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## THE WIRTH THESIS ON COMMUNITY SIZE, DENSITY, AND HETEROGENEITY AS DETERMINANTS OF THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF URBAN LIFE. A CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE AND CRITERIA FOR AN EMPIRICAL TEST\*

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The quality of social life has emerged in recent years as a focal concern for social scientists. Indeed, the topic seems to have become "one of the most significant issues of our time" [36, p. 521]. This concern is most evident in the recent interest in "social indicators" measuring the quality of life in American society (see Gross and Straussman [32] for a useful summary of the "movement"). Related to this issue is the concern with the quality of life engendered specifically by residents in urban communities [45, 50, 54]. Two contrasting perspectives have dominated the literature related to this topic.

The first perspective, termed "behaviorist" by Winsborough [64] and the "negative" school by Carnahan, Gove and Galle [11], portrays social life in urban areas as, *inter alia*, alienating, impersonal, isolated and lonely. One proponent of this school of thought recently described urbanites as "physically lonely; almost all of them live in a state of endless inner loneliness. They have thousands of contacts, but the contacts are empty and unsatisfying" [2]. Similarly, Esser [14, p. 28] concluded:

It is clear that city dwellers are more curt, brusque, and impolite than rural dwellers. The opposite reaction to being crowded, an increase in withdrawal and noninvolvement behavior, is extensively evident in city dwellers.

On the other hand, the "structuralist" or "positive" school tends to extol the social benefits of urbanization. Factors such as increased organizational complexity and specialization allowing for a higher standard of living, economies of scale, cultural stimulation, and social innovation are emphasized by proponents of this school [24, 25, 26, 36, 41]. While the structuralist position is well represented in the scholarly literature, it is the behaviorist stance which generally prevails in the mass media.

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Zlutnick and Altman's [67] recent review of the popular press revealed it to be a "veritable unending source of expert opinion on the effect of crowding on human behavior." They note that there is a strong media consensus on the deleterious effects of overcrowding, even though there is a serious dearth of empirical data to substantiate such contentions [67, p. 50]

The most important academic source often cited by proponents of the behaviorist school is Louis Wirth's article "Urbanism as a Way of Life," published in 1938 (citations will refer to the reprint in Hatt and Reiss [34]). There, Wirth defined the city sociologically as a "relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals" [65, p. 50], and developed a set of propositions linking variations in these three independent variables -- population size, density, and heterogeneity -- to a series of structural, behavioral, and attitudinal characteristics. However, even though this essay has been described as possibly "the most influential article ever to appear in a sociological journal" [52, p. 127], Fischer [17, p. 216] recently concluded in his survey of the related literature that "there is little evidence of sufficient quality to draw an adequate conclusion for or against the theory."<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to first construct a set of criteria by which a research design dealing with propositions related to Wirth's model can be evaluated. Then, the empirical literature directly related to this thesis will be reviewed with this set of criteria serving as an evaluative guideline.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN CRITERIA

A research design which would be more adequate for testing Wirth's propositions than presently exists in the literature would include the following basic characteristics:

- (1) The concept "urban" should be treated as a continuous, interval-level variable in its operational form. Measures should be taken from the entire range of the rural-urban continuum; thus maximizing variation and allowing the use of parametric statistical techniques. This is faithful to Wirth's basic principle, reemphasized by Hatt and Reiss [34, p. 20], that empirical tests of his propositions maximize variation on the ecological variables. In his original statement, Wirth [65, p. 51] noted that "the larger, the more

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<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that Fischer himself has done more than any other writer to identify some of the misinterpretations of the Wirth thesis and to lay the groundwork for a systematic empirical test of the theory. Moreover, Fischer and his collaborators have in the last few years made an impressive contribution to the empirical literature on the topic [16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23].

densely populated, and the more heterogeneous a community, the more accentuated the characteristics associated with urbanism will be." He reemphasized the point in a paper he was preparing for publication in 1951 [66, pp. 222-223].

In respect to each of my criteria of urban life -- numbers, density, permanence, and heterogeneity -- cities represent a vast continuum shading into non-urban settlements. The same is true of rural settlements be they rural non-farm settlements, villages, or scattered farm areas. To lump the great variety of cities and rural settlements respectively together obscures more than it reveals the distinctive characteristics of each.

- (2) Characteristics of urbanism assumedly related to variations in Wirth's three definitional characteristics should be expected to vary by degree rather than by kind. That is, urbanism should not be construed as a characteristic of only "more-urban" communities and totally absent from "less-urban" communities -- quantitative variation by degree, rather than qualitative differences of kind, exist on Wirth's dependent variables as well as the independent variables.
- (3) Although Fischer [17] contends that size, density, and heterogeneity are a "single factor" best tapped by the single indicator of size, Wirth's principle that all three of these components may have independent effects upon urbanism should be respected. Wirth [65, p. 52] specifically emphasized that:

There are, nevertheless, good reasons for treating large numbers and density as separate factors, since each may be connected with significantly different social consequences. Similarly the need for adding heterogeneity to numbers of population as a necessary and distinct criterion of urbanism might be questioned, since we should expect the range of differences to increase with numbers. In defense, it may be said that the city shows a kind and degree of heterogeneity of population which cannot be wholly accounted for by the law of large numbers or adequately represented by means of a normal distribution curve.

