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POPULISM AND LYNCHING IN LOUISIANA, 1889-1896:  
A TEST OF ERIKSON'S THEORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
BOUNDARY CRISES AND REPRESSIVE JUSTICE\*

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*This paper applies Erikson's theory of the relationship between crises in a community's solidarity and its exercise of repressive justice to the relationship between the Populist disruption of the Solid South and the incidence of lynching. This application points out certain problems in Erikson's formulation that can be resolved by a systematic examination of the distribution of lynchings among the parishes of Louisiana and shows how Erikson's theoretic statement provides an interpretation of relationships between a parish's lynching incidence and its social and political characteristics. The analysis illustrates how econometric techniques may be applied to historical data in the process of sociological theory construction.*

Inspired by Durkheim's classic formulation of the relationship between repressive justice and mechanical solidarity,<sup>1</sup> Erikson's (1966) study, *Wayward Puritans*, states that the disruption of solidarity (in his terms a "boundary crisis") produces a sudden and dramatic in-

crease in repressive justice (a "crime wave").<sup>2</sup> He examines three disruptions of solidarity in seventeenth century Massachusetts and argues that such disruptions would precipitate sudden increases in the incidence of repressive justice. Thus, in the late 1630s the increasing power of the clergy became incompatible with the Puritan doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. During this boundary crisis, the colony prosecuted a group of Antinomian heretics led by Anne Hutchinson, who took the extreme position that laymen could challenge the authority of the clergy. Some twenty years later a second boundary crisis occurred as the New Englanders found themselves increasingly in conflict with the progressive tendencies of their Old World brethren, particularly on the issue of religious toleration. During this second crisis, the colony prosecuted Quakers, people who refused to defer to authority, who disrupted church services, who paraded naked through the streets and who otherwise challenged the Puritan establishment. Finally, toward the end of the century the colony suffered a period of

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\*I am indebted to Kai Erikson, both for his own work and for his comments on this project at several points along the way. I am grateful to Marc Bernstein, Amnon Igra, John Meyer and Stephen Robertson for critiques and technical assistance. The trenchant editorial advice of Morris Zelditch and the anonymous reviewers improved this paper considerably. For the remaining errors and ambiguities, I am accountable.

<sup>1</sup> Durkheim (1893) distinguishes two forms of social solidarity, mechanical and organic. Mechanical solidarity is based on similarity of individual characteristics (e.g., common race and region) and is characterized by consensus on values, harmony (if not identity) of interests and unity of purpose. Differences exist among members in their attributes, but such differences are regarded as secondary or peripheral, not as bases for organization and action. In contrast, organic solidarity is based on diversity of individual interests and is characterized by interdependence and exchange. While mechanical solidarity is associated with repressive justice, which reaffirms a common value through diffuse forms of ritual punishment, organic solidarity is associated with restitutive justice, which is characterized by restorative sanctions and organized administration.

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<sup>2</sup> Testing Durkheim's thesis is only one objective of Erikson's study. This paper focuses on this single thread of his argument and does not address the complex issues raised in the book as a whole.

domestic turmoil: political disputes, Indian war, administrative upheaval. Massachusetts now became plagued with invisible demons, who in 1692 materialized in the witchcraft prosecutions of Salem Village. Through the seventeenth century, then, there was a direct connection between major disruptions of solidarity and outstanding occurrences of repressive justice.

While these events confirm Erikson's basic thesis, the study contains some critical problems of evidence. First, the extent of actual involvement by the members of the Colony in the three major trials is unclear. Much of the evidence about these trials comes from the writings of elites, who may be projecting their own interests and orientations in describing the colony as a whole; consequently, the actual audience of the Puritan trials might have been quite limited. This especially becomes problematic during the seventeenth century as the growing population began to include immigrants who were not members of the church. Second, *Wayward Puritans* provides no explicit criteria for selecting these three particular episodes in the Colony's history as instances of boundary crises; if no other dramatic social strains had occurred during this period the selection would be compelling,<sup>3</sup> but the absence of explicit criteria vitiates an empirical confirmation of the thesis and leaves open the possible interpretation of circularity: viz., that the defining criterion of a boundary crisis is a crime wave. Third, Erikson's analysis is limited to Puritan Massachusetts and consequently it provides no clear idea about the domain or scope of the thesis. Do boundary crises produce crime waves only in theocratic regimes or in secular states as well (cf. Connor, 1972)? Would, for example, Virginia Colony, organized around commercial interests (Diamond, 1958) prosecute deviance in the same way as Massachusetts Colony, organized around religious commitment? In fact, Rhode Island Colony, subject to some of the

same sources of strain as Massachusetts, did not experience similar crime waves, as one would expect if Erikson's thesis was universally applicable (Bernstein, 1975:102).

This study seeks to overcome these three problems in Erikson's formulation by analyzing lynching in Louisiana during the Populist revolt. This historical phenomenon provides an ideal test case for the argument in three ways. First, lynchings during this period clearly epitomize Durkheim's concept of repressive justice in being ritual punishments "in which the whole society participates in rather large measure" (Durkheim, 1893:76).

A lynching may be defined as an illegal and summary execution at the hands of a mob, or a number of persons, who have in some degree the public opinion of the community behind them. (Cutler, 1905:276)

Lynchings were ritual punishments of alleged criminals. As shown in Table 1, only 8 percent of the victims of lynch mobs have no known offense, while 65 percent of all vic-

Table 1. Alleged Offenses in Lynchings, 1889-1896<sup>a</sup>

	Blacks	Whites	Percent (Total Victims)
Homicide	33	9	44%
Rape	17	3	21
Unknown	8	0	8
Status	7	0	7
Theft	6	0	6
Arson	5	1	6
Assault	3	1	4
Political	1	0	.5
Miscege- nation <sup>b</sup>	.5	.5	.5
Totals	80.5	14.5	100%(95)

<sup>3</sup> The actual criteria for selecting the three episodes "were the virtually unanimous opinion of historians studying the period that these were unusually critical moments in the history of the colony" (Erikson, personal communication).

<sup>a</sup> Includes incidents for which parish location cannot be determined.

<sup>b</sup> Incident includes both black and white victims.

tims were charged with capital crimes (murder and rape). Ten percent of the black victims were charged with breaches of racial etiquette (including such intrinsically trivial actions as vagrancy, disobedience and making threats). Typically, lynchings involved large segments of the community participating in an open, public reaction against an accused criminal. Seldom were any attempts made to disguise the identity of the participants; indeed, in many cases photographs of the participants subsequently appeared in newspapers. Lynchings were carried out with the acquiescence, if not approval, of law enforcement agents; and, in fact, between 1890 and 1900 lynchings outnumbered legal executions by a ratio of 2 to 1 (Bye, 1919:57-8, 64-5). Many prominent white Southerners—publicists, newspaper editors, politicians—viewed lynching as a necessary and legitimate adjunct of the legal system, to maintain law and order, to protect white women and to “keep the niggers in their place” (cf. Collins, 1918). How diffuse these sentiments were in the general white population is difficult to gauge precisely, although as late as the 1930s some 64 percent of the survey respondents in a small Mississippi town agreed that lynching was justified in rape cases (Powdermaker, 1939:389). Unlike the trials conducted by magistrates in Puritan Massachusetts, lynchings in Louisiana unequivocally involved popular participation and legitimization.

