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Criminal Justice Policy Review 2005; 16; 360

DOI: 10.1177/0887403405274782

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Now Serving Part Two Crimes: Testing the Relationship Between Welfare Spending and Property Crimes

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Studies that examine the effects of welfare, specifically the program of Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC), have primarily examined the relationship between public assistance spending and index, or part one, offenses. In general, the results of past studies have found a negative relationship between welfare and serious crime rates. To date, however, few studies have examined the effects of welfare on the more prevalent part two crimes. Given that previous examinations have found an inverse relationship between index crimes and welfare spending, changes in levels of spending could potentially affect both categories of crime in unwanted directions. As such, this study examined both part one and part two property crimes in relation to welfare spending from 1980 to 1990 in Kentucky counties. Significant positive findings were observed between AFDC spending and part two property crimes.

Keywords: *welfare spending; property crimes; part two offenses*

Studies that examine the effects of welfare, specifically, Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC), have primarily examined the relationship between public assistance and serious offenses. These studies have found that as levels of welfare relief increase, rates of serious offenses decrease. To date, however, no study has examined the effects of welfare relief on less serious part two offenses. Part two offenses are actually more numerous than the more serious part one offenses (Felson, 1994). For example, out of the 9 million arrests for all crimes in 1990, 80% were arrests that were not

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The author would like to thank William King of Bowling Green State University for assisting her with the revision of this article. Expressions of appreciation also go to the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Melissa W. Burek, Criminal Justice Program, Department of Human Services, 223 Health Center, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403.

Criminal Justice Policy Review, Volume 16, Number 3, September 2005 360-384

DOI: 10.1177/0887403405274782

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included among the 8 major index offense categories. Thus, most of the arrests in this country are for crimes that are not very dramatic, exciting, violent, or serious. In fact, the majority of crimes are the ordinary, common offenses such as shoplifting, vandalizing property, public drunkenness, and drug crimes.

The increased prevalence of these less serious offenses in a community, however, has consequences for the quality of life in that area (Reiss, 1986). For example, crimes of vandalism can render damaged property useless. Neighborhoods victimized by the lesser offenses may become more vulnerable to the occurrence of more serious crimes (Wilson & Kelling, 1982) because these lesser offenses discourage resident stability and encourage offenders and would-be offenders to make their homes in communities marked by disorder (Reiss, 1986; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Indeed, it may be the lesser offenses that threaten the economic and social institutions that support neighborhood organization and encourage more serious crime (McGahey, 1986; Sherman, n.d.; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Simply, relatively minor part two offenses may have a greater impact on serious crime than is generally thought.

Government anticrime policies often range from adopting legislation that calls for more mandatory sentences to increasing the number of offenses that are death eligible. Few directives are being issued that may be better suited for decreasing disorder and strengthening institutions known to have an attenuating influence on crime. According to past empirical examinations, one such social program shown to reduce crime is government welfare assistance via increases in AFDC spending. These studies, however, have only observed index offenses, which do not make up the majority of crimes committed in the United States. Research that examines whether programs such as AFDC can affect part two offenses in the same direction is needed. The present study attempts to meet this need.

The present study examines the impact public assistance spending, namely AFDC, has on part one and part two property offenses from 1980 to 1990. The measure that is used to observe these changes is the residual-change score suggested by Bohrnstedt (1969). The residual-change score presents a measure that allows for the prediction of the level of property crime in 1990 for each unit under study based on its levels in 1980 in relation to a number of factors. Property offenses are examined because they are the most widespread display of criminal behavior committed in the United States. Part one property offenses include rates of burglary, larceny, auto theft, and robbery. Part two property offenses include buying, receiving, or possessing stolen property, vandalism, fraud, forgery, and embezzlement.

WELFARE IN THE UNITED STATES

Welfare relief programs have had a long history in the United States (Patterson, 1981; Piven & Cloward, 1987). One of the largest cash assistance programs was Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), originally termed Aid to Dependent Children (Gilder, 1981; Moffitt, 1992; Murray, 1984; Piven & Cloward, 1971). AFDC began in 1935 during the Great Depression. It was designed to give federal grant money to states to aid indigent children who were fatherless (Patterson, 1981; Ways and Means Committee, 1996, 1998). The original goal of AFDC was to assist single mothers and their children in the development of a strong, independent family home (Murray, 1984; Piven & Cloward, 1987; Ways and Means Committee, 1998). The cash benefit payments of AFDC were to provide needy families with shelter, clothing, food, and personal and household necessities (Wilson, 1987).

During the 1950s and early 1960s, Congress modified the eligibility requirement from serving widowed mothers to serving needy mothers or other caretakers or relatives. By 1990, subsequent changes were implemented that allowed any child of an unemployed or incapacitated parent to be AFDC eligible (Ways and Means Committee, 1998).

