

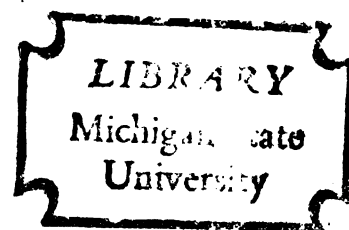


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THE EFFECT OF THE COMMUNITY'S
ECOLOGY ON A RELATIVELY DEPRIVED
GROUP: A CASE STUDY:
THE GREAT STRIKE OF 1877
IN PITTSBURGH AND PHILADELPHIA

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
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THESIS



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DEPRIVED GROUP: A CASE STUDY: THE GREAT STRIKE
OF 1877 IN PITTSBURGH AND PHILADELPHIA

By

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF THE COMMUNITY'S ECOLOGY ON A RELATIVELY
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OF 1877 IN PITTSBURGH AND PHILADELPHIA

By

Carolyn Tyirin Kirk

Relative deprivation has been used as a major concept in explaining the so-called race riots of the mid-1960's. Here I attempt to use the concept to explain the labor strike and riot in Pittsburgh and the labor strike in Philadelphia in 1877 and find that the concept used by itself is insufficient. However, it remains a useful tool of analysis when ecological conditions are also taken into consideration. Specifically, when a community is deteriorating physically and is in a worsening financial situation, this condition helps to produce a community-level feeling of ambiguity in which a relatively deprived group is more likely to engage in riot behavior. Conversely, when a community is physically and financially "healthy," a relatively deprived group will not engage in riot behavior.

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INTRODUCTION

The closest the United States has ever come to experiencing a nation-wide general strike grew out of the railroad strike of 1877. Beginning in mid-July in West Virginia and ending in early August, railroad workers walked off their jobs in twenty major cities from Baltimore to San Francisco and in even more numerous small towns. The strikes originated as a protest to a ten percent wage reduction first instituted by the Pennsylvania Railroad on June 1 which other major lines quickly adopted. Varying by community, local grievances and problems, in addition to the dissatisfaction created by the wage cut, precipitated railroad and general strikes, race and labor riots. The largest railroad strikes occurred in Pennsylvania against the Philadelphia based Pennsylvania Railroad. Strikes took place throughout the state including Philadelphia and Pittsburgh with the latter also experiencing the largest labor riot in the country. By contrast, no rioting occurred in Philadelphia.

The purpose of this study is two-fold. The first is to put the events of July, 1877 in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia into a sociological perspective through the

use of the relative deprivation model of collective behavior. The second is to test the relative deprivation theory by evaluating its power in explaining those same events.

THEORY AND DATA

Although the relative deprivation model is not a theory in the strictest sense, the concept and the loose propositions connected with it have been used to explain individual behavior with some success. That is, sociologists have been able to make sense of individual behavior by using the theory. It has been used less often to explain group behavior. In part, this lack of use stems from the anti-reductionist position taken by many macro-sociologists. However, I see no reason for rejecting the concept for group behavior on such grounds. In our present state of sociological knowledge, I believe that it is reasonable to assume that parallel concepts can be applied to the individual as a unit and to a collectivity of people as a unit.

W. G. Runciman,¹ in a study of class, status, and power inequalities in England since 1918, has developed the fullest statement of the relative deprivation theory of collective behavior. According to Runciman,

¹W. G. Runciman, Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: A Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth-Century England (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), Ch. 2 and 13 especially.

A is relatively deprived of X when (i) he does not have X, (ii) he sees some other person or persons, which may include himself at some previous or expected time, as having X (whether or not this is or will be in fact the case), (iii) he wants X, and (iv) he sees it as feasible that he should have X.²

The concept of relative deprivation likewise applies to groups or a set of persons interacting on the basis of one or more characteristics in common. Thus, relative deprivation for a group is the discrepancy between its expectation based on a comparison with a reference group, either itself at another point in time or a different set of people perceived to have a similar characteristic but less deprived. He finds in the study that people do not mind inequality of power as long as class (wealth) inequalities are based on principles of need, merit, and contribution to the common good and status inequalities do not exist in terms of respect, although praise may be given differentially. When a group does become sufficiently deprived, however, it will attempt to alleviate the deprivation through a collective behavioral response.³ James C. Davies,⁴ in a comparison of three riots, one each in Russia, Egypt, and the United States, has elaborated the theory to include the postulate that the group must be above the level of absolute deprivation or subsistence

²Ibid., p. 10.