Second, the Populist revolt is a particularly revealing instance of a boundary crisis. The revolt, as will be shown below, was the major breakdown in Southern white solidarity after Reconstruction. Even more significant for our purposes are the ways in which white solidarity was politically institutionalized. In addition to the kind of impressionistic assessments of disruption that were available in Erikson's study, election statistics provide an explicit, albeit crude, index of the extent of and variation in the boundary crisis.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the political institutions of this society create a

periodicity in the boundary crisis, since conflicts were intensified every two years during election campaigns. This study will capitalize on both these aspects of political institutionalization in arriving at indicators of the magnitude of the boundary crisis that are logically independent of the incidence of repressive justice.

Third, lynchings varied in frequency among a wide range of communities. This opens up the possibility of comparing the reactions of a number of communities differing in their levels of solidarity to a single boundary crisis. While this objective might be accomplished by systematic replication of Erikson's study in the other seventeenth century American colonies, Louisiana in the 1890s conveniently provides 59 parishes<sup>5</sup> for comparison.

The burden of this paper is to show how Erikson's theoretic formulation can be used to generate hypotheses about the relationships between a parish's incidence of lynching and its social and political characteristics. Before

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<sup>5</sup> The county in the South was the major political and social unit. As Johnson (1941:3) notes:

Although every county may have some variation within its borders, the type of underlying economy that dominates tends to enforce itself throughout the county and to be reflected in the characteristic social organization. In many cases . . . the county appears to be a community in itself and to reflect a natural history of development. The open county farming of the section makes it easier for one to say that he is from Jackson County, Georgia, or Greene County, Alabama, than from a particular township.

Not only was the county the major social and economic unit, but crime produced the most intense passion among the residents of the county in which it was committed. For example, a lynching failed to occur in the sensational Scottsboro rape case:

. . . in part, because of the fact that neither of the girls was from Jackson County, Alabama. As *Birmingham News* reporter melodramatically put it: “The homes of Jackson County people were not desecrated. There were no relatives of the girls to feel surging within them the demand for blood vengeance.” The question was one of race unheated by personal relationships. (Carter, 1969:10)

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<sup>4</sup> Erikson (1966:89) utilizes data from the gubernatorial election of 1637 to determine the strength of the Antinomian faction.

considering the systematic empirical analysis, however, it is essential to have some understanding of the sense in which the Populist movement constituted a disruption of solidarity among Southern whites. The following section briefly outlines the basic contours of this history.<sup>6</sup>

*The Boundary Crisis in Southern White Solidarity*

The familiar idea of the Solid South may be viewed as an instance of mechanical solidarity among Southern whites. As Williams (1961:47) notes:

In the monolithic Democratic party the whites could thresh out their differences; but these differences would never become troublesome because no issue must be permitted to divide white solidarity. It was an admirable arrangement to head off any economic stirrings on the part of the masses. Indeed, it was understood that there was supposed to be no relationship between politics and economics.

This consensus on values, harmony of interests and unity of purpose among Southern whites was generated and sustained by two major external threats, the North and the Negro, both of which in the 1890s were politically institutionalized in the Republican party. The sectional conflict and racial issue were of long standing, but the Reconstruction period (c. 1867-1876) provided the real basis for the Solid South. After the Civil War, Congress, dominated by Radical Republicans, reconstituted the state governments of the former Confederacy. Through Constitutional amendment and national legislation, the Negro became not only a citizen but an officeholder as well. The sudden elevation of the Negro, the incursion of Northern adventurers and the oc-

cupation by Federal troops (in Louisiana until 1876) galvanized Southern whites around the Democratic party (cf. Turner, 1967).

The upshot [of Reconstruction] was a suppression of class feeling . . . the like of which has probably not been seen in any other developed society of modern times. (Cash 1941:112)

From the end of Reconstruction to the last decade of the century, the Solid South remained intact. During the Populist revolt of the 1890s, however, Southern white solidarity briefly collapsed. In Louisiana "the agrarian revolt was no less than a political and social earthquake" (Degler, 1974:320). The cause of this convulsion lay in the social structure of Southern society. The Solid South was a social myth; the underlying social reality was basically a dichotomous class structure typical of commercial plantation systems (cf. Stinchcombe, 1961). Large planters, merchants and industrial entrepreneurs constituted a relatively homogeneous class ("the Bourbons"),<sup>7</sup> while most whites were either small farmers or laborers.<sup>8</sup>

The dormant class conflict was increasingly exacerbated by the Bourbon's policy of *laissez faire* capitalism, which curtailed public education and other social services instituted by the Reconstruction governments and encouraged Northern and British capital to expand the railroad system and exploit the natural resources. Central to this program of economic

<sup>7</sup> The major cleavage in Louisiana's Bourbon class was the split between cotton planters and sugar planters in seven southern parishes who supported the Republican party because its tariff policy promoted their economic interests.

<sup>8</sup> In the antebellum South only about 30 percent of the white farmers owned slaves and of these 50 percent owned fewer than five slaves (Wootter, 1936). Except for the threat of black labor competition, most whites, therefore, had little vested interest in the institution of slavery. During the Civil War lower-class whites throughout the South were enraged by Confederate conscription laws (which exempted owners of large plantations) and by war profiteering of their wealthier brethren. Lower-class whites openly rebelled against the Confederacy in several areas (Shugg, 1939; Degler, 1974).

<sup>6</sup> Space limitations necessitate sketching the broad contours of this history sufficient for an understanding of the subsequent analysis. Fuller treatment may be found in the references. See especially Lewinson, 1932; Woodward, 1951; Hair, 1969; Cunningham, 1964; Dethloff and Jones, 1968; Howard, 1957; Johnson, 1949.

development was a supply of cheap, docile labor. Although progress was, in the long run, to be beneficial to the whole population, the short run profits were to be used to motivate entrepreneurs while the short run costs were to be borne by the poor whites and the blacks.

The interests of the latter in railroad rate regulation, cheaper credit and higher wages diametrically opposed Bourbon ambitions for a New South. In the 1870s and 1880s, as agricultural prices declined and credit became tighter, lower-class Southern whites began to join farmers throughout the country in a series of national agrarian social and political movements: The Grange, the Farmer's Alliance, The People's (Populist) Party. While most of these organizations sought to work within the framework of existing political parties, the Populists organized as a distinct political entity, which in Louisiana directly confronted the mythology of the Solid South.

The conflict between the two classes of whites was complicated by the racial factor in Southern politics. In Louisiana the blacks were enfranchised in 1868 and overwhelmingly supported the Republican Party. After Reconstruction the Bourbons continued to support franchisement for the blacks. Since black males of voting age outnumbered their white counterparts in many areas, the Bourbons perceived a manipulated black electorate as essential in guaranteeing their position *vis-a-vis* the poor whites. Moreover, the ability of the Bourbons through economic and physical coercion to deliver black votes in their districts gave them power in the national Democratic party. Lower-class whites, on the other hand, opposed the black franchise both for the threat it posed to their status and, increasingly, for the power it gave to the Bourbons.

The Populist leaders sought to overcome the racism of the lower-class whites and pragmatically sought to attract the black vote, arguing that "the accident of color can make no possible difference in the interest of farmers, croppers, and laborers'" (Woodward, 1951:402). The Populists viewed the ideal of the Solid South as a form of false consciousness and the true interest of the lower-class

whites as being not in racial status but in economic position. As the Democratic *Texas Gazette* editorialized, "We can no longer depend upon the solidarity of the white race" (Hair, 1969:238).

