

I. Syracuse Criminal Offenses and Calls

SECTION SUMMARY

Introduction

The information found in this section describes criminal and police activity in the six residential TNT sectors (sectors 2-7). Results are reported for each residential sector along with the residential average.

Methods

The Syracuse City Police Department provided a diskette to the Community Benchmarks Program containing the frequency and type of criminal offenses reported and calls made to police in 1996. There were 23,001 offenses reported and 185,248 calls made to police in 1996.

Findings

This report describes the 10 most frequently reported crimes and 10 most frequently made calls to police for TNT sectors 2-7 as they compare to the city's residential average. Table 1.1 provides the best and the worst sectors for each of the twenty variables.

Table 1.1: Percentage of Most Frequent Offenses/Calls by Sector

CATEGORY	"WORST" SECTOR	"BEST" SECTOR
Offenses Per 1,000 Population		
Petit Larceny	2	6
2 nd Degree Harassment	2	4 & 6 (tie)
4 th Degree Criminal Mischief	2	4
2 nd Degree Burglary	2	4
4 th Degree Grand Larceny	2 & 5 (tie)	4
2 nd Degree Aggravated Harassment	7	5 & 6 (tie)
Unlawful Possession of Marijuana	3	4
7 th Degree Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance	3	4 & 6 (tie)
3 rd Degree Burglary Offenses	2	4, 5, 6, 7 (tie)
3 rd Degree Assault	2	4
Calls to Police Per 1,000 Population		
Vehicle/Traffic Stop Calls	2	6
Ambulance Calls	2	5 & 6 (tie)
Alarm Calls	5	6
Domestic Dispute Calls	2	6
911 Hang-Up Calls	3	6
Harassment Calls	2	4 & 5 (tie)
Follow-Up Investigation Calls	3	6
Larceny Calls	2	6
Noise Complaint Calls	7	3
Auto Accident with Property Damage Calls	4	3, 5, 6 (tie)

Planning sector 2 has the highest frequency of criminal offenses and calls to police for 12 out of the 20 variables, or 60% as indicated by the gray shading.

At the census tract level, as described in Table 1.2, tracts 41, 33, and 30 are among the worst for both criminal offenses and calls to police, whereas tracts 56.01 and 56.02 are among the best in both categories.

Table 1.2: "Worst" and "Best" Census Tracts, Criminal Offenses and Calls to Police

CRIMINAL OFFENSES						CALLS TO POLICE					
"Worst" Census Tracts			"Best" Census Tracts			"Worst" Census Tracts			"Best" Census Tracts		
Census Tract	Sector	Per 1,000 Persons	Census Tract	Sector	Per 1,000 Persons	Census Tract	Sector	Per 1,000 Persons	Census Tract	Sector	Per 1,000 Persons
41	3	318	56.02	5	15	41	3	2,142	56.02	5	48
33	5	253	37	2	31	33	5	1,594	28	2	183
13	7	243	56.01	5	32	30	2	1308	56.01	5	206
30	2	217	61.03	4	38	40	2	1,243	4	7	247

METHODS

Data Collection

The Syracuse Police Department provided criminal offense and call data to the Community Benchmarks Program in October 1997. The information reported the frequency and type of all criminal offenses and calls made to the Syracuse Police Department during 1996. Data were provided by census tract and aggregated to the TNT sector level.

The data set for offenses includes all cases in which police officers confirm that an offense or violation of criminal law was committed. This data set consists of 23,001 cases sorted by census tract. The data set for police activity, known as “calls” or “incidents,” is logged any time an officer is dispatched. This can include investigations of alleged criminal activity, traffic stops, medical complaints and/or miscellaneous incidents. A total of 185,248 cases were provided in this data set, also by census tract. Less than 1 percent of offense data and less than 2.5 percent of call data contained non-existent census tracts; these cases were dropped from the data set. Calls and offenses responded to by city police that occurred outside the city limits were not included in this report.

The “offense” and “call” data sets are separate and distinct. Officers can be dispatched on a “call” for any variety of purposes. Subsequent investigation of the “call” will determine whether or not one or more offenses occurred.

Offense data characterizes criminal activity in an area while call data describes the quality of life for residents of an area since calls frequently involve complaints of noise, prostitution or harassment. Not every call will result in the determination that an offense was committed. However, some calls not only produce such a result, but can culminate in the identification of offenses that are unrelated to the original call. Additionally, the designation of “offense” indicates an illegal activity has occurred; it does not mean a person has been charged or convicted with the crime or violation.