Almost a half a century after its inception, many poor persons (not exclusively widowed or unwed mothers) with children could be considered eligible for assistance under the AFDC program. The result of these changes was that by 1975 11 million people (42%) of the 25.9 million citizens living below the poverty line received AFDC assistance (Ways and Means Committee, 1996, 1998). By 1990, 11.4 million (33%) out of the 34 million below the line of poverty were on the AFDC rolls (Ways and Means Committee, 1998). An examination of the historical trends in AFDC enrollments, as observed in the Green Book of the Ways and Means Committee (1998), reveals that the average new monthly family enrollments in the AFDC program remained relatively stable, ranging from 3,642 new families for 1980 to 4,869 new families for 1995.

The U.S. government approved a number of changes in the welfare system on July 1, 1997 (Ways and Means Committee, 1998). These reforms ended the federal cash assistance program to needy children as it was known under the AFDC program. The current program, Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), provides funds for states in the form of grants to develop and implement their own individual welfare and work assistance programs (Ways and Means Committee, 1996, 1998).

The new law that established TANF, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, places a 5-year restriction on lifetime benefits for eligible recipients (Ways and Means Committee, 1996, 1998). Individual states are permitted to reduce the number of months and/or years below the maximum 5 years at their discretion. Regardless of the time limits on total lifetime benefits, recipients in every state are required to go to work after 2 years of welfare assistance. Thus, recipients may collect TANF funds for 2 years, gain employment, terminate employment, and then return to TANF for no more than 3 additional years over their lifetime. Further, unwed mothers under the age of 18 who do not live at home and who do not stay in school are ineligible for assistance. These limits on welfare programming and spending, when viewed in consideration of the negative association observed in past studies between welfare and crime, could be seen as a potential factor in increasing crime.

THE WELFARE-CRIME RELATIONSHIP

Studies that have examined the relationship between welfare and crime have focused exclusively on index offenses. The hallmark examination for this relationship was conducted by DeFronzo (1983) in which the relationship between 1970 index crime rates and cost-of-living-adjusted monthly AFDC assistance per family was examined in 39 standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSAs). His major findings indicated that AFDC assistance was negatively associated with homicide, rape, and burglary rates controlling for other variables. Later research found similar results; as welfare spending increased, serious crime rates decreased (DeFronzo, 1983, 1992, 1996, 1997; DeFronzo & Hannon, 1998; Devine, Sheley, & Smith, 1988; Fiala & LaFree, 1988; Grant & Martinez, 1997; Hannon, 1997; Messner, 1986; Rosenfeld, 1986; Zhang, 1997). Table 1 provides a summary of the major findings from these studies in terms of the structural covariates found to influence crime rates.

The units of analysis across the studies involved the examination of SMSAs, labor market areas, cities, states, countries, large metropolitan counties, and time. Only two studies were longitudinal in design (see Devine et al., 1988; Grant & Martinez, 1997). Some studies measured welfare as (a) the average payment per family, percentage of all persons below poverty line receiving aid; (b) the average amount of AFDC payments per person, cost-of-living adjusted monthly AFDC assistance per family or per family member; (c) the percentage of population receiving relief and welfare eligibility; (d) the average public assistance payments to African

(text continued on page 369)

Table 1: Structural Covariates of Index Crime Rates: Results From Previous Studies

Previous Studies	Structural Covariates							
	Income Inequality	Percentage Families in Poverty	Percentage Unemployed	Percentage Non-White	Region	Population Size	Family Income	Percent Divorced
DeFronzo (1983)	0	0	+rape; +larceny; +burglary	+homicide; +robbery; +aggravated assault	0	+auto theft; +homicide; +robbery; +rape	+burglary; +larceny	*
Messner (1986)	0	*	0	+all index but auto theft	0	+all index crimes	0	*
Rosenfeld (1986)	*	*	*	*	0	0	*	*
Sampson (1987)	*	*	0	*	+adult homicide	+juvenile homicide	*	*
Devine, Sheley, and Smith (1988)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fiala and LaFree (1988)	*	*	+child homicide	*	*	*	*	*
DeFronzo (1992)	0	*	+sexual assault	+sexual assault	0	0	*	0
DeFronzo (1996)	*	+burglary	0	*	*	+burglary	*	*
DeFronzo (1997)	*	*	+homicide	*	*	+homicide	*	0
Grant and Martinez (1997)	*	*	+all index crimes	0	*	0	*	*
Hannon (1997)	*	*	+homicide	*	*	*	*	*
Zhang (1997)	+property crimes	*	+property crimes	0	+property crimes	*	*	*