Louisiana's Populists waged strong campaigns in the state and national elections of 1892, the Congressional election of 1894 and the gubernatorial election of 1896. Not only did the Louisiana Populists seek support of the blacks, but they formed coalitions ("fusions") with the Republican Party. The peak of the insurgency was reached in 1896 when the Populists and other anti-Democratic factions won control of 40 percent of the seats in the state General Assembly. Although the Populists carried several parishes, they were unable to win gubernatorial and Congressional contests, for the Democrats controlled both the black votes and the election machinery in too many areas. Frustrated by legitimate means of political opposition many Populists discussed the possibility of open, armed rebellion.

The agrarian revolt, however, died quietly. Many of the supporters of Populism simply withdrew from politics altogether while others returned to the Democratic Party. The latter restored white solidarity in two ways. First, it adopted a major Populist demand, in inflationary monetary policy. (In the Presidential election of 1896 the Populist Party formed a coalition with the Democrats behind free silver advocate William Jennings Bryan.) Second, the Democrats adopted the policy of disenfranchising the blacks.<sup>9</sup> In effect, this policy shifted emphasis from economic interests back to racial status as the basis of political organization.

Hopes for reform and the political means employed in defiance of tradition and at great cost to emotional attachments . . . met with cruel disappointments and frustration. There had to be a scapegoat. And

<sup>9</sup> The number of black registered voters was cut from 130,334 in 1896 to 1,342 by 1904. While in 1896 black registered voters outnumbered the whites in 26 parishes, by 1900 whites were the majority in all parishes (Woodward, 1957:68).

all along the line signals were going up to indicate that the Negro was an approved object of aggression. (Woodward, 1957:64)

While *de facto* discrimination and disenfranchisement had been widespread previously, the systematic exclusion of the Negro from

social, political and economic life dates from the collapse of Populism in the latter part of the 1890s (Woodward, 1957; 1971). As a result of this reaffirmation of white supremacy, the boundary crisis precipitated by the Populist movement was resolved and the Solid South restored.

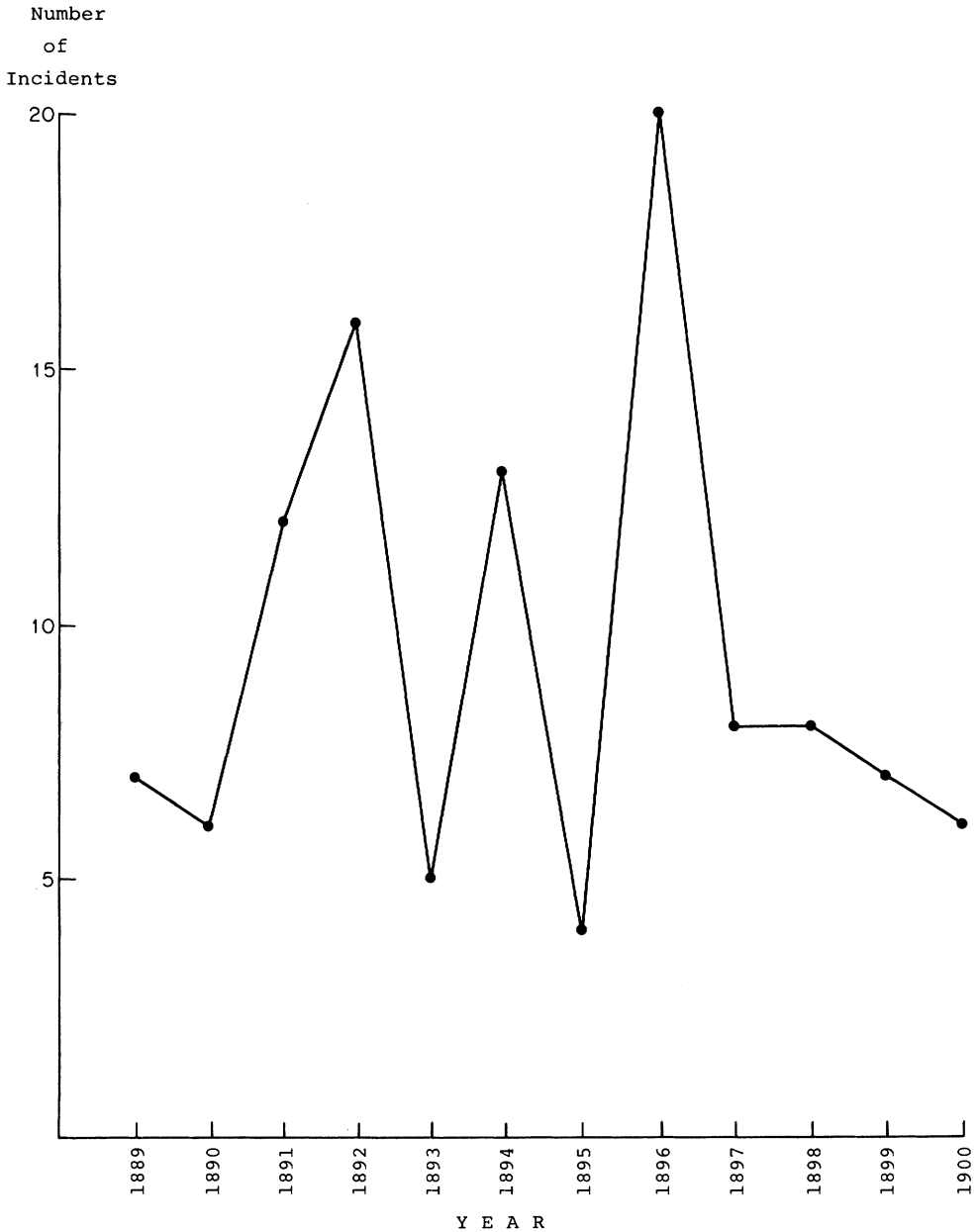


Figure 1. Frequency of Lynching  
in Louisiana, 1889-1900

This brief sketch of the historical context suggests that Southern whites in the 1890s experienced a boundary crisis analogous to the three that Puritan Massachusetts experienced during the seventeenth century. Reconstruction consolidated the two classes of Southern whites into a one party system, but this unity was broken by a wave of agrarian radicalism. The political failures of Populism resulted in a restoration of the Solid South on a renewed basis of extremist white supremacy. The following section considers how indicators of white solidarity can be located for each parish and how Erikson's theoretic argument applied to this historical context can be used to interpret the configuration of relationships between parish characteristics and lynching incidence.

#### VARIABLES AND INDICATORS

##### *Lynchings and Repressive Justice*

Lynchings will be used in this analysis as the indicator of repressive justice. The data on lynchings were tabulated from a compilation from newspapers made by the N.A.A.C.P. (1919) of victims, date and location of incident and the alleged offense. Between 1889 and 1896, there were 83 lynchings for which parishes can be identified, an average of 1.41 per parish.<sup>10</sup> Although most victims were black, in 14 cases the victims were white. The unit of analysis here is the incident, which may include as many as 11 victims.