Calls and offenses were assigned to TNT sectors based on the census tract from which the call or offense took place. For the five census tracts crossing TNT sector boundaries offense and call data were weighted according to population percentages. This was accomplished by dividing those borderline tracts into census block groups. Once the block group populations were obtained, percentages were devised. These percentages were used in weighting offense and call data to provide the most accurate description for each of the sectors. Approximately 14% of both the call and offense data sets lie within the five census tracts that crossed TNT sector boundaries.

Those offense and call categories selected for this report represent the 10 most frequent occurrences for the average in TNT sectors 2 through 7. This report presents the data on the basis of calls and offenses per 1,000 population and lists the 10 most frequently reported crimes and the top 10 call types for what are considered to be *quality of life* issues in TNT residential sectors 2-7.

Data Quality

The Community Benchmarks Program assumes that the data provided by the Syracuse Police Department is as accurate as possible and that the procedures used for inputting and quality assurance are valid.

Problems with the data may lie in the assignment of data to TNT sectors. Criminal offense and call data from tracts that cross sector boundaries may not have been assigned correctly and may not be representative of the true information. Since assignment was based upon population, we are unsure of the degree to which errors were made. However, since each of the sectors contain several census tracts, we feel the patterns presented in this report are reasonably accurate.

Data Analysis

Scatterplots were constructed and simple regressions were calculated to determine the degree to which there was a relationship between overall criminal offenses and calls to police with median income. Socioeconomic variables other than median income – percent non-white, percent of population under 34 years, and percent of adults with a high school diploma or less – were investigated but since they are all so highly correlated (r^2 is greater than or equal to .4 for each relationship) median income can be viewed as a surrogate.

The regression analysis has two purposes. The first is to ascertain the degree to which there is a relationship between median income and criminal offenses/calls to police. The second is to see which census tracts have higher or lower rates of incidents given their median income level which is represented by the distance from the predicted value. In interpreting this information, it is important to keep in mind that 1990 median income data are used, whereas the dependent variables describe 1996 data.

FINDINGS

Findings Format

The findings for this study are presented in two parts: 1) by TNT sector, and 2) by census tract.

TNT Sector Analysis

Table 1.3 reports the data on a per 1,000 population basis. The per 1,000 population basis allows for comparison among the six sectors due to the significant variation in the geographic size and population of the sectors. Sectors 2 and 3 have the highest number of offenses and calls per 1,000 population, whereas sectors 6 and 4 have the lowest.

TABLE 1.3: TOTAL OFFENSES AND CALLS

<i>TNT Sector</i>	<i>Total Offenses</i>	<i>% of All Offenses</i>	<i>Total Calls</i>	<i>% of All Calls</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>% of Residential Population</i>	<i>Offenses per 1,000 Population</i>	<i>Calls per 1,000 Population</i>
2	4,524	20%	35,840	19%	22,877	14%	198	1,567
3	6,452	28%	46,436	25%	32,956	20%	196	1,409
4	924	4%	9,232	5%	11,985	7%	77	770
5	4,353	19%	36,341	20%	41,792	26%	104	870
6	1,111	5%	9,461	5%	15,250	9%	73	620
7	5,637	25%	47,938	26%	36,914	23%	153	1,299

Table 1.4 summarizes the frequency distribution of all criminal offenses and calls for the six residential TNT sectors. Those sectors in which the highest number of offenses/calls occurred are shaded gray.

Table 1.4: Offenses and Calls by Sector

<i>Category – Offenses Per 1,000 Persons</i>	<i>TNT Sector</i>					
	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
Petit Larceny (mean = 27)	31	22	19	25	16	23
2 nd Degree Harassment (mean = 19)	29	26	8	10	8	21
4 th Degree Criminal Mischief (mean = 16)	22	20	9	12	10	16
2 nd Degree Burglary (mean = 12)	16	14	5	8	7	15
4 th Degree Grand Larceny (mean = 7)	8	6	4	8	5	7
2 nd Degree Aggravated Harassment (mean = 7)	7	6	6	5	5	9
Unlawful Possession of Marijuana (mean = 7)	8	15	1	4	2	5
7 th Degree Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance (mean = 5)	6	12	1	3	1	6