³Ibid., pp. 261-275.

⁴James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," American Sociological Review, XXVII (1962), 5-19.

in order to have both the needed time and energy to produce a collective response. Davies' postulate has been affirmed and extended by Denton E. Morrison and Allan D. Steeves⁵ who in a review of thirteen studies of the National Farmers' Organization (NFO), the most radical of the major farmers' organizations in the United States, have found that the NFO membership is comprised of farmers of a higher economic level than those not belonging. Thus, not only can a collective behavioral response be expected from those groups above subsistence yet relatively deprived but also a more radical response can be expected by the least absolutely deprived within the group.

The major source of data will be the testimony gathered by the committee appointed by the Pennsylvania legislature to investigate the strikes and riots. Originally, I intended to develop a questionnaire in order to interview those who testified before the commission. However, since the commission was primarily concerned with the behavior of the military, it did not gather the information necessary for strict quantification of responses for the present purposes. However, certain recurring themes and attitudes do appear in the testimony which can be used in a less rigid way. Furthermore, since early

⁵Denton E. Morrison and Allan D. Steeves, "Deprivation, Discontent, and Social Movement Participation: Evidence on a Contemporary Farmers' Movement, The NFO," Rural Sociology, XXXII (1967), 415-434.

unions did not keep membership lists but were instead organized secretly on a local level, it is only possible to know the leadership which was public knowledge at the time. Also, even the relative degree of participation locally by those eligible to join is not known. Thus, it will not be possible to compare the membership of the unions with the non-membership which held similar jobs. In addition to the commission data, data will also be gleaned from newspaper clippings, the annual reports of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Industrial Statistics, and the U. S. Census of 1880. Before turning to an analysis of the data, it will first be necessary to familiarize the readers with the events of the summer of 1877.

THE EVENTS OF 1877

Resulting from the depression of 1873, railroad wage cuts prompted sporadic strikes throughout the United States. Railroad companies deemed these reductions necessary due to the severe depression, although railroads continued to grow and flourish in spite of the slowing down of the economy.⁶ By the summer of 1877, though, many of the worst economic effects resulting from the Panic of 1873 were disappearing. With the amelioration of the depression, many workers again turned to some form of union involvement, which the depression had effectively curtailed, to improve their economic position. This involvement took two forms, either reactivating already existing unions or organising new ones on both the local and national level.

⁶From December 1873 through December 1877 8,814 miles of new track were put into operation; in comparison, during the four year period prior to the depression (December 1869 through December 1873) 23,424 miles were put into operation. Thus, although construction slowed down, it did not cease. Furthermore, the Pennsylvania Railroad, the largest system, controlled over 3,000 miles of track in 1871; by 1883, it controlled over 7,000 miles. Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., ed., The Railroads: The Nation's First Big Business (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1965), pp. 13, 18; and Arthur Cecil Bining and Thomas C. Cochran, The Rise of American Economic Life (New York: Scribner's, 1964), p. 329.

In early 1877, Thomas A. Scott, president of the rapidly expanding Pennsylvania Railroad, announced the second ten percent wage cut since 1873 which would take effect on June 1. In May, an elected delegation, primarily engineers, representing railroad men from various Pennsylvania towns, approached Scott to demand that the reduction not be initiated. Scott ignored the request. With the new policy, he also retained the graduated scale system of wages for conductors and engineers. Although a graduated scale had been initiated in response to a proposal by the men themselves, the two reductions within four years, in effect, erased any economic gains the men had made through experience and skill.⁷

Scott's action and the committee's ineffectiveness led, in the Pittsburgh area, to the formation of a national Trainmen's Union open to all railroad workers. The union immediately proposed a strike for June 27 to protest the new wage policy. With the failure of the strike to materialize, the demise of the new union followed quickly.⁸

The workers were further antagonized when, on July 16, the Pennsylvania Railroad announced the adoption of double headers, i. e., two engines drawing twice the number of cars as before. In effect, this put half the freight

⁷Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Railroad Riots in July, 1877 (Harrisburg, 1878), pp. 2, 20. (Hereinafter referred to as Report.)