The trends in lynching incidents over time (shown in Figure 1) indicate a fairly systematic relationship between the frequency of lynching and the disruption of the Solid South. Populism, as the previous section showed, was at its apogee from 1892 to 1896. During this period Louisiana had, on the average, 13 incidents per year. Subsequently, from 1897-1918 the average was five incidents per year. This comparison provides only a

crude indicator of how lynching responded to the crisis of white solidarity. It seems reasonable to suppose that the crisis would be most severe in election years and that consequently this will be revealed in the lynching rate. Thus, in the three election years (1892, 1894 and 1896), the average was 17 incidents per year. Moreover, the sharpest increase in lynchings occurs in 1896, the year of the most bitter contest in the gubernatorial election (Hair, 1969:259 ff). The responsiveness of lynching to the Populist crisis provides some indication that lynching is a valid indicator of repressive justice.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In terms of Erikson's theory, since the strain on white solidarity increased during the election, the symbolic threat of the criminal correspondingly increased. Groundless accusations became more accepted; when accusations were made, there was much less willingness to allow the law to take its course and a greater need to immediately and ritualistically punish the alleged offender.

Lynching and political conflict, however, might be related more directly, simply as a consequence of the attempts by whites to coerce black voters. Although political violence was widespread during the elections, lynchings do not seem to be simply one manifestation of political violence. If lynchings were used as a form of direct political intimidation, there should be some increase in the victims charged with non-criminal offenses during election years. In the election years (1892, 1894, 1896), only 4 of the 43 victims of lynch mobs were not charged with criminal offenses. Furthermore, 79 percent of the victims were charged with the most serious crimes, murder and rape, during the election years, while only 46 percent of the victims were charged with these offenses in non-election years. This increase in the proportion of serious offenses during elections is more consistent with Erikson's theory than it is with the interpretation of the increase in lynchings as a direct outgrowth of political violence.

A plausible alternative interpretation is that lynchings were basically a mode of political violence and that the accusations of rape or murder were simply cover-ups designed to conceal the real motive. This is a difficult argument to address with the kinds of evidence available. There are, however, two reasons for rejecting this interpretation. First, political murders were so common that it is difficult to see why indirect methods of political coercion would have been employed. Second, the available descriptive accounts yield no evidence that politically active blacks were accused of crimes and then lynched. In general, it appears victims were possibly not only innocent of the alleged crimes, but inno-

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<sup>10</sup> The variance of the incidents is 2.52. Since the variance and the mean of lynching incidents are not equal, the distribution of lynchings among parishes is nonrandom (see Spilerman, 1970:632). For 12 incidents the parish cannot be determined.



A further, qualitative indication of the validity of lynching as an index of repressive justice is Woodward's observation that a wave of virulent racism swept the South around the turn of the century, during and after the passage of Jim Crow and disenfranchisement legislation; further, the decline in the rate of lynching was "happily not in conformity with [this] deterioration in race relations" (1951:351). The weight of the evidence, then, suggests that the rate of lynching varies systematically with the disruption of white solidarity and is unaffected by fluctuations in the degree of racist hostility toward blacks.

### *Solidarity and Parish Characteristics*

Published census and electoral data (U. S. Census 1916; 1920; Burnham, 1955; Daniel, 1943) provide a fairly wide range of information about the characteristics of the parishes.<sup>12</sup> The problem for this analysis is to select indicators that can be linked conceptually to the level of solidarity among Southern whites in the parishes.

The discussion of the historical context pointed out that the Solid South arose from the Reconstruction experience of Yankee occupation and "Negro rule." While the actual degree of black participation in Reconstruction governments was minimal, the perceived threat of black domination loomed as a powerful impetus to white solidarity. Moreover, as long as blacks could vote, any split between the whites would hand over the balance of

power to the black electorate. It seems reasonable, therefore, to take percent black in the parish as one determinant of the degree of white solidarity; the greater the percent black, the greater the degree of white solidarity.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the racial composition of the parish, two additional determinants of the level of solidarity have been selected. First, urbanization is taken as an index of the extent to which the parish is differentiated, hence organically rather than mechanically solidary. Urban areas are more likely to be ethnically heterogeneous and occupationally diverse (the correlation between percent urban and number of persons engaged in manufacturing is  $r = .83$ ). Since the degree of mechanical solidarity is less in urban areas we should find fewer lynchings in urban than in rural parishes.<sup>14</sup> As Cash (1941:314) observes:

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<sup>13</sup>Two major caveats must be considered in interpreting percent black as a determinant of white solidarity. First, percent black is in general a powerful explanatory variable statistically (see e.g., Spilerman, 1970; Matthews and Prothro, 1963). Like many variables that provide good statistical explanations, however, percent black is most accurately regarded as a proxy variable for several conceptually distinct processes. Blalock (1967a) suggests some strategies for disentangling threat and competition processes. Reed (1972) reports that the relationship between lynching and percent black is congruent with Blalock's threat hypothesis. In the absence of a more direct index of white fear of black domination, percent black is employed here although it may well represent other aspects of the social organization of the parish.

Second, the effects of percent black are empirically indistinguishable from the effects of the absolute size of the black and white populations since the percentage variable is an exact linear function of these two variables (cf. Blalock, 1967b). This especially becomes a problem when substantive significance can be attached to effects of both the percentage variable and its components. (In this case, the greater the white population the more potential lynchers; the greater the black population, the greater the potential number of victims.)

<sup>14</sup>The distribution of urbanization is markedly skewed among Louisiana's parishes. Only 14 parishes (24 percent) have any urban population. At the other extreme, Orleans parish, containing New Orleans, is 100 percent urban. Consequently, urbanization is a dummy variable that takes on the value 1 if the parish has any urban population and 0 otherwise.

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cent of any other offense against the white community. During the 1892 election, white Democrats attempted to lynch a prominent black Populist (Woodward, 1938:240), but this incident seems, on the basis of available evidence, to be isolated.

<sup>12</sup>The data on racial composition and urbanization are from the 1900 enumeration (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1920), those on religious affiliation from the 1916 report. Taking observations from various dates seems justified, given the apparent stabilities in these variables over time. Thus, the average inter-census correlation for percent black from 1890-1920 is  $\bar{r} = .947$ ; for percent urban from 1900 to 1920,  $\bar{r} = .899$ . It seems unlikely that there were any differential changes in parish characteristics during this period that would materially affect the parameter estimates.

It is a part of the general law of the town everywhere that its inhabitants rarely lynch; that the tradition of direct action by mobs natural to the frontier and the open, little policed countryside tends more and more to die out . . . it was largely in the new and growing towns and in the areas in which they stand that lynchings tended to fall off most rapidly.

The third independent variable is an index of religious homogeneity. Louisiana is divided between a French-speaking Catholic white population in the South and an Anglo-Saxon Protestant white population in the North. In any given parish, the degree of solidarity among whites will be contingent on the degree of homogeneity on this characteristic. As Hair (1969:186) points out:

... the commingling of English-speaking and Creole-Cajun cultures had resulted in a milieu of political instability and unusual insensitivity to human rights.

The index of religious homogeneity is calculated by the following formula:  $I = 1 - p(1 - p)$ , where  $p$  denotes the percent Catholic population of the parish. Predominately Catholic or predominately Protestant parishes will have a greater homogeneity since  $p(1 - p)$  reaches a maximum at .5.

A direct index of the parish's commitment to the Solid South is its level of Democratic

vote. Percent Democratic vote in two elections, the 1892 Presidential and the 1896 gubernatorial, will be taken as reflectors of the degree of solidarity.

Table 2 provides the intercorrelations among the variables along with their means and standard deviations.

INCORPORATING THE VARIABLES  
INTO A CAUSAL MODEL

Direct indicators of mechanical solidarity are unavailable. As Durkheim (1893:64) points out:

Social solidarity is a completely moral phenomenon which, taken by itself, does not lend itself to exact observation nor indeed to measurement. To proceed . . . we must substitute for this internal fact which escapes us an external index which symbolizes it and study the former in light of the latter.

