Examining the (In) Equalities in Structural Covariates of Gender Specific Drug Arrest Counts

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Introduction

- The War on Drugs has disproportionately impacted women, in particular increased incarceration rates of women
- Women are more likely than men to serve time for drug offenses and are subject to increasingly punitive law enforcement and sentencing practices
- Extant literature has failed to assess potential inequality in the structural covariates of gender specific drug arrests

Review of Literature

Concentrated Disadvantage
- Communities maintain higher levels of poverty, female headed households or single parent homes, low educational attainment, and unemployment

Ethnic Heterogeneity
- Communities maintain higher levels of foreign born populations and Hispanic born populations

Residential Instability
- Communities maintain higher levels of renters and lower levels of living in the same house for a set time period

Socialist Feminism
- Women's oppression arose from economic and cultural inequalities along with the role of gender and class has furthered divided men and women in society

Methodology

Primary Question
- What structural covariates influence the (in) equalities in gender specific drug arrest counts?

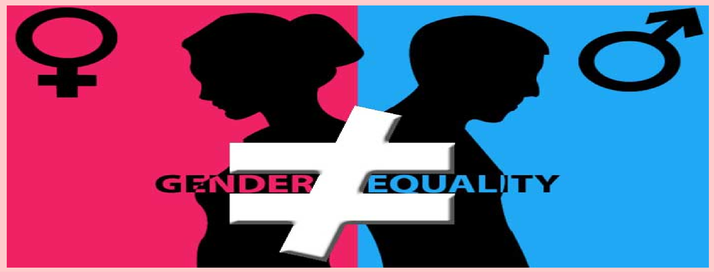
Research Questions
- What structural level characteristics are associated with drug-specific arrests for females and males?
- What are the (in) consistencies in the structural covariates of drug specific arrests for females and males?

Sample
- City level data
- Arrest data from National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and American Community Survey (ACS)
- Places that report to NIBRS and ACS with populations 50,000 or more (final sample, N= 127)

Dependent Variables
- Male drug arrest per 100,000 for crack, heroin, and methamphetamines
- Female drug arrest per 100,000 for crack, heroin, and methamphetamines

Independent Variables
- Concentrated Disadvantage
- Residential Instability
- Ethnic Heterogeneity

Analytical Approach
- Bivariate analysis
  - Examines the relationship between two variables to determine existence of an association
- Pearson's Correlation Coefficient
  - Measures strength, direction, and nature of an association



Results

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for all measures (N=127)

	LnPop	South	Pop 15 - 24	CD	FB	Hisp	OO	SH	F - Cr	F - He	M - Cr	M - He	M - Me
Mean	11.67	.36	15.58	0	11.58	13.67	56.95	80.90	9.99	11.63	40.58	32.39	63.60
SD	.67	.48	5.29	.82	7.19	10.92	5.66	11.56	15.07	29.46	51.49	40.28	63.60

Table 2: Correlations between overall and gender-specific drug arrests (N=127)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Ln Pop															
South	0.083														
15-24	-0.047	0.081													
CD	.220*	-0.016	.212*												
FB	0.05	-.210*	-0.086	-.174*											
Hisp	0.071	-0.047	-0.129	0.084	.339**										
OO	-.224*	0.002	-.515**	-.589**	-0.15	-0.029									
SH	-0.141	-0.138	-.767**	-.290**	0.11	0.051	.687**								
F-Cr	0.168	.219*	0.066	.469**	-.196*	-0.142	-.328**	-0.162							
F-He	0.02	-.356**	-0.021	.204*	0.029	-0.05	-0.133	0.027	.285**						
F-Me	-0.112	-0.072	0.049	-0.008	-0.084	.210*	-0.092	-.189*	-0.083	.333**	.344**				
M-Cr	0.151	.221	0.127	.528	-.200	-0.124	-.436	-.197	.906	.215	.354	-0.09	.534		
M-He	0.058	-.348**	0.008	.307**	0.103	-0.016	-.246**	0.029	.379**	.931**	0.005	.187*	.330**	.354**	
M-Me	-0.107	-0.107	0.036	-0.002	-0.057	.251**	-0.092	-.187*	-0.097	.338**	.291**	.973**	-0.002	-0.101	.192*

*p ≤0.05; ** p≤0.01 level

Discussion and Conclusions

Major Findings
- Concentrated disadvantage is weakly correlated with female and male arrests for crack, heroin, and methamphetamines
- Owner occupancy maintains an inverse, moderate correlation with female crack arrests and male crack and heroin arrests
- Same house maintains an inverse, moderate correlation with female and male crack and heroin arrests
- Foreign born maintains an inverse, weak correlation with female and male crack arrests
- Hispanic born maintains a inverse, weak correlation with female and male crack arrests but maintains a positive, moderate correlation with female and male methamphetamines arrests

Conclusions Based on Major Findings
- In accordance with social disorganization theory, male and females appear to have similar magnitude in correlations
- Males appear to have stronger correlations within the framework of social disorganization theory
- Findings are not in accordance with socialist feminism, expected results would have shown women to have stronger correlations within the measures for social disorganization

Limitations
- NIBRS and ACS are both reliable but have validity issues
  - Small agency bias in reporting to NIBRS and ACS
  - Issues with publically available secondary data
- Bivariate analysis only examines one variable against another
- Possibility of spurious relationships exist between variables and/or an over or under estimation of variables

Policy Implications
- Increase focus on community agencies that can coordinate efforts to help women with job training and availability, subsidized day-care options, substance-abuse treatment, counseling, and affordable housing options

Further Recommendations
- Use of a multivariate analysis approach with additional measures to examine the effect of law enforcement issues, drug mortality rates, and drug market to see if same results exists as in bivariate analysis approach
- Further research should examine minorities in gender specific drug arrest counts, research has shown the buying, selling, and use of certain kinds of drugs is disproportionally linked to racial and ethnic minorities