Thus, operational measures for all three of Wirth's definitional characteristics of "urban" should be incorporated into adequate empirical tests of urbanism.

- (4) Criterion 3 requires that additional consideration be given to the logical status of these three definitional characteristics as related to each other and to urbanism. Even though population size is the single indicator normally utilized in empirical analyses of Wirth's thesis, on the theoretical level the literature has traditionally conceptualized population size, density, and heter-

ogeneity as having the same logical status in relation to urbanism -- that of independent variables [17, 53]. An alternative approach treating only population size as independent and density and heterogeneity as intervening variables, seems faithful to Wirth's model. The causal sequence reflects Durkheim's proposition concerning the demographic mechanism underlying the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity -- from a social system integrated through "likeness" or similarity to a system integrated through dissimilarity or based upon individual differentiation and functional specialization. As population size increases within a specified area, density increases. As both size and density increase, the population differentiates in order to reduce the conflict inherent in a system wherein similar units are making unrealizable demands upon the system's limited resources (see Wirth [65, p. 55] for evidence of his acceptance of Durkheim's proposition).

- (5) As emphasized by others [17, 38, 50], the research design should incorporate a measure of community industrialization in order to control for its possible effects. Wirth [65, p. 50] noted that "It is particularly important to call attention to the danger of confusing urbanism with industrialism. . .".
- (6) In contrast to the previous research utilizing statistical techniques measuring only direct relationships between community ecological properties and urbanism, a more fruitful approach would incorporate a methodology allowing for analysis of indirect community effects upon urbanism. Specifically, path analysis allows for the analysis of possible direct effects of variation in community population size upon indicators of urbanism, but also of possible indirect effects of population size upon urbanism via the intervening variables of population density and heterogeneity [13, 37, 44, 56].
- (7) Finally, as Fischer [17] points out, the research design should incorporate a means of controlling relevant individual-level variables. That is, do community properties have independent effects after controlling individual characteristics (see Hauser [35] for a discussion of the relevance for controlling individual-level factors prior to interpreting research findings as "contextual effects"?)

This set of criteria constitute guidelines for evaluating the empirical literature related to the Wirth thesis -- this is the purpose of the balance of this paper.

#### RELATED LITERATURE

In his essay, Wirth developed the propositions that, the more urban a community, the more likely that its residents would express feelings of alienation, and that impersonal, secondary relationships would constitute a larger proportion of the resident's total pattern of social interaction. Thus Wirth [65] hypothesized that, as communities urbanized, residents became

inter alia: more characteristically irritated, lonely, "reduced to a state of impotence as an individual," and "unable to obtain a conception of the city as a whole or to survey his place in the total scheme." Similarly, he noted that:

In relation to the number of people whom they see and with whom they rub elbows in the course of daily life, they know a smaller proportion, and of these they have less intensive knowledge [65, p. 54].

It is these characteristics of urbanism -- alienation and impersonal, segmental relationships -- with which the empirical literature has generally concerned itself.

Some 13 years after the publication of "Urbanism as a Way of Life," Wirth has lamented that the empirical evidence to test his thesis "has not been accumulated in such a fashion as to test critically any major hypothesis that has been proposed" [66, p. 223]. The next two decades did witness an increased interest in exploring the empirical implications of the thesis. The research that followed can be grouped into two major phases: (1) early case studies and comparative research utilizing a limited (2 to 5) number of community units, and (2) recent analyses of large scale sample surveys treating population size of respondents' communities of residence as a contextual variable. Each phase will be discussed in turn followed by a brief review of some intra-community studies that are sometimes depicted as tests of the theory.

#### Phase I: The Case Studies

The case study results were interpreted as challenges to Wirth's model of urbanism. For instance, Mizruchi [48] contended that Wirth's model leads one to expect expressions of anomie only from residents of large, not small, communities. Contrary to this expectation, he found that a large number of respondents in his sample taken from a relatively small community (population 20,000) expressed a high degree of anomie. Similarly Stone [58] contended that individuals interacting with sales clerks would do so only in a purely pecuniary, utilitarian manner in a middle size community (population 100,000), according to Wirth's thesis. The fact that a large percentage of his sample expressed "personalizing" (reflecting a personal relationship between customer and clerk), and "ethical" (reflecting strong customer loyalty) relationships was interpreted by him as refuting Wirth's thesis. This same logic was applied to Smith *et al*'s [55] finding (based on the same sample) that a large percentage of residents of this same mid-size community interacted to a high degree in primary relationships. Similar conclusions were derived from the work of Axelrod [3], Reiss [49], Sussman [59], Babchuck and Bates [5], Babchuck [4], Tomeh [62], and Adams [1], all of whom discovered levels of primary interaction in urban communities that were thought to be in conflict with the Wirth thesis.