Recent developments in structural equation models permit the explicit representation of unmeasured variables like mechanical solidarity and their relationships to observable indicators. Hauser and Goldberger (1971), for example, develop and test a model utilizing "social economic status" as an unmeasured variable determined by three observable indicators: income, occupation and education. This section will present an analogous repre-

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients for 59 Louisiana Parishes

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Percent Black	1.0						
2. Urbanization	-.110	1.0					
3. Religious Homogeneity	.231	-.435	1.0				
4. Percent Democratic Vote, 1892 Presidential Election	.324	.098	.246	1.0			
5. Percent Democratic Vote, 1896 Gubernatorial Election	.649	-.058	.178	.496	1.0		
6. Lynchings, 1889-1896	.295	.170	-.014	.253	.213	1.0	
7. Black Population Size	.229	.401	-.224	.111	.230	.418	1.0
Mean	.508	.254	.902	.766	.589	1.41	11,031
Standard Deviation	.213	.439	.082	.210	.229	1.59	11,028

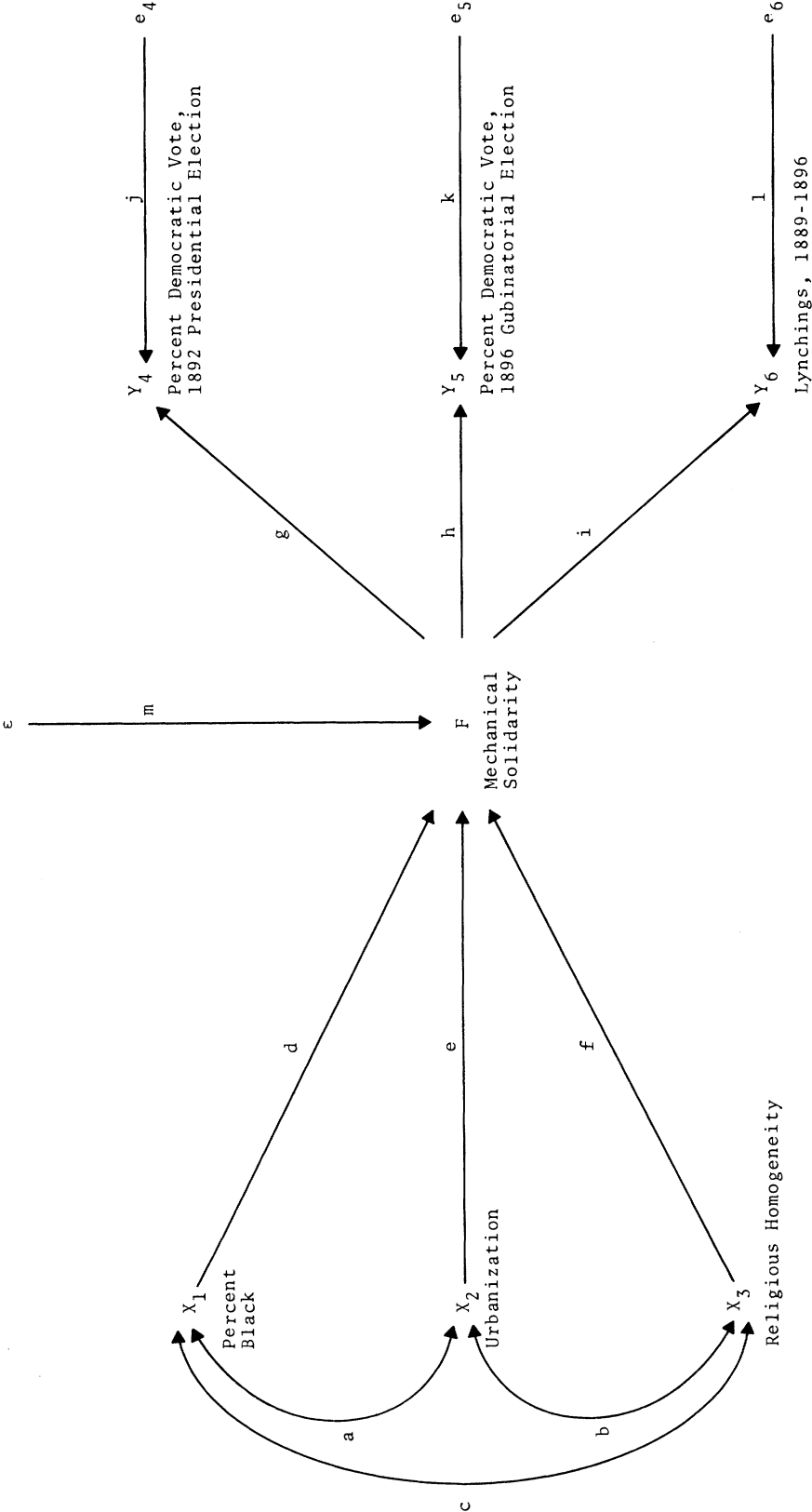


Figure 2. MIMIC Representation of Durkheim's Thesis Applied to Lynching in Louisiana

sentation of Erikson's thesis on repressive justice and mechanical solidarity and discuss the advantages of this way of formalizing the argument.

Figure 2 presents a Multiple Indicator-Multiple Causes (MIMIC) path diagram incorporating mechanical solidarity as an unmeasured factor  $F$  caused by three variables:  $X_1$ , percent black;  $X_2$  urbanization;  $X_3$ , religious homogeneity. The effect of all other determinants of the level of the parish's white solidarity is represented by the error term  $E$ .  $F$ , in turn, determines the level of democratic voting ( $Y_4$ ,  $Y_5$ ) and the incidence of lynching ( $Y_6$ ).

This model embodies the following major implicit assumptions:

- (1) The three causes and two indicators are related to each other only indirectly through mechanical solidarity (i.e.,  $p_{jk} = 0$ , where  $1 \leq j \leq 3$  and  $4 \leq k \leq 6$ ).
- (2) The errors ( $\in e_k$ ) are independent of all variables they do not affect directly and are independent of each other.
- (3) The causal variables ( $X_j$ ) have been measured without error.
- (4) Lynching incidence ( $Y_6$ ) in a given county is independent of lynchings in other counties, i.e., there is no geographical contagion or diffusion.

In addition to these assumptions generic to the MIMIC model, use of these particular data involves the further assumption that the estimation procedure remains robust given 59 cases and non-normal distributions of the variables.

Despite the burden of tenuous assumptions,<sup>15</sup> this approach has four advantages. First of all, to draw causal inferences from historical data inevitably entails making some rather strong, untestable assumptions. Formal-

ization of the argument in terms of a causal model brings these assumptions out in the open, rather than leaving them implicit. Second, in the absence of an explicit causal model, the investigator examines the configuration of relationships among variables and intuitively infers the extent to which the configuration of relationships supports the argument.<sup>16</sup> A causal model provides explicit criteria for success or failure of an interpretation. Third, this particular model clarifies the distinction between indicators which are causes of the unmeasured variable (e.g., religious homogeneity as a cause of mechanical solidarity) and indicators which are consequences of the unmeasured variable (e.g., percent Democratic vote as a manifestation of mechanical solidarity). Sociological hypotheses often implicitly assume asymmetry between variables and their indicators (e.g., a change in urbanization would affect the level of solidarity, but a change in solidarity would not affect urbanization); this approach explicates the asymmetric nature of the relationship between indicators and variable. Fourth, the causal model provides formal guidelines (viz., criteria of identifiability) about the relevance or cogency of particular kinds of information (Blalock, 1971). Without such a model, the investigator seldom has a clear idea about how many causes and consequences of the unmeasured variable should be examined and how many relationships among the variables can be legitimately inferred from the amount of information in hand. Thus, while representing the hypothesis in terms of a causal model requires that strong assumptions be made about the distributions of the indicators and the nature of the factors not explicitly represented in a model, such a model provides clear and explicit guidelines for selecting variables

<sup>15</sup> The third assumption is a particularly unrealistic but necessary heuristic assumption given the availability of only one indicator of repressive justice. For an example of how this assumption could be tested were alternative indicators of repressive justice available, see Costner and Schoenberg (1973).