DeFronzo and Hannon (1998)	+homicide	*	*	0	*	+homicide	*	*
Hannon and DeFronzo (1998a)	*	*	*	*	*	0	0	+burglary; +larceny
Hannon and DeFronzo (1998b)	*	0	+property crimes	0	*	+all index crimes	*	0

Structural Covariates

<i>Previous Studies</i>	<i>Age Structure of Population (15-29)</i>	<i>Percentage Female-Headed Households</i>	<i>Percentage Below Poverty</i>	<i>Percentage Males Aged 16-24</i>	<i>Median Income</i>	<i>Criminal Opportunity</i>	<i>Residential Mobility</i>	<i>Structural Covariates</i>	
								<i>Age Structure of Population (15-29)</i>	<i>Percentage Female-Headed Households</i>
DeFronzo (1983)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rosenfeld (1986)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Messner (1986)	0	*	0	*	*	*	*	*	+all index crimes
Sampson (1987)	*	+juvenile homicide; +juvenile robbery	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Devine, Sheley, and Smith (1988)	*	*	*	+homicide; +robbery	*	+homicide; +robbery	*	*	*
Fiala and LaFree (1988)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
DeFronzo (1992)	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
DeFronzo (1996)	*	+burglary	0	0	*	*	*	*	*
DeFronzo (1997)	*	+homicide	0	0	0	*	*	*	*

(continued)

Table 1: (continued)

<i>Previous Studies</i>	<i>Age Structure of Population (15-29)</i>	<i>Percentage Female-Headed Households</i>	<i>Percentage Below Poverty</i>	<i>Percentage Males Aged 16-24</i>	<i>Median Income</i>	<i>Criminal Opportunity</i>	<i>Residential Mobility</i>
Grant and Martinez (1997)	0	+violent crimes; -property crimes	+violent crimes; -property crimes	*	*	*	*
Hannon (1997)	0	+homicide	+homicide	*	*	*	*
Zhang (1997)	0	*	*	*	+property crimes	*	*
DeFronzo and Hannon (1998)	*	+homicide	+homicide	*	*	*	*
Hannon and DeFronzo (1998a)	+larceny	+property crimes	*	*	*	*	*
Hannon and DeFronzo (1998b)	0	0	*	*	*	*	+all index crimes

<i>Previous Studies</i>	<i>Structural Covariates</i>						
	<i>Population Density</i>	<i>Male Unemployment Rate</i>	<i>Percentage Females in Labor Force</i>	<i>Percentage Urban Population</i>	<i>Per Capita Income</i>	<i>High School Drop-out Rate</i>	<i>Welfare</i>
DeFronzo (1983)	*	*	*	*	*	*	-rape; -homicide; -burglary

Rosenfeld (1986)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-homicide; -auto theft +larceny; -all other index crimes +family disruption; -adult homicide -burglary; +robbery; +homicide -child homicide -sexual assault -female- headed households; -burglary -female- headed households; -homicide -all index crimes
Messner (1986)	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	0	
Sampson (1987)	*	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Devine, Sheley, and Smith (1988)	*	+burglary	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Fiala and LaFree (1988)	*	*	+child homicide	0	*	*	*	*	*	
DeFronzo (1992)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
DeFronzo (1996)	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	
DeFronzo (1997)	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	
Grant and Martinez (1997)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

367 *(continued)*

Table 1: (continued)

Previous Studies	Structural Covariates							Welfare
	Population Density	Male Unemployment Rate	Percentage Females in Labor Force	Percentage Urban Population	Per Capita Income	High School Drop-out Rate		
Hannon (1997)	*	*	*	+homicide	*	+homicide	-drop-out rate; -homicide	
Zhang (1997)	*	*	*	+property crimes	+property crimes	*	-property crimes	
DeFronzo and Hannon (1998)	+homicide	*	*	*	*	*	-homicide	
Hannon and DeFronzo (1998a)	*	+auto theft	*	*	-larceny; -burglary; +auto theft	*	-divorce rate; -female-headed households; -property crimes	
Hannon and DeFronzo (1998b)	+all index crimes	*	+property crimes	+all index crimes	*	*	-resource deprivation; -all index crimes	

NOTE: + indicates a significant positive relationship between the variables indicated; - indicates a significant negative relationship between the variables indicated; 0 indicates a nonsignificant or null effect; * indicates that the researchers did not include this variable in their study.

American households; (e) the government revenue for impoverished, social security allocations; (f) the family allowance measures; or (g) the sum of public assistance spending through AFDC. Regardless of the way welfare was operationalized, however, most of the examinations observed a significant inverse relationship between welfare and crime.

These studies measured crime as either all index crime rates (i.e., both part one property and violent offenses) or as part one property crime rates or violent crime rates or one or more individual offense type from the part one property and violent crime categories. Homicide was examined in a number of studies, and burglary, larceny, and other offenses falling under the property crime category were explored often. None of the examinations, however, considered the influence of welfare on part two property offenses.