In sum, this body of research was interpreted as incompatible with Wirth's model since he had hypothesized a positive relationship between community size and both feeling of anomie and the relative dominance of secondary relation-

ships. As Wilensky [63, p. 136] stated in his early review:

Studies suggest first that a lively primary group life survives in the urban area, and primary group controls are effective over wide segments of the population. The alleged anonymity, depersonalization, and rootlessness of city life may be the exception rather than the rule.

In terms of the criteria discussed above for evaluating this research, this early empirical stage does not fare well. First, conclusions were based upon data from community case studies, and therefore did not include variation on Wirth's independent variables. Thus, case studies do not meet the comparative research standard of Criterion 1. The second major drawback of this early phase of research is conceptual rather than methodological in nature, and is therefore related to Criterion 2. Wirth maintained that characteristics of urbanism become more accentuated as the urban nature of a community increases. However, he did not maintain the proposition that residents of large, dense, and heterogeneous communities were devoid of primary contacts, or that all urbanites were alienated. This seems to be the interpretation of the researchers during this early phase. Thus, the evidence that residents of a small town express anomie does not contradict Wirth's position; his point is that this characteristic should become more accentuated in more urban communities, not that it is absent in less urban and present in only more urban communities. That is, Wirth's statements dealt with quantitative, not qualitative, differences associated with variation in his ecological variables -- differences of degree, not of kind. Similarly, Wirth's position is not that an individual's social network in less urban communities consists entirely of personal, primary relationships, and only impersonal, secondary relationships characterize social life in more urban communities. His point is that the latter simply become a larger proportion of the individual's total system of social interaction in a more urban community.

Thus, statements such as "The weight of the evidence clearly suggests that local intimacy exists in the city" [55, p. 279], or that "studies suggest first, that a lively primary group life survives in the urban area" [63, p. 136], or that "The complete absence of informal contacts of one sort or the other is extremely rare in metropolitan Detroit" [62, p. 100], do not contradict the Wirth thesis. If Wirth would have been speaking in qualitative rather than quantitative terms, case studies may be beneficial. However, his emphasis upon differences of degree necessitates empirical analysis of related hypotheses which incorporate a range of values on his ecological variables not satisfied by a community sample size of one.

In addition, this research fails to meet the remaining criteria. The concept of "urban" is conceptualized as unidimensional, and operationalized by the single variable of "population size." This, in turn, negates attention to the logical status of Wirth's definitional variables. In addition, the confounding effects of industrialization were ignored, and only direct urban effects were considered. Finally, since the independent variable was not varied, "control" variables were not, by definition considered.

An early methodological improvement was the trend towards analyzing variations in community population size and aspects of urbanism in comparative analyses of small numbers of communities. This research found that differences in expressions of anomie between residents of a small community and a large community (population sizes equal 30,000 and 300,000) disappeared when controls for social class and race were introduced [42]; that responses from a small sample of college students classified according to the density of their communities of residence showed that "dwelling area groups differ little if at all in the incidence of friendly contacts" [60]; that, in an analysis of five communities, population size varied inversely with degree of neighboring, positively with participation in work groups, curvilinearly with both interaction in immediate and extended kinship relationships (a u-shaped association) and participation in formal and informal groups (an inverted u-shaped relationship) [40]; and that reported friendship ties of a sample of white-collar hotel employees residing in different size communities showed that "residents of large cities and their suburbs are less likely to have close friends than residents of small towns" [33, p. 499]. This early comparative research is therefore characterized by mixed findings. Killian and Grigg's [42] and Sutcliffe and Crabbe's [60] analyses seem to contradict Wirth's position, while Key's [40] research gives partial support and Guterman's [33] findings fully support Wirth.

This set of research designs improved upon the case study approach in that at least more than one unit of analysis is included in a comparative design. While not enabling maximum variation on Wirth's ecological variables, this approach at least met the minimal requirement that "If urbanism is a continuum then adequate tests of the model should sample more than one point on that continuum" [17, p. 190]. However, judged by the criteria developed above, this research also fails to adequately test Wirth's model. First, while more than one case is an improvement over analyses of a single case, Criterion 1 remains unmet. Second, and also related to Criterion 1, is the problem that the independent ecological variable is treated on the ordinal level with categories that either do not tap the full range of the urban continuum (e.g., Key's [40] categories range only up to 100,000 while Guterman's [33] categories do not range below 140,000), and/or include gaps between categories (e.g., Guterman's) categories are "under 14,000," "between 1.5 and 2.5 million," and "14 million," while Killian and Grigg's [42] are "30,000" and "300,000"). Thus, the findings of different researchers often relate to different segments of the size continuum. This makes comparisons difficult, and also means that research does not capture the relatively continuous variation of population sizes across community units.