<sup>16</sup> For example, Hammond (1974) argues that during the late 1820s religious revivals in Ohio produced a heightened moral sense (unmeasured) which was manifested subsequently in support of abolitionist organizations and political candidates. He examines the intercorrelations between the number of religious revivals in a county and the county's vote in three elections and concludes that the pattern of correlations supports his hypothesis.

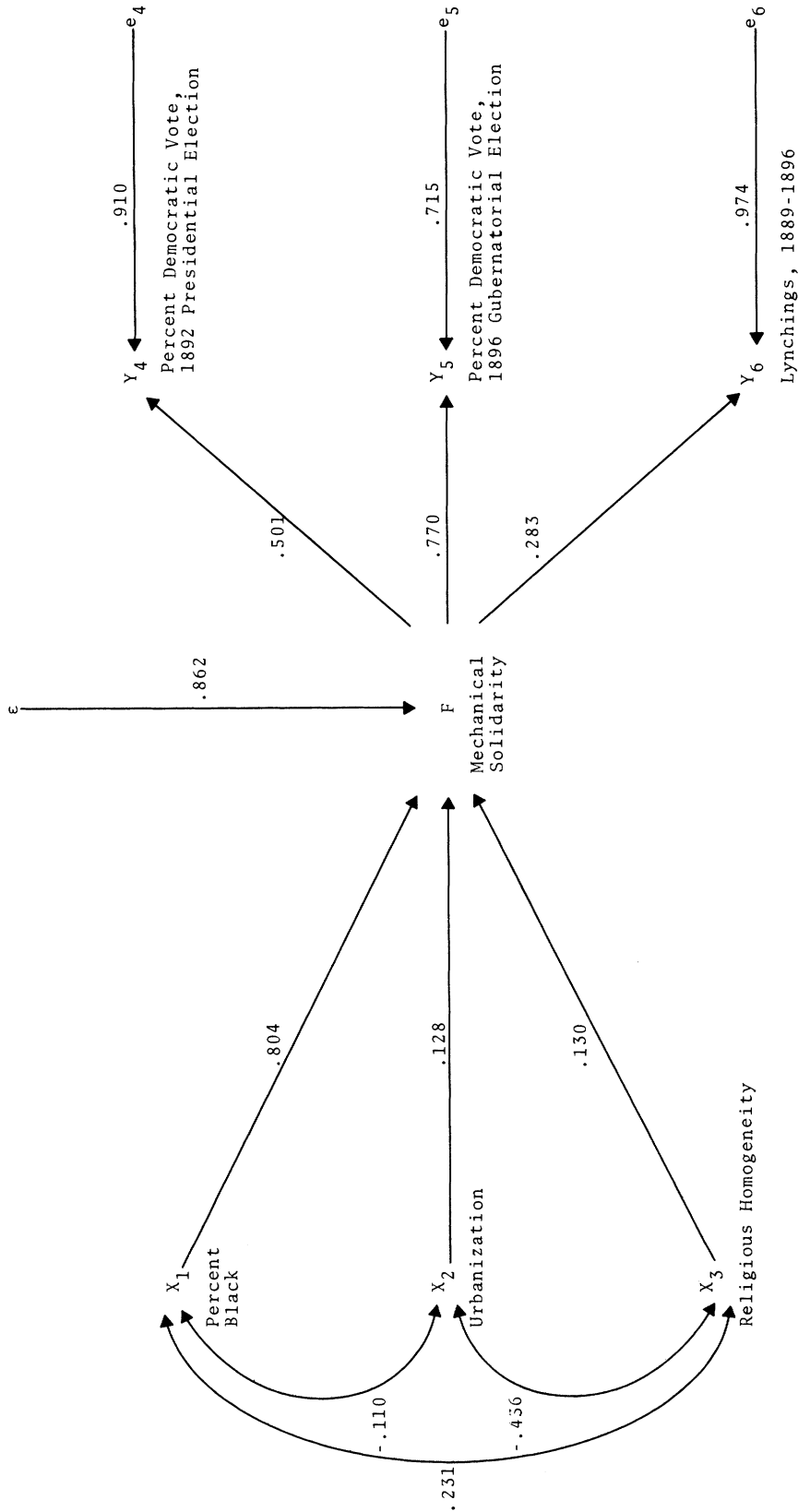


Figure 3. Maximum Likelihood Estimates for Causal Model with Unmeasured Variables

Table 3. Residuals between Observed Correlations and Correlations Predicted from the Parameter Estimates<sup>a</sup>

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Percent Black	0.0					
2. Urbanization	.000	0.0				
3. Religious Homogeneity	-.000	.000	0.0			
4. Percent Democratic Presidential Vote 1892	-.087	.107	.126	.000		
5. Percent Democratic Gubernatorial Vote 1896	.015	-.045	-.022	.016	.000	
6. Lynchings 1889-1896	.063	.175	-.088	.077	-.057	-.000 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> $\chi^2 = 11.61$ , d. f. = 6,  $p > .05$ .

<sup>b</sup>Rounding error.

and evaluating the evidence for the hypothesis.

The model in Figure 2 states that the level of mechanical solidarity in a given parish is affected by three structural properties of the parish: its percent black; its degree of urbanization; and the extent of its religious homogeneity. Mechanical solidarity should be greater the greater the percent black and the greater the extent of Catholic/Protestant religious homogeneity. On the other hand, urbanization should have a negative impact on the level of mechanical solidarity in the parish. The degree of the parish's mechanical solidarity is reflected by its Democratic vote in two elections.<sup>17</sup> The central thesis of this paper is

that mechanical solidarity has a positive impact on repressive justice, which is equated in this model with the incidence of lynching.

Estimates of the model's parameters are presented in Figure 3.<sup>18</sup> The overwhelming determinant of the level of solidarity is the percent black; the greater the percent black, the greater the level of solidarity. This is congruent with the argument that the threat of black domination was a catalyst for the formation of the Solid South. Urbanization has a

<sup>18</sup> Fifteen correlations among the six observed variables may be computed. With nine parameters to be estimated, the model contains six overidentifying restrictions.

<sup>17</sup> Note that this does not mean popular support of Southern whites for the Democratic party. First, voting statistics at this time reflect black as well as white votes. Second, voting statistics reflect the capacity of the parties to carry out election fraud. The extent of fraud varies among parishes and among elections. Systematic parish by parish evidence on fraud is not available; but one rough indicator is the magnitude of the correlation between Democratic vote and percent black, since blacks, when given the opportunity, supported the Republican party. In the Presidential election of 1892, this correlation is .324; but in the gubernatorial election of 1896, it nearly doubles ( $r = .674$ ). In contrast, the Presidential election of 1896, in which the Populists form a coalition with the Democrats and which by contemporary accounts was a fair election, the correlation between Democratic vote and percent black drops to  $r = -.104$ .