As illustrated in Table 1, a number of structural factors were found to influence crime rates in past analyses. Namely, the effects of poverty, unemployment, income inequality, family disruption, and welfare assistance were found to significantly influence serious crime. Only increases in public assistance, however, were able to reduce serious crime rates, whereas the other structural covariates were found to positively contribute to an increase in crime. Specific to property crimes, a number of control variables were found to be positively associated with burglary, larceny, and auto theft rates, including median family income, the unemployment rate, the male unemployment rate, the percentage of females participating in the labor force, the percentage divorced, residential mobility, the percent of urban population, the percentage of female-headed households, the city population size, the age structure of population (15-29 years old), income inequality, and the poverty rate.

A review of the welfare-crime literature also illustrated the theoretical frameworks that have been used to explain the effects of welfare on crime. In brief, social disorganization theory posits that increases in welfare can either increase or decrease crime rates due to its potential influence on a community's ability to exert informal social control over its residents (Rosenfeld, 1986). Anomie theory contends that high levels of welfare relief can act as a legitimate mean through which people can meet the culturally prescribed goals which, in turn, reduces rates of crime. Crime can be considered an illegitimate medium for meeting culturally prescribed goals. Institutional anomie, on the other hand, may contend that as welfare spending is increased, crime rates will increase or remain unaffected because welfare may not provide enough monetary assistance to achieve the American Dream (Chamlin & Cochran, 1995). Finally, the concept of social support offers the explanation that welfare assistance payments can increase com-

munity cohesion. This increase in community cohesion has the ability to decrease crime by lessening the influences of economic and familial hardships (Cullen, 1994).

In light of these contentions, the importance of studying part two offenses is again highlighted. A number of part two offenses are instrumental in form and are not a result of intense emotions. Many of the violent offenses that have been the focus of many studies examining the welfare-crime relationship, however, are often the result of strong feelings. These offenses may not be as amenable to study at the aggregate level when utilizing welfare as a predictor variable (Devine et al., 1988). Further, part two offenses are more prevalent than are part one offenses. As such, studies exploring the influence of macrolevel factors such as welfare spending should be concerned with explaining phenomena that occur more often and may be more amenable to informal social controls, increases in levels of social support and community cohesion, and the pursuit of legitimate options to achieve culturally prescribed goals. Property offenses, both part one and part two, may be more likely than personal index offenses to meet these conditions.

METHOD

To gain a better understanding of how changes in government assistance policies can shape crime, this study examines the welfare-crime relationship using counties in Kentucky as the unit of analysis. Available data are used to determine if changes in levels of AFDC spending are associated with changes in property crime from 1980 to 1990. These years were chosen for several reasons. First, they are census years. Census years provide a more accurate description of key demographic characteristics, whereas noncensus years only provide estimations of these characteristics. More faith can be put into studies that use measures that have more accurate values rather than just estimations of key variables, which are available for noncensus years. Second, past studies examining the welfare-crime relationship utilized data from 1980 and 1990. Thus, the present study can be readily compared to the prior literature. Further, the present study is using counties rather than SMSAs or cities. It is also of value to compare the results of the current analyses with those found in the previous examinations concerning part one property crimes.

The present study includes all 120 counties in Kentucky. Reiss (1986) contends that this approach enables a study to tap into the variability among counties in relation to one another that may be more valuable than examining

Table 2: Comparison of Kentucky to the United States on Key Variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Kentucky</i>	<i>Other States</i>	<i>t-value</i>
Serious crimes per 100,000, 1980	3,432	5,745	-9.307*
Serious crimes per 100,000, 1990	3,286	5,362	-9.845*
Resident population, 1980	3,660,324	4,457,638	-1.188
Resident population, 1990	3,686,891	4,900,628	-1.563
Female-headed households, 1980	125,875	161,588	-1.354
Female-headed households, 1990	153,766	204,558	-1.536
AFDC total recipients, 1980	166,628	203,999	-0.966
AFDC total recipients, 1990	174,190	220,355	-1.027
Persons unemployed, 1980	133,000	149,880	-0.706
Persons unemployed, 1990	103,000	136,300	-1.476
Single males in population (15 and older), 1980	358,353	495,475	-1.724
Single males in population (15 and older), 1990	361,278	568,867	-2.080*
African American population, 1980	259,477	524,711	-3.014*
African American population, 1990	262,907	594,463	-3.277*

*significant within a .05 critical region.

a large national sample of units. Further, counties, as social systems, are believed to exhibit "their own unique institutional dynamics" (Maume & Lee, 2003, p. 1166). Kentucky was also chosen because of its diverse geographic setting as it is composed of urban, suburban, and rural populations that are likely to be similar to other locales throughout the country. In addition to sharing similar divisions of geographical populations with other states, Kentucky is also not significantly different from the rest of the country across a number of factors (see also Table 2).¹

Kentucky has collected data on both part one and part two offenses and welfare program spending at the county level since the early to middle 1970s. The Kentucky Uniform Crime Reporting Program has been a solid and consistent effort with every police agency in Kentucky reporting (Commonwealth of Kentucky Crime Report, 1980, 1990). Thus, data from Kentucky provide a valid and reliable base from which to answer the research question regarding the effects of welfare on rates of crime both serious and nonserious in nature.