⁸Ibid., pp. 3-4, 661. The chief organizer was a brakeman.

conductors, brakemen, and flagmen out of work. Added to the new wage policy, this last decision proved to be the breaking point. Three days later when the policy was put in effect, spontaneous and scattered strikes broke out throughout the State. In Pittsburgh, the railroad strike received strong support from the city. Bitter feelings toward the Pennsylvania Railroad "pervaded all classes" of that city because of the commonly held belief that the line discriminated against Pittsburgh in freight rates, i.e., manufacturers in more western cities were charged lower freight rates than were Pittsburgh industrialists. There was also a feeling that wage cuts had been too severe; local merchants, moreover, expressed concern that the reductions would affect their businesses. Industrial and mining laborers, suffering from wage reductions due to the depression, also sympathized; the railroad men's plight, they felt, was their own.⁹

Meanwhile, an ad hoc committee from the Pittsburgh division of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (founded 1863) tried to bargain with the local management of the railroad on July 20 and 21. They demanded that wages be restored to pre-June levels, all strikers be given back their jobs (many had already been replaced although trains were not running), the classification of conductors

⁹Ibid., p. 18. See also pp. 798-804, 806-807, 817-819 for examples of headlines and editorials reflecting Pittsburgher's feelings. This point was made by men representing all occupational levels. Even the anti-union and anti-strike newspapers called the Philadelphia troops murderers.

and engineers be abolished, double headers except for coal trains be eliminated, and one fireman be maintained on every engine, whether road or shifting. The management of the Pennsylvania Railroad refused to bargain with the committee. A similar effort by a citizens' group on behalf of the workers also failed on July 22.¹⁰

While the strike in Pittsburgh was occurring, over-reaction on the part of a federal investigator led President Hayes to send federal troops into Maryland and West Virginia. This, plus the confusion of reports of various government and railroad officials concerning the strike in Pittsburgh compelled the lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania to request that Hayes send troops to Pittsburgh; the governor, on a western trip at the time, telegraphed his full support for the action. Local units of the State militia in both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia were called to active duty in Pittsburgh.¹¹

The arrival of the Philadelphia troops in Pittsburgh precipitated violence. On Saturday, July 21, as men left work at noon,¹² they gathered with women and children, in carnival-like spirit on the hillside above the 28th Street depot to await the rumored arrival of the Philadelphia troops. By mid-afternoon the troops arrived. Shortly after forming on the 28th Street tracks, several militia

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹¹Ibid., p. 594.

¹²Factories in the Pittsburgh area closed around noon for the weekend in 1877. Ibid., p. 10.

men fired into the crowd, forcing it to disperse only to regather immediately. This led to a series of charges and countercharges until the Philadelphia troops retreated, some to the outskirts of town and others to the Union Depot between 7th and 8th Streets. It was estimated that approximately half the Pittsburgh troops, having friends and relatives among the strikers, deserted at this time; the others moved out of town.¹³

By evening the anger of the crowd increased and many talked of driving out the remaining Philadelphia troops. Some of the men stole guns and ammunition from gun stores; others set fire to railroad cars and pushed them down to the roundhouse on 26th Street. Both women and men pillaged the remaining cars while a number of women furnished food and drink for the looters. The following day while the looting and burning continued, the troops moved out of the depot to the outskirts of town. By that evening (Sunday), fires had destroyed the round house at 26th Street, the

¹³Ibid., pp. 11, 510-511. An incomplete list of all those killed and taken to the city morgue and of all those wounded and treated in the public hospital reveals the victims to be either railroaders or other laborers in large part, although one child in arms and at least one woman leaning out her window to see were also reported. Fifteen of the forty-one were railroaders which is not surprising since they were picketing and, thus, closest to the track. The inclusion of only four non-laborers (excluding women, children, and all others without specified occupations) could be due either to the composition of the crowd or to the greater likelihood that these people had easier access to private physicians who did not report them as casualties of the firing. List compiled from The Daily Post, July 23, 1877 and the Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, July 23, 1877.

union depot, hotel, and machine shop between 7th and 8th Streets, the track between the depot and 28th Street, and a grain elevator believed to be owned by an outside monopoly. Meanwhile, when the fires started spreading to locally owned property, the authorities issued a notice in the Sunday newspapers and in the churches calling for a general meeting of citizens in order to restore peace. However, the group remained unorganized until Monday when the rioting ended on its own accord and there was no longer a need for the organization. By then, both rioters and strikers had been aiding firemen in stopping the spread of fires to local property bordering the tracks.¹⁴

The day after the Pittsburgh strike began (July 19), Philadelphia railroad workers, led by brakemen and freight conductors, walked off the job. At one point it was estimated that the strikes drew a crowd of four to five thousand composed in large part by the unemployed of that city. The mayor, basing his decision on inaccurate and highly embellished reports of what was happening in Pittsburgh, over-reacted. Consequently, he ordered the police to disperse the crowd in any manner they deemed necessary. Swinging their clubs freely, the police charged the crowd several times forcing it to dissolve without a riot ensuing.¹⁵

¹⁴Report, p. 16.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 23. The composition of the crowd is based on the mayor's testimony. Since there are no indications that workers took the day off, and since Philadelphia, being a large city and port, would have large numbers of non-workers, I have accepted his statement.