Conventional ordinary least squares (OLS) could be used to estimate the parameters of the model. However, OLS will yield alternative estimates for the overidentified parameters and thus, is not efficient (i.e., the variance of OLS estimates fails to converge to zero). Costner (1969) and others advocate a simple averaging of these conflicting estimates. Some estimates, however, will generally be more efficient than others. Where discrepancies among estimates are slight, simple averaging may be the most cost-effective procedure. For cases in which the estimates vary, however, methods for efficiently estimating overidentified models have recently evolved in the literature. These procedures take weighed averages of alternative estimators; the smaller the variance of the estimator, the greater its weight. While this may be done by several techniques, the best developed is the maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) procedure conceived by Jöreskog et al. (1970) and others (Werts et al., 1973; Hauser and Goldberger, 1971; Burt, 1973).

small positive impact on solidarity. This is contrary to its anticipated effect since it means that strictly rural parishes have less solidarity than urban areas. This finding may, however, reflect a measurement error arising from using the simple rural/urban dichotomy, which compares primarily rural parishes with parishes that have small towns. Unfortunately, the small number of urban parishes makes it impossible to assess the impact of the *degree* of urbanization on mechanical solidarity, which would capture more realistically the theoretic distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity. Religious homogeneity, on the other hand, does have an anticipated positive impact on solidarity; the greater the homogeneity, the greater the solidarity. But, like urbanization, the magnitude of its impact is not breathtaking, being overshadowed by the impact of percent black.

Turning to the estimated consequences of solidarity, Democratic vote is a strong reflector of the level of solidarity, as would be expected from the substantive significance attached to Democratic voting. Solidarity has a moderate impact on the incidence of lynchings for the period in which the boundary crisis occurred. This is the part of the model that is of greatest theoretic import. It confirms the proposition that the greater the level of solidarity, the greater the incidence of repressive justice.

Evaluation of the model requires two steps. The first step is a straightforward statistical test of goodness of fit.<sup>19</sup> The second step is a comparison of the model with alternative, rival hypotheses. The statistical test devised by Jöreskog et al. (1970) utilizes the parameter estimates of the model to regenerate predicted correlations. The goodness-of-fit

test ( $\chi^2$  in Table 3) essentially compares the observed correlations with the predicted correlations. Since the chi-square value in this case is not significant, there is no major difference between observed and expected values. The table of residuals (Table 3) indicates rather small departures of predicted from expected values. The major exception is the correlation between urbanization and lynching. It would be tempting to use this discrepancy as a basis for respecifying the model, but as Costner and Schoenberg (1973) have shown, this would be a fool's errand.

Failure to reject the model on statistical grounds means that we can adequately account for the configuration of observed relationships between lynching and five characteristics of the parishes by a model specifying three characteristics as a cause of the unmeasured variable mechanical solidarity and two characteristics as consequences of solidarity. While this model is not deduced in a strict sense from the theoretic argument, the argument provides a rationale for the selection of indicators and the specification of their relationships. Furthermore, the theoretic argument provides the substantive interpretation of the model. Nothing in the data tells us that the unmeasured variable *F* denotes solidarity among Southern whites.<sup>20</sup>

Given the indicators used and the assumptions built into the model, this test permits us to conclude that the incidence of lynching as a form of repressive justice varied among Louisiana parishes directly with their level of solidarity. While this test confirms in a systematic fashion Erikson's argument, it leads to an important qualification of his formulation, viz., that boundary crises cause crime waves *only to the extent that the community is mechanically solidary*.

How much confidence can be placed in this result? Although the test passes the conven-

<sup>19</sup>The lynchings examined here are taken as the population of events; consequently, the significance test is not used to infer population parameters from sample statistics. Rather, the test is to be interpreted as a counter-factual device; it estimates the probability that a comparable goodness-of-fit could be obtained if observed and estimated correlations were generated by a random procedure. For a general discussion of this line of argument see Winch and Campbell (1969).

<sup>20</sup>As in all factor analysis models the characterization of the factor is provided *a priori* by the investigator; other meanings may be attached to *F* if it is viewed from alternative theoretic orientations. For example, *F* might be reinterpreted psychologically as the level of frustration of individual whites, resulting in lynching as a form of aggression.

tional significance criterion for goodness-of-fit, additional factors need to be considered for an adequate substantive evaluation of this test. In particular, this model should be compared with an alternative generated by a distinct theoretic perspective on the same analytic level. Unfortunately, there is no well-formulated alternative theory of repressive justice, so the evaluation must rest on more mundane alternative explanations for the historical phenomenon of lynching.

The most pedestrian, and at the same time most plausible, rival explanation for the distribution of lynchings among parishes is the population size. Specifically, the more blacks in the parish, the more likely one of them is to be lynched. (This, of course, fails to account for 14 percent of the incidents in which the victim was white.) Similarly, the more whites in the parish, the more potential lynchings (cf. Spilerman's (1970) account of urban riots). The validity of both arguments can be roughly assessed by the equation

$$Y = .503 + .00012B - .00002W, R^2 = .226 \\ (.00004) (.00001)$$

where  $Y$  denotes predicted lynchings (1889-1896),  $B$  denotes black population size and  $W$  denotes white population size. Both coefficients are significant at the .05 level. Since black population size has a positive impact on lynchings, it seems plausible that the number of lynchings in a parish depends on the number of potential black victims; the negative impact of white population size, however, suggests that lynchings cannot be explained in terms of the number of white lynchings.

Now, to pit the plausible victim availability hypothesis against the theoretic model, we construct a second model (in Figure 4) in which black population size is allowed to affect lynchings directly, independently of solidarity, and to be correlated with the hypothesized causes of solidarity.

By allowing black population size to affect lynchings directly, we in effect test whether the estimates of the first model are spurious. Conceptually, this entails making explicit one

component of the error term associated with lynchings ( $e_6$ ) and testing whether this component, by virtue of its relationship to the causes of solidarity, can account for the impact of solidarity on lynching.

As with the first model, the revised model fails to reject the null hypothesis of no difference between the predicted correlations and the observed correlations. Table 4 presents the residuals and  $\chi^2$  test.

The parameter estimates given in Figure 4 demonstrate that, in fact, part of the effect of mechanical solidarity on lynching is spurious. When black population size is explicitly considered, the estimated impact of mechanical solidarity on lynching is cut by more than half. This result suggests that availability of black victims may well be an important factor in determining the parish's incidence of lynching. Availability, however, does not completely account for the impact of mechanical solidarity. Until additional plausible rival alternative hypotheses are introduced, the results of the analysis can be viewed as supporting the proposition that the extent of repressive justice is affected by the level of mechanical solidarity.

## CONCLUSION

The major impact of Durkheim's theory of repressive justice in contemporary sociological research has been on labeling theory and other essentially social psychological preoccupations with the impact of the sanctioning process on the individual offender. Erikson's study is the major work on Durkheim's *social structural* thesis concerning the relationship between repressive justice and mechanical solidarity. This study applied Erikson's formulation to another historical episode, one characterized by (1) a clearer relationship between the theoretic concept of repressive justice and its historical manifestation; (2) a range of communities facing a single boundary crisis, but differing in degree of solidarity; (3) an explicit, independent index (in electoral statistics) of the extent of the boundary crisis.