Dependent Variables

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations for the categories of part one crime rates and part two arrests, which are the dependent variables examined, for the years under study. The rates of part one property offenses reported to police are considered because prior research measured crime in

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations of Study Variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>1980</i>		<i>1990</i>	
	M	SD	M	SD
Dependent variables				
Part one property crimes	1,800.767	1,243.579	897.583	3,360.039
Part two property crimes	149.833	260.811	337.217	768.591
Predictor variables				
AFDC spending	\$459.20	\$79.75	\$933.87	\$67.34
Unemployment rate	.037	.090	.036	.010
Racial composition	.039	.045	.037	.044
Age structure of population	.049	.006	.114	.019
Population size	30,506	65,833	30,710	64,800
Female-headed households	.034	.007	.037	.007

NOTE: $N = 120$.

this way. Measuring the part one crimes in a similar manner facilitates comparisons to past studies. Arrests were selected for the part two offenses. The data from Kentucky's crime reporting program only report part two crimes as arrests (i.e., part two crimes reported were not available).

Predictor Variables

Welfare

The variable used to examine the welfare-crime relationship is the total AFDC dollars spent in 1980 and 1990 per county per recipient. AFDC is selected as the welfare program of interest because its payments supported the potentially employable "who are most likely to pose a threat to the social order and most susceptible to discretionary actions of federal and state governments" (Chamlin, 1992, p. 155).

In addition, many of the past studies have used the AFDC program as well because it was the most popular of all government assistance programs for the impoverished (Gilder, 1981; Moffitt, 1992; Murray, 1984; Piven & Cloward, 1971). Further, AFDC expenditures were selected because it is the AFDC program that has undergone strict limitations and changes in eligibility requirements over the years.

A number of other variables were found to have significant associations with part one offenses in the past research examining the relationship

between welfare and crime. Controlling for these variables allows for a more rigorous test of the welfare-crime relationship as it relates to part one and two property offenses. Theoretically, it also makes sense that these variables should be selected for inclusion in the analyses based on the premise, for example, that in units with larger populations, higher unemployment, and greater percentages of female-headed households, more monetary allocations toward welfare benefits would be distributed. Values on the control variables were obtained from the 1980 and 1990 census. Explanations for the control indicators are illustrated below.

Unemployment

In general, unemployment has been found to have both a negative and a positive effect on crime (Crutchfield, 1989; Devine et al., 1988). The negative association between crime and unemployment can be explained by opportunity theory, which holds that when there are more people at home, this enables better supervision and protection of their property, thereby reducing certain crimes, particularly property crimes (Crutchfield, 1989; Felson, 1994). The positive association between unemployment and crime is explained by motivational theories, which contend that economic deprivation motivates people to commit crimes to meet their material needs (Devine et al., 1988). Because the present study concerns itself with the examination of part two offenses, many of which are crimes that can yield monetary and material gains that may outweigh both paychecks from labor and AFDC benefits, it is necessary to control for the unemployment rate. In the past literature, unemployment was found to be positively associated with both violent and property offense rates (DeFronzo, 1983, 1992; Grant & Martinez, 1997; Hannon, 1997; Hannon & DeFronzo, 1998b; Zhang, 1997).

Population Size

Larger populations are thought to consist of a variety of cultures and value systems. As such, there are difficulties inherent in attempting to achieve consensus among large numbers of persons (Sampson & Groves, 1989). When this situation occurs, crime rates increase because the lack of value consensus leads to impersonal groupings of family, institutions, and friendships that generate definitions that may conflict with the dominant

culture and weaken social controls (Bursik, 1988; Elliott et al., 1996; Sampson & Groves, 1989).

Larger populations also demand more services and job opportunities. Thus, when there are not enough opportunities or services available for everyone, an anomic condition may occur in which a society cannot regulate its populace (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997). Crime results when access to legitimate means (i.e., services and job opportunities) to material success is unavailable (Bernard, 1987; Cullen, 1983; Merton, 1938). Instrumental crimes, or those that more readily supply material and monetary gains, are the behaviors that would be engaged in to meet material needs (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997). A number of past studies found that increasing population size led to a significant increase in part one violent and property crime rates (DeFronzo, 1983, 1996, 1997; Defronzo & Hannon, 1998; Hannon & DeFronzo, 1998b; Messner, 1986; Sampson, 1987). In sum, it is necessary to include population size as a control variable in the present examination.