ANALYSIS

Three types of collective behavior occurred in two major cities in Pennsylvania from May through July, 1877, namely, bargaining or petitioning of grievances, striking, and rioting. Each will be analyzed separately in order to test the theory of relative deprivation.

Engineers spearheaded the bargaining with the Pennsylvania Railroad management. The first time the negotiations were a response to the failure of workmen to receive a pay raise at a time when the country was coming out of a depression and the railroads were expanding. In the second instance, the workers were responding to even greater deprivation in that employment and wage levels were further slashed.

In light of the history and policy of railroad unionization, their leadership would be expected. Engineers in 1863 were the first railroad men to unionize. Originally, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (B.L.E.) also included firemen, the ranks from which most engineers arose. In 1864, however, at their national convention, they voted to exclude the less-skilled firemen from the B.L.E. since they felt the interests of both could better be served if they remained autonomous. That same

year, the B.L.E. helped to found the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. Through 1877 and for at least another decade, the primary aims of the B.L.E. were to provide accident and life insurance programs and to promote better working conditions and wages for engineers by swaying public opinion. At the 1871 national convention, this latter policy was formalized with the passage of a resolution against strikes. In the light of the B.L.E.'s policy, then, it is not surprising that engineers encouraged and led the negotiations but not the strikes.¹⁶

In terms of the relative deprivation model, the engineers' behavior was to be expected. In the railroad class system, engineers were at the top of the blue collar hierarchy in both skill and wages received.¹⁷ This was in line with expectations, although the failure of wages to rise with better times and the threat of some engineers

¹⁶Donald L. McMurry, The Great Burlington Strike of 1888: A Case History in Labor Relations (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 29.

¹⁷The rank order from highest to lowest wages which reflected skill was as follows: engineer, passenger conductor, freight conductor, brakeman, fireman, trackman. Lower on the scale were such occupations as flagman, switchman, and various other roundhouse and road crossing workers. See Pennsylvania Bureau of Industrial Statistics, Reports, V (1876-79), pp. 546, 551-552, respectively for 1877 wage scales for the Allegheny Valley Railroad originating from Pittsburgh and for the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad originating from Philadelphia. (Hereinafter referred to as Industrial Statistics.)

on the graduated scale earning less than non-engineers did not fall in line with their expectations. The behavior of the engineers, even though a direct response to these economic conditions, was even more importantly a response to status inequalities. In the status hierarchy, engineers perceived that they did not receive the same respect as management (reference group). Translated into issues, it meant that engineers did not have the same security of life, limb, and job as those above them; they saw themselves as being deemed individually dispensable by ownership and management. Negotiating as reasonable men in order to sway both the management and the public, therefore, was an acceptable tactic designed to promote and to emphasize equality of status whereas striking was not.

The formation of the Trainmen's Union and the spontaneous strike a month later, on the other hand, were basically responses to economic or class deprivation, although unionization, in part, was a response to status deprivation. The Trainmen's Union was formed not only in response to wage reductions but also in response to the perception by other railroad workers that engineers did not represent all railroad workers in the May negotiations. That is, engineers, to the other workers, were accorded the respect of being listened to by management while the rest were ignored. Although other workers did not try to negotiate,

they perceived a status differential between engineers and themselves in this respect. The strike was a more violent response to further worsening economic conditions after the union failed. Furthermore, the evidence indicates that both the union and the strike were started by conductors and brakemen who were, although worse off economically than engineers, better paid than workers of other classifications.¹⁸

Although the behavior of the railroad workers confirms the relative deprivation theory, the behavior of the general working class is contradictory. Rioters in Pittsburgh were primarily men and women of the working class whereas the potential rioters in Philadelphia were employed persons (see footnote 15). Assuming that unemployed persons are not above the subsistence level, we would expect the two crowds to behave in the two ways they did. However, we also need to explain why the Pittsburgh workers did riot and the Philadelphia workers ignored the strike.