After showing that lynching was a form of repressive justice and that the Populist disrupt-



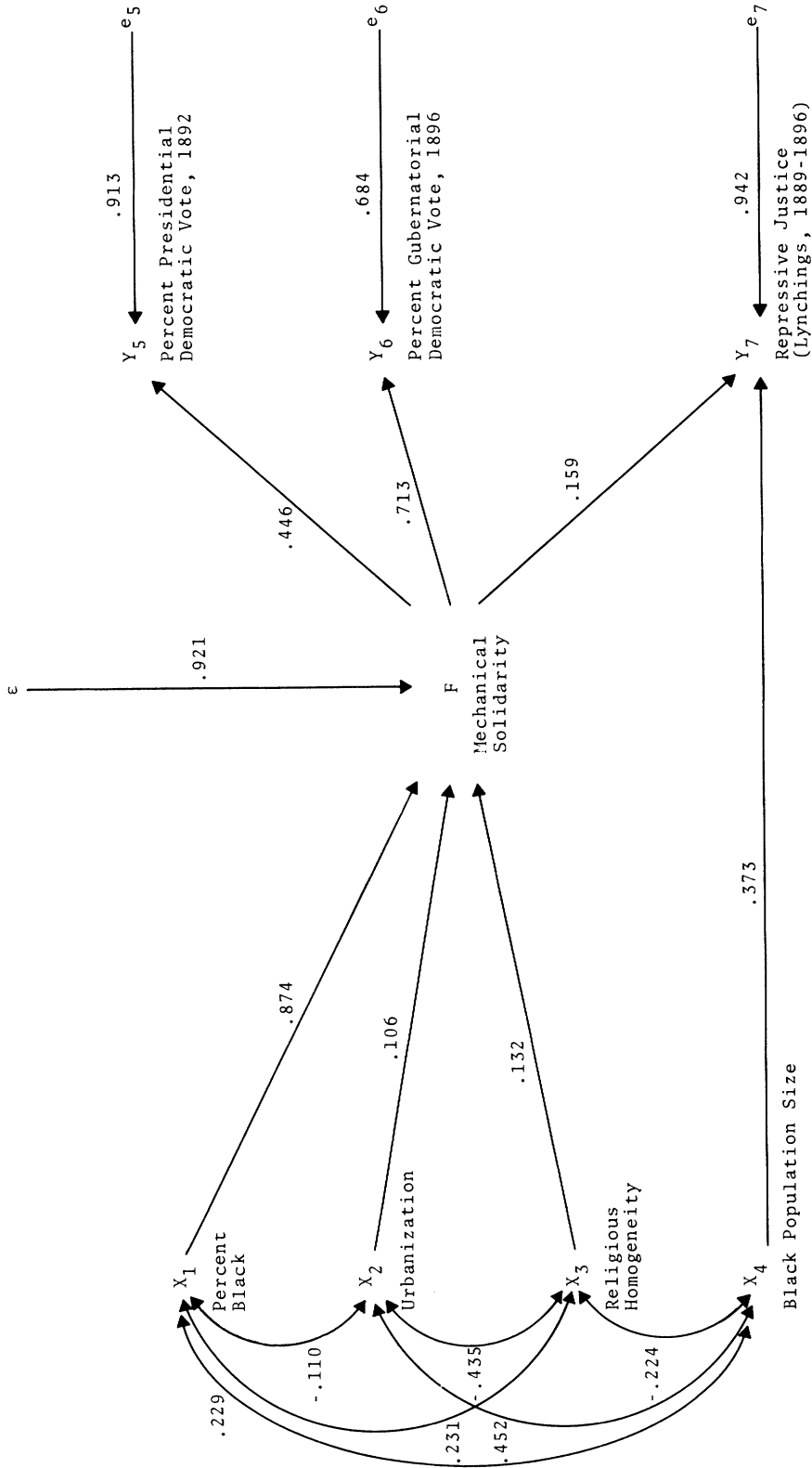


Figure 4. Maximum Likelihood Estimates of Causal Model Incorporating the Availability Hypothesis

Table 4. Residuals between Observed Correlations and Correlations Predicted from the Parameter Estimates for Revised Model<sup>a</sup>

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Percent Black	0.0						
2. Urbanization	.000	0.0					
3. Religious Homogeneity	-.000	-.000	0.0				
4. Black Population size	-.000	.000	-.000	0.0			
5. Percent Democratic Presidential Vote	-.074	.120	.128	.013	-.000		
6. Percent Democratic Gubernatorial Vote	.010	-.024	-.027	.074	.008	-.000 <sup>b</sup>	
7. Lynching, 1889-1896	.067	.010	.024	.010	.108	-.019	.007 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> $\chi^2 = 10.86$ , d.f. = 8,  $p < .20$ .

<sup>b</sup> Rounding error.

tion of the Solid South constituted a major boundary crisis, the study developed a causal model utilizing the configuration of observed relationships among various social and electoral variables to infer the relationship between the degree of mechanical solidarity and the extent of lynching. The model can account for the observed relationships and, moreover, the introduction of an alternative hypothesis (availability of black victims) does not render the original finding spurious.

The paper has demonstrated that Erikson's thesis that boundary crises produce repressive justice can be utilized to account for several peculiarities of lynching during this period (e.g., its tendency to increase during election years, but the failure of the offenses for which the victims were lynched to reflect political conflict directly; and the failure of lynching to increase with racist hostility toward the turn of the century). The study also suggests an important qualification of Erikson's thesis (a qualification that can only become visible when a number of different communities are systematically compared), viz., the extent to which a given community responds to a boundary crisis with the exercise of repressive justice depends directly on the magnitude of mechanical solidarity in that community.

While these conclusions must be tempered with caveats produced by the gross nature of

the empirical indicators<sup>21</sup> and the stringent assumptions necessary to infer relationships, this study demonstrates the potentials as well as the problems of utilizing historical materials to refine and test sociological theory.

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<sup>21</sup> As is frequently the case in historical analysis of this sort, much of the critical evidence is unknown. No systematic evidence, for example, exists on the size or social composition of lynch mobs during this period; nor is such evidence available on the nature and frequency of criminal offenses handled by the conventional legal system.

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### RACIAL AND CLASS PREJUDICE: THEIR RELATIVE EFFECTS ON PROTEST AGAINST SCHOOL DESEGREGATION\*

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American Sociological Review 1976, Vol. 41 (April): 280-288

*The common practice in the field of race relations has been to treat anti-black behavior as an indicator of racial prejudice. In addition to race, blacks also share the characteristic of low social status. The present study finds that behavioral protest against school desegregation is a product of both racial and class prejudice. The relationship between each form of prejudice and protest is specified by the respondents' social status.*

Public school desegregation has generated considerable protest from white parents. Manifested in various forms and degrees of intensity, protest commonly has been attributed to

racial prejudice. A lengthy research tradition strongly supports the assumption that white opposition to school desegregation is motivated by negative attitudes toward blacks (Blalock, 1957; Dye, 1968; Harris, 1968; Pettigrew, 1959; Pettigrew and Cramer, 1959; Robey, 1970; Vanfossen, 1968). Hubert Blalock, however, has suggested an interesting alternative view: that the aversion of whites to integration may be a function of class prejudice as well as racial prejudice.<sup>1</sup> "The com-

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<sup>1</sup> We follow Blalock in the use of the term "class" prejudice. While there has been considerable dis-

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