Racial Composition

Racial composition is examined because race, particularly the percentage of African Americans, has been found to have one of the strongest influences on crime in the United States (Sampson, 1987; Walker, Spohn, & Delone, 1996). The racial composition in the population is also taken into consideration in the present examination because it was a significant predictor in past studies examining the welfare-crime relationship. Increases in the percentage of African Americans were found to increase homicide, robbery, aggravated assault, sexual assault, burglary, and larceny rates (DeFronzo, 1983, 1992; Messner, 1986).

Age Structure of Population

There is an extensive literature base that finds a strong connection between crime rates and the proportion of the population between 16 and 29 years of age (Cohen & Land, 1987; Steffensmeier & Harer, 1987). Only two of the past examinations in the welfare-crime literature found a significant positive correlation between age structure of population and part one crime rates (Devine et al., 1988; Hannon & DeFronzo, 1998a). Because males are disproportionately involved in crime (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997; Sampson, 1987), the measure used in the present study is the percentage of males in the population for each county in Kentucky aged 15 to 29.

Female-headed households

Theoretically, areas with higher percentages of female-headed households are hypothesized to attenuate informal social controls for it is more difficult to monitor and report criminal and/or delinquent activity (Sampson, 1987). In addition, a number of studies have found a significant overrepresentation of female-headed homes in the background of youthful offenders (Currie, 1985). Several studies also found that increases in welfare spending led to decreases in the number of female-headed households (DeFronzo, 1996, 1997; Hannon & DeFronzo, 1998a, 1998b). The percentage of female-headed households has been consistently and positively associated with serious crime rates in past examinations (DeFronzo, 1996, 1997; DeFronzo & Hannon, 1998; Grant & Martinez, 1997; Hannon, 1997; Hannon & DeFronzo, 1998a; Sampson, 1987). Based on these findings, any analysis omitting the female-headed household factor as a control variable might confound the results of the analysis.

Statistical Procedures

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was conducted to determine the changes in levels of crime between 1980 and 1990 relative to welfare spending controlling for other predictors. Because this study is also interested in changes in the part one and part two crime rates as affected by total AFDC spending per county, the residual-change score suggested by Bohrnstedt (1969) was also calculated for each variable. These new values for each variable were then analyzed using OLS. The residual-change score measure provides an opportunity to examine the dynamic nature of relationships, which is superior over models that include variables only measured at one time period.

Residual-change scores also have the advantage of remaining statistically independent of the original levels of a variable (Bohrnstedt, 1969; Chamlin, 1992). In other words, residual-change scores provide a measure of change in the variable under study that is not based on the original value of the variable level alone (Bohrnstedt, 1969; Chamlin, 1992). Other measures such as gain or change scores, on the other hand, are unable to remove the effects of the original level of a variable from the equation. This inability can result in a negative correlation with the initial level of the variable under study (Bohrnstedt, 1969; Chamlin, 1992). The reason for this scenario is because the effects of the variable at time one was not removed from the variable at time two, and “when a variable is less than perfectly correlated

Table 4: Bivariate Correlations Between Property Crimes and Predictors

<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Part One</i>		<i>Part Two</i>	
	<i>Property Crimes</i>		<i>Property Crimes</i>	
	<i>1980</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>1990</i>
Predictor variables				
AFDC spending	.179	.471***	-.083	.469***
Unemployment	-.219**	-.173	-.205*	.272**
Population size	.657***	.922***	.711***	.801***
Racial composition	.463***	.412***	.482***	.439***
Age structure	.096	.283**	.015	.144
Female-headed households	.310***	.331***	.194*	.219*

NOTE: $N = 120$.* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

with itself across time, one can expect to observe a negative relationship between initial measurement and change" (Bohrnstedt, 1969, p. 117).

Another advantage of using residual-change scores is that they automatically adjust for changes that the other units under study, in this case counties, have experienced during the same period of time (Chamlin, 1992). This adjustment allows for a score that is able to depict the level of unanticipated fluctuations in the dependent variable over time (Chamlin, 1992).

To derive the residual-change score measure, the level of a variable at time t is regressed on its level at its preceding time $t-10$. The equation is then used to predict the level for each county at time t . The resultant score is then subtracted from the observed level at time t ; thus, the result is the residual-change score (Bohrnstedt, 1969; Bursik & Webb, 1982; Chamlin, 1992). This procedure was used to calculate the level of change for all of the variables; the resulting variables were then entered into the OLS equation for analysis.