The explanation based on the relative deprivation theory would be verified if Pittsburgh workers were more relatively deprived than Philadelphia workers. Both groups, however, were subjected to the effects of the depression, i.e., wage cuts. If anything, Philadelphia workers were

¹⁸ See p. 11 of text and footnotes 8 and 17. Also the testimony of the relevant area superintendent of the Allegheny Valley Railroad indicates that brakemen voiced the most displeasure about the wage reduction; Report, p. 129.

more deprived than Pittsburgh workers during the period. Although figures for 1877 are not available, 1879 wage figures give a lower average wage for Philadelphia than for Pittsburgh workers.¹⁹ In addition, rents were higher in Philadelphia although the housing was better for the working class.²⁰ Still, no riot occurred in that city and no indications of worker sympathy with trainmen can be found in either the investigatory committee's general report or the testimony given therein. Available evidence, then, does not support the theory of relative deprivation as presently formulated.

A second possible explanation is that the (potential) precipitating event differed in the two cases. One major distinction was that non-local troops were sent into Pittsburgh but not Philadelphia. If this were to be a causal factor, then it would have to be shown that riots always occurred in those cities having riots after outside troops appeared. However, riots occurred in cities outside

¹⁹\$346.40 per year for Philadelphia and \$464.91 per year for Pittsburgh. U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Social Statistics, XVIII, pp. 840, 872. Part of the difference is due to the higher proportion of women in the labor force in Philadelphia (26%) than in Pittsburgh (14%); Census, Population, I, p. 855. (Hereinafter referred to as Census.)

²⁰Industrial Statistics, III, 1874-1875, p. 526 and XV, 1886-1887, pp. 18-19.

of Pennsylvania in 1877 to which troops were not sent and in other cities prior to the arrival of troops. Furthermore, crowds did not always gather to watch troops arrive in other cities.²¹ If there are sociological laws, then there cannot be random behavior. Another possibility concerning the troops is that they symbolized something more than the military, a point to which we will later return.

A third alternative to explaining the occurrence or non-occurrence of riots, suggested by the lack of concern in dispersing the initial crowd or the rioters in Pittsburgh, is that of community deprivation. That is, it is the simultaneous occurrence of relative deprivation both on a community level and within a segment of a community (group) which sets the conditions for a riot to occur if a possible precipitating event takes place. Consequently, the group would experience deprivation on two levels. It would share the deprivation of the community while simultaneously enduring its own unique deprivation. The major point here, though, is that all segments of the community share the community-level deprivation, i.e., it impinges upon them in the Durkeimian morphological sense.

Testimony cited earlier supports the idea that Pittsburgh possessed a sense of relative deprivation while Philadelphia did not. The question then becomes, what

²¹The best work on the riots of 1877 is Robert V. Bruce, 1877: Year of Violence (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959).

causes such community deprivation. Data from the 1880 Census and the Pennsylvania Bureau of Industrial Statistics lends credence to the idea that the ecological condition of the community is an important factor. Philadelphia was the most populous and wealthy city in Pennsylvania. Its air was exceptionally clean and its streets well-constructed and cleaned regularly. The city also maintained public drinking fountains and numerous hospitals, dispensaries, and homes for the poor, the insane, and the aged. Housing, too, was good for all classes. As the population expanded, the city systematically incorporated contingent lands and expanded services to the new areas.²²

Allegheny County, in which Pittsburgh was located, was the second most populous and wealthy in the State. As Pittsburgh's population grew, however, it moved into other governmental units which were not annexed. Surrounding towns became bedroom communities while manufacturing remained and grew in Pittsburgh itself. In 1880, the area in which the riot occurred was in rapid transition from a district of houses and small shops to one of densely built factories. Housing in the city was generally poor for the working class. Furthermore, the number of persons per dwelling increased between 1870 and 1880 in contrast to Philadelphia where it decreased.

²²The population in 1880 in Philadelphia (city and county were one governmental unit) was 847,170; Census, I, p. 316. For rest of data see Census, XVIII, pp. 811-833.

Smoke from the plants blanketed the city. Streets of wood were decaying and storms constantly washed away roads built on steep grades. The inadequate sewage system contributed to a high incidence of diphtheria. A small-pox epidemic hit the city in 1875 and continued through 1877. Pittsburgh maintained only three public institutions, a poor-farm, a hospital, and the city hall. In 1877, the city, verging on bankruptcy, had to fire over half its policemen due to lack of funds.²³

The lower classes, of course, felt the brunt of these conditions more than the rest of the city. The Pennsylvania Railroad, in part a cause of the condition, became the scapegoat for these conditions. The entry of Philadelphia troops symbolized the power of the Philadelphia-based railroad and further reinforced the perception with their arbitrary and random firing into the crowd. The firing, then, became the precipitating event.

