent variables were included in one multiple regression equation. We would hypothesize, however, that the relevance of our independent variables in the determination of an appropriate sentence will alter with the type of offense for which a sentence is being provided. Some types of offenses (e.g., murder or rape) are certainly more feared than others we considered (e.g., income tax fraud). Further, the importance of attitudes toward punishment would be likely to vary along similar lines. Such offenses as possession of marijuana, being drunk in public, and engaging in a homosexual act with a consenting adult were frequently described as acts that did not merit punishment of any kind of those in our sample. Thus, not unlike the suggestion made by many criminologists that a typological approach to the explanation of crime may prove more useful than broader theoretical formulations, we suspect that a more thorough understanding of public opinions toward sanctions for criminal acts may require that we examine their attitudes toward the sanctioning of more homogeneous types of offenses than the seventeen that were employed in the construction of our severity of sentencing measure. That hypothesis notwithstanding, movement toward an explanation of factors that influence public attitudes toward sentencing is clearly critical, and the variables we have examined have proven their utility in the analysis we have presented.

TABLE 1  
SEVERITY OF SENTENCING PATTERNS BY  
PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME RATES

		<u>Perception of Crime Rates</u>				
		low			high	
<u>Severity of Sentencing</u>	low	30.9 (140)	25.0 (148)	22.7 (80)	23.6 (111)	21.2 (69)
		22.7 (103)	18.6 (110)	19.8 (70)	18.1 (85)	16.9 (55)
		27.6 (125)	31.5 (186)	34.6 (122)	30.0 (141)	28.5 (93)
	high	18.8 (85)	24.9 (147)	22.9 (81)	28.3 (133)	33.4 (109)
Totals		100.0 (453)	100.0 (591)	100.0 (353)	100.0 (470)	100.0 (326)

Gamma = .114

$\chi^2 = 36.162, \alpha = .001$

TABLE 2  
SEVERITY OF SENTENCING PATTERNS BY  
FEAR OF VICTIMIZATION

		<u>Fear of Victimization</u>				
		low			high	
<u>Severity of Sentencing</u>	low	29.9 (165)	25.4 (126)	26.1 (126)	22.3 (87)	16.3 (44)
		22.6 (125)	21.1 (105)	15.3 (74)	17.4 (68)	18.9 (51)
		28.6 (158)	31.2 (155)	30.4 (147)	30.9 (121)	31.9 (86)
	high	18.8 (104)	22.3 (111)	28.2 (136)	29.4 (115)	33.0 (89)
Totals		99.9* (552)	100.0 (497)	100.0 (483)	100.0 (391)	100.1* (270)

Gamma = .139

$\chi^2 = 45.857, \alpha = .001$

\*Indicates difference from 100 percent caused by rounding error.

TABLE 3  
SEVERITY OF SENTENCING PATTERNS BY  
WILLINGNESS TO EMPLOY PUNISHMENT

		<u>Willingness to Employ Punishment</u>				
		low		high		
<u>Severity of Sentencing</u>	low	38.2 (177)	30.9 (77)	23.2 (95)	21.5 (142)	13.9 (57)
		21.0 (97)	17.3 (43)	24.2 (99)	18.1 (120)	15.6 (64)
		25.7 (119)	26.9 (67)	31.8 (130)	31.4 (208)	34.9 (143)
	high	15.1 (70)	24.9 (62)	20.8 (85)	29.0 (192)	35.6 (146)
Totals		100.0 (463)	100.0 (249)	100.0 (409)	100.0 (662)	100.0 (410)

Gamma = .235

$\chi^2 = 120.267, \alpha = .001$

TABLE 4  
SEVERITY OF SENTENCING PATTERNS BY  
PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUNISHMENT

		<u>Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Punishment</u>				
		low		high		
<u>Severity of Sentencing</u>	low	37.2 (180)	29.0 (115)	21.9 (87)	17.8 (72)	18.4 (94)
		22.9 (111)	20.2 (80)	18.4 (73)	20.3 (82)	15.1 (77)
		24.8 (120)	30.7 (122)	30.2 (120)	33.9 (137)	32.9 (168)
	high	15.1 (73)	20.2 (80)	29.5 (117)	28.0 (113)	33.7 (172)
Totals		100.0 (484)	100.1* (397)	100.0 (397)	100.0 (404)	100.1* (511)

Gamma = .220

$\chi^2 = 108.420, \alpha = .001$

\*Indicates difference from 100 percent caused by rounding error.

TABLE 5

SEVERITY OF SENTENCING PATTERNS BY PERCEPTIONS OF THE  
GENERAL DETERRENT EFFECTIVENESS OF PUNISHMENT

		<u>Perceptions of the General Deterrent Effectiveness of Punishment</u>				
		low			high	
<u>Severity of Sentencing</u>	low	37.7 (177)	30.6 (75)	23.2 (141)	18.9 (74)	16.9 (81)
		19.8 (93)	20.8 (51)	20.6 (125)	21.0 (82)	15.0 (72)
		24.7 (116)	31.4 (77)	30.3 (184)	32.7 (128)	33.8 (162)
	high	17.7 (83)	17.1 (42)	26.0 (158)	27.4 (107)	34.4 (165)
Totals		99.9* (469)	99.9* (245)	100.1* (608)	100.0 (391)	100.1* (480)

Gamma = .214

 $\chi^2 = 99.887, \alpha = .001$ 

\*Indicates difference from 100 percent caused by rounding error.