RESULTS

Table 4 presents the bivariate correlations between the predictor variables and part one and part two property crimes. Significant positive relationships were observed between the crime categories and the welfare variable in 1990. Population size exhibited the strongest correlation across property crimes in 1980 and 1990. Significant correlations can also be observed between the racial composition and percent female-headed households variables and property crimes. The strength of the correlations for the

Table 5: Results of Regression Analyses with Residual-Change Scores

<i>Property Crimes</i>	<i>Part One</i>		<i>Part Two</i>	
Predictor variables				
AFDC spending	.085	(26.046) ^a	.149*	(48.683)
Unemployment rate	.025	(4.202)	-.028	(-4.842)
Population size	.683***	(.896)	.547***	(.764)
Racial composition	.298***	(1.151)	.276***	(7.070)
Age structure of population	.214***	(30.688)	-.085	(-12.641)
Female-headed households	-.053	(-11.701)	.116	(27.369)
<i>R</i> ²	.548		.615	

NOTE: *N* = 120.

a. Unstandardized regression coefficients are in parentheses.

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001.

racial composition variable remained fairly consistent for both types of property crimes and years of study, producing Pearson's *r* values around .4. The association between female-headed households and part two property crimes, however, was not as strong as the correlation between this predictor variable and part one crimes. It is interesting to note that the age structure variable was only significantly associated with part one property crimes in 1990 ($r = .283$, $p < .01$). Given the prevalence of part two property crimes compared to part one crimes and findings testing the age-crime curve, this lone significant finding between age and crime is unexpected. The unemployment rate was the only variable to negatively affect property crimes, thereby lending some support to the nature of the relationship between unemployment and crime posited by opportunity theorists.

Table 5 presents the standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients for changes in part one and part two property offenses from 1980 and 1990. Changes in the levels of AFDC spending were not found to be a significant predictor of part one property crimes. This finding does diverge from those found in past studies that have focused on some of the crimes found in the part one property category. Note, however, that the mean rate of part one property crimes did decrease in value from 1980 (1,800.767) to 1990 (897.583).

Perhaps other factors occurred between 1980 and 1990 that rendered AFDC spending insignificant. For example, a number of similar findings between property crime rates and the other structural covariates in the OLS model are observed to be comparable to those found in past cross-sectional examinations of the welfare-crime relationship. Changes in the levels of the age structure of the population, as measured by the percentage of males

aged 15 to 29 in the population, changes in the percent African American, and changes in the population size variables significantly affected changes in the levels of part one property crimes. All of these indicators were associated with crime in the expected positive direction. As expected, changes in population size levels had the strongest effect on changes in the levels of part one property crime rates in the 1980s ($\beta = .683, p < .001$). The age structure and racial composition variables demonstrated a weak to moderate relationship with part one property crime rates ($\beta = .298, p < .001$; $\beta = .214, p < .001$, respectively).

Levels of AFDC spending, however, were found to have a weak influence on part two property crimes ($\beta = .149, p < .05$) in a positive direction. In general, this finding differs from results observed in past examinations. Analogous to results found with part one property crimes, racial composition ($\beta = .276, p < .001$) and the population size ($\beta = .547, p < .001$) variables positively affected changes in the levels of part two property crime arrests. Again, the population size variable was observed to have the strongest effect on changes in the levels of part two arrests compared to the other significant variables in the model. Percent African American was found to have a weak to moderate association with part two property crimes ($\beta = .276, p < .001$). Based on previous research on the structural covariates of crime, it would be expected that as the percentages of males in the crime-prone age group increases, so would crime increase, particularly crime that occurs most often, namely part two offenses. This contention is not supported in the present study, however.

DISCUSSION

Past studies examining the welfare-crime relationship have generally observed an inverse relationship between welfare spending and part one crime rates. The present study contributed to the welfare-crime literature by not only studying part two offenses but also by analyzing differences in the levels of welfare spending from 1980 to 1990 rather than focusing on only one year.

In general, contradictory results were observed in regard to the welfare-crime relationship. Significant relationships were found to be in a positive direction between changes in the levels of AFDC spending and changes in the levels of part two property crime arrests from 1980 to 1990. Finding welfare to affect crime in a positive direction, however, is not necessarily an anomaly. One previous study conducted by Messner (1986) found a positive relationship between larceny (a part one property crime) and welfare. In

his earlier work, DeFronzo (1983) addressed this issue by stating that low levels of AFDC assistance may leave potential offenders with a large number of unmet needs for which larceny can effectively supplement.