²³The 1880 population in Pittsburgh was 156,389 and in Allegheny County 355,869. Some annexation of minor civil divisions did take place between 1870 and 1880, but it involved no planning for change; Census, I, pp. 306, 406. In Philadelphia persons per family decreased from 5.28 to 5.13 while persons per dwelling decreased from 6.01 to 5.79. The comparable figures for Pittsburgh are family decrease 5.32 to 5.24 and dwelling increase 6.05 to 6.44; Census, I, p. 671 and Census, 1870, I, pp. 599-600. For rest of data see Census, XVIII, pp. 861-867.

RACE RIOTS AND LABOR RIOTS--

SIMILAR PHENOMENA

In developing a theory of collective behavior, it is necessary to specify the scope of application of hypotheses. There is some evidence that the scope of the community-group hypotheses includes so-called race riots. Stanley Lieberson and Arnold R. Silverman, in a survey of race riots in the United States between 1913 and 1965, conclude that such riots "are more likely to occur when social institutions function inadequately, or when grievances are not resolved, or cannot be resolved under the existing institutional arrangements." In other words, institutional malfunctions either deprive or further deprive segments of the community until a potentially explosive event such as a lynching or interracial rape symbolizing the deprivation does set off a riot. The authors specifically found correlations between riots and political systems not giving full representation to relatively deprived groups, police departments without Negro patrolmen, and economic conditions in which blacks

and whites held the same or similar jobs on the lower levels of the occupational structure.²⁴

Lieberson and Silverman did not, however, attempt to correlate community-level variables such as extent of urban decay or city's financial situation with riots; neither did they consider the cities on a longitudinal basis except for the proportional growth of blacks. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission) concerning the 1967 riots does do this in three cases. The Report contains profiles for eight disorders all of which confirm the group deprivation model; data regarding the relevant communities is presented for three of these profiles, Jersey City, Newark, and Detroit. In all three cases, the profiles indicate the existence of community level deprivation, more so in the last two which had the largest riots of the summer than in the first.²⁵ For example, Newark in 1967 had nowhere to expand, it had reached its legal bonding limit, taxable property was contracting while services needed to be increased for the population which doubled on workdays, and twenty thousand students were on double sessions. In Jersey City, available housing had

²⁴ Stanley Lieberson and Arnold R. Silverman, "The Precipitants and Underlying Conditions of Race Riots," American Sociological Review, XXX (1965), 887-898, especially 897-898 for summary.

²⁵ Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York, Bantam Books, Inc., 1968), pp. 58-59, 70-71, 90-91, 111.

decreased, the sewage system was archaic, and the city had reached its bonding limit for schools. Detroit also had overcrowded schools, a high school certificate was meaningless in getting jobs, and the mayor was unable to keep campaign promises for better garbage collection and street lighting. Not mentioned in the report is the fact that the mayor, a young, bright, new-look politician, had set up a series of committees to deal with such problems, but because of city finances and his own marital problems which took a great deal of time and were made public, he had not followed up with action through these committees.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the relative deprivation model of collective behavior does not fully explain the events of 1877 in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. However, its power of explanation is enhanced if we consider the ecology of the political community and its effect on the inhabitants. That is, if the equilibrium of a community system is in the process of breaking down, it is reasonable to assume that the ambiguity of the situation will cause a group to engage in riot behavior in response to the ambiguity. On the other hand, even if a group is relatively deprived, it will not engage in such spontaneous and extreme behavior if the system is in equilibrium and the ecological and thus structural relationships are clearly defined.

Even though I have not been able to test rigidly the effect of a community's ecology on the inhabitants either as individuals or as groups, the impressionistic data tends to support the above thesis. It is possible to collect the relevant data through sample surveys today, although there is the danger that answers to such questions will be markedly affected by the occurrence of the riot. However, it is possible to test the

community-level thesis more rigidly than here by examining editorials, letters to the editors (which did not exist in 1877), speeches by leaders of local organizations and the organizations' policies and attitudes on local issues, and by re-interpreting relevant survey data gathered before the riot for other purposes. Such analyses should aid us, then, in specifying the relative weights or importance of various community-level variables and in explaining the social psychological processes by which non-social and social "milieu" variables affect both individual and group behavior.

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