TABLE 6

SEVERITY OF SENTENCING PATTERNS BY PERCEPTIONS OF THE SPECIFIC  
DETERRENT EFFECTIVENESS OF PUNISHMENT

Perceptions of the Specific Deterrent Effectiveness of Punishment

		low			high	
<u>Severity of Sentencing</u>	low	34.8 (159)	31.6 (126)	20.4 (104)	21.0 (66)	18.2 (93)
		24.7 (113)	16.3 (65)	21.9 (112)	15.9 (50)	16.2 (83)
		26.3 (120)	27.8 (111)	32.7 (167)	32.1 (101)	32.9 (168)
	high	14.2 (65)	24.3 (97)	25.0 (128)	31.1 (98)	32.7 (167)
Totals		100.0 (457)	100.0 (399)	100.0 (511)	100.1* (315)	100.0 (511)

Gamma = .203

$\chi^2 = 98.614, \alpha = .001$

\*Indicates difference from 100 percent caused by rounding error.

TABLE 7

ZERO-ORDER AND CONDITIONAL CORRELATIONS (GAMMA) BETWEEN INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES WHEN RELEVANT SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS ARE HELD CONSTANT

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Zero-Order Gamma</u>	<u>Conditional Gamma</u>
Perception of Crime Rate	Sentence Severity	.114	Age Low = .146
			Age High = .062
			Education Low = .070
			Education High = .135
			Income Low = .093
			Income High = .120
			Occupation Low = .138
			Occupation High = .111
			Male = .123
			Female = .062
Fear of Victimization	Sentence Severity	.139	Black = .161
			White = .113
			Age Low = .139
			Age High = .127
			Education Low = .094
			Education High = .164
			Income Low = .155
			Income High = .127
			Occupation Low = .150
			Occupation High = .109
(con't)			Male = .144
			Female = .141
			Black = .207
			White = .134

TABLE 7 (con't)

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Zero-Order Gamma</u>	<u>Conditional Gamma</u>
Willingness to Employ Punishment	Sentence Severity	.235	Age Low = .268 Age High = .178  Education Low = .160 Education High = .301  Income Low = .224 Income High = .252  Occupation Low = .244 Occupation High = .270  Male = .248 Female = .192  Black = .142 White = .250
Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Punishment	Sentence Severity	.220	Age Low = .258 Age High = .163  Education Low = .150 Education High = .270  Income Low = .192 Income High = .252  Occupation Low = .197 Occupation High = .262  Male = .230 Female = .157  Black = .268 White = .224

(con't)

TABLE 7 (con't)

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>Zero-Order Gamma</u>	<u>Conditional Gamma</u>
Perceptions of the General Deterrent Effectiveness of Punishment	Sentence Severity	.214	Age Low = .244 Age High = .165  Education Low = .153 Education High = .253  Income Low = .192 Income High = .234  Occupation Low = .202 Occupation High = .238  Male = .229 Female = .114  Black = .170 White = .220
Perceptions of the Specific Deterrent Effectiveness of Punishment	Sentence Severity	.203	Age Low = .233 Age High = .153  Education Low = .136 Education High = .247  Income Low = .178 Income High = .227  Occupation Low = .165 Occupation High = .261  Male = .213 Female = .141  Black = .254 White = .203

## APPENDIX A

The following items provided operational measures of the variables employed in this article:

### Fear of Victimization

The city's downtown section just isn't safe at night anymore.

The danger of becoming the victim of a criminal offense seems to be lower in this city than in many other parts of the country.

I avoid shopping in the downtown section of the city because of the crime problem.

During recent years I've become more afraid of becoming victimized by criminals than I ever was before.

My family and I feel reasonably safe and secure in this community.

Crime is such a problem that this city is simply not a safe place to raise children.

The threat of crime has become so great that nobody can feel safe in his own home anymore.

Crime has become such a problem in my neighborhood that I'm afraid to go out at night.

### Perception of Crime Rate

The extent of crime in this city is one of my major concerns.

Many people don't seem to realize how serious the crime problem has become in this city.

The crime problem in my neighborhood has become so serious that I would like to move as soon as I can.

The crime rate in the area where I live seems to be rapidly increasing.

### Perception of Effectiveness of Punishment

\* If judges would give longer sentences to criminals fewer of them would break the law again.

\*\* A firm response to those who violate the law would soon reduce the crime rate in our society.

\* The more seriously we punish someone for a crime the less likely he will be to break the law again.

\* Punishing a criminal does little to keep him from committing another crime.

\*\* Regardless of whether prison sentences keep the person who received the sentence from breaking the law again, they do show others in our society that crime does not pay.

\* Sending criminals to prison is a waste of tax money because it does so little to rehabilitate them.

\*\* If people were certain that they would be punished for their actions, there would be far less crime.

\* Specific Deterrence

\*\* General Deterrence

#### Attitude Toward Punishment

People should only be sent to prison after every other alternative has been tried.

Juveniles should never be put in jails or prisons.

We have a moral obligation to punish people who break the laws.

We should provide help and assistance as well as punishment for those who break the laws.

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**END**