Social disorganization, institutional anomie, and social support theories can offer possible explanations concerning the positive relationship observed between welfare and part two property crimes in the present study. The tenets of social disorganization could explain welfare's influence on crime in relation to a decrease in informal social controls and welfare's possible mediating effects on economic deprivation. For example, increases in welfare may influence the breakdown of family controls and labor market constraints (Rosenfeld, 1986; Sampson & Wilson, 1995). Because the family and the job market elicit certain controls over residents in an area, increases in spending for AFDC could influence the breakdown of families with fathers leaving the home because a mother traditionally could not be married to collect welfare (Hannon & DeFronzo, 1998a; Rosenfeld, 1986).² In addition, increasing spending on welfare assistance may also discourage parents from seeking gainful employment in the job market because eligibility rules require that the parent be unemployed (Gilder, 1981; Murray, 1984; Rosenfeld, 1986). Both family and employment have the ability to exert control over community behaviors and to direct the community's residents, especially children, into culturally approved paths, but if disrupted, crime and delinquency are likely to occur (Rosenfeld, 1986).

Results from the present examination could exemplify these contentions in that AFDC spending per recipient was found to be a significant and positive predictor of part two property crimes. Increases in many of the offenses in this crime category could be expected in areas where welfare spending has increased because the AFDC program may free residents from common informal constraints on behavior such as jobs and family life.

Institutional anomie contends that anomic tendencies, produced by the desire of everyone in society to achieve the American Dream of material success, are affected by an institutional imbalance of power dominated by the economy (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997). Because the American Dream of material and monetary success can only be achieved through the means available in the economic system, increasing welfare assistance may increase the pressure to attain material success goals so much that people will resort to criminal means to acquire them because welfare alone may not lessen the anomic condition (Chamlin & Cochran, 1995). Given that welfare is a government program that is subservient to the economic institution, and given the government's inferior status, it is unable to provide the regulating behavior necessary to affect reductions in crime.

Evidence from the results of this study could be understood based on the contentions of institutional anomie theory and the accompanying increases in crime. Increases in behaviors such as fraud, forgery, embezzlement, and the like could have been the result of the inability of increased AFDC yearly spending per recipient to provide the legitimate means necessary to attain the culturally prescribed goals of monetary and material success.

The contentions of social support might explain the positive finding between AFDC and part two property crimes from 1980 to 1990 as welfare's diminishing effect on providing the appropriate levels of social support necessary to increase community cohesion and lessen economic and familial hardships. Perhaps increases in welfare spending were unable to provide the level of social support necessary to influence an increase in community cohesion. In turn, the amount of community cohesion necessary to buffer against the effects of economic and familial hardships could not be provided (Sampson & Wilson, 1995). As a result, part two property crimes increased.

CONCLUSION

Researchers have found a consistent decline in serious crime since the mid-1990s (Chaiken, 2000; Ringel, 1996). This time period was also when welfare reform legislation was passed and implemented nationwide with welfare rolls and spending being cut. Studies examining the relationship between welfare and crime during the latter half of the 1990s, when crime was decreasing, have been scant, even in the current examination. Given the results of this study, considering welfare as a structural covariate that could influence crime, particularly part two property crimes, in unwanted directions, several suggestions for future research are offered.

Future research that concerns itself with examining the welfare-crime relationship across different macrosocial units within the United States could be beneficial considering the major reforms to the AFDC program under the new welfare-to-work TANF policy. Even though AFDC and TANF programs are distinct in their forms of entitlement and welfare to work, respectively, they are similar in that they both provide cash assistance to recipients in times of need regardless of the duration of that need. Because the present study only examined counties within one state from 1980 to 1990, and because the bulk of the past research in this area is studied cross-sectionally, subsequent research should consider longitudinal designs to disentangle the effects of the terminated AFDC program and of

TANF on crime since the mid-1990s. A greater focus on part two crimes may also be advised considering the prevalence of these offenses.

NOTES

1. To determine how typical Kentucky is relative to the other 49 states in the country, *t* tests were conducted. The *t*-value indicates how many standard errors separate Kentucky's total from the mean of the other 49 states on the listed variables. Table 2 displays the total value for Kentucky across a number of key dimensions as well as the mean value for the other 49 states on these same variables. As can be observed in Table 2, a few variables were found to differ significantly between the total value for Kentucky and the mean value for the other 49 states. These variables were serious crimes per 100,000 in population for 1980 and 1990, African American population in 1980 and 1990, and population of single males in 1990. The remaining variables, including resident population, number of female-headed households, unemployed persons, and the total number of AFDC recipients, were found to not differ significantly.

2. Note, however, that AFDC eligibility requirements in 1990 changed to indicate that both the mother and the father, if unemployed, could collect AFDC payments (Ways and Means Committee, 1998). Because the current study examines both 1980 and 1990 data, it is relevant to take into consideration the effects of the eligibility rules prior to 1990.

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