Finally, with the exception of the introduction of control variables for relevant individual level characteristics, this research also generally fails to meet the balance of the criteria. Degree of "urban" is perceived as a unidimensional concept operationalized by the singly independent variable "population size" (or density -- Sutcliffe and Crabbe [82]), no measures of community industrialization are included, indirect effects among variables are not computed, and, with notable exceptions [33, 40], statements such as that by Sutcliffe and Crabbe [60, p. 67] betray a continued misinterpretation of Wirth's thesis:



The results do not support the assumption that all individuals in inner cities are socially isolated . . . The friendless person may of course exist, but it remains to be shown that the incidence of such people increases with urbanization (emphasis added).

## Phase 2: The Large Scale Sample Surveys

The most recent phase of empirical research is methodologically and conceptually superior to the earlier research efforts. However, this present phase still does not adequately test Wirth's thesis, as judged by the criteria developed above.

Most of this recent research has been carried out by Claude S. Fischer [16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23]. He has found that, controlling upon relevant individual level variables, variations in the contextual variable "respondent's community size" are unrelated to variations in expressions of racial tolerance [16], contrary to Wirth's [65, p. 56] proposition that "The juxtaposition of divergent personalities and modes of life tends to produce a relativistic perspective and a sense of toleration of difference. . ." in urbanites. Additionally, in an analysis of multiple survey data sets, Fischer [18] found that community size was unrelated to respondent's expressions of alienation, only weakly associated with a sense of powerlessness, and positively associated with both the tendency to have fewer relatives living nearby and to know fewer neighbors.

In addition, Fischer [19] found that expressions of malaise, a concept referring to a "domain of subjective psychological states encompassing dissatisfaction, unhappiness, despair and melancholy" are unrelated, or related only very weakly, with variations in population size. With the exception of a significant relationship between residents in central city versus suburb and malaise, and residents in the largest cities on the continuum and malaise (the latter association possibly reflecting a "big city" malaise of some type of threshold effect, a notion also developed by Guterman [33]), Fischer concluded that "urban life per se does not generate malaise." Finally, Fischer's research [21] found that individuals are more likely to express less traditional values concerning religion, alcohol consumption and sexual morality, the larger their community of residence.

In summary, Fischer's research does not support propositions derived from Wirth's model of urban social life, with the exception that "large numbers" involve a "greater range of variation" and that, consequently, "the ideas of the members of an urban community may, therefore, be expected to range between more widely separated poles than those of rural inhabitants" [65, p. 53]. This may reflect Glenn's [29] assertion that there is a permanent difference in attitudes engendered by size of community, since the larger the community the more likely it is to be a source of innovation. As Hawley [36] emphasizes, cities have always "served as vortexes of change."

Consistent with Fischer's findings of an absence of an association between community population size and attitudinal indicators of the quality of urban

social life, Inkeles and Smith [38] found, in their cross cultural analysis of residents of communities in five developing countries, no association between community population size and an index of "personal adjustment" or "mental health" consisting of statements reflecting "objective psychological symptoms" of psychological stress. (Psychosomatic Symptom Test). The authors [38, p. 101] conclude from their analysis that:

Despite the presumable greater social disorganization, impersonality, confusion, and discord of the larger, more cosmopolitan, and more rapidly changing urban conglomerates, they evidently do not produce more personal disorientation, individual stress, or psychic disorganization, at least so far as measured by the Psychosomatic Symptoms Test in the samples of young men we studied in five countries.

In contrast to Fischer's and Inkeles and Smith's focus upon propositions derived from Wirth's model, Kasarda and Janowitz [39] recently analyzed the structural determinants of community attachment, including indicators of both the Wirthian perspective (population size and density) and an alternative "systemic" model (individual's length of residence in present community). In contrast to Wirth, they state that:

the systemic model focuses on length of residence as the key exogenous factor influencing community behavior and attitudes. The major intervening variables are friendship and kinship bonds and formal and informal associational ties within the local community [39, p. 330].

Their analysis of a large scale survey carried out in Great Britain, led them to conclude that length of residence was the crucial explanatory variable related to community attachment, in contrast to population size, population density, individual socio-economic status or stage in life cycle. The longer one resides in a community, regardless of its ecological properties, the more integrated one becomes in social networks and the more satisfied one is with his or her community.

In summary, the recent literature directly related to the Wirth thesis has, with few exceptions, not lent support to selected propositions related to that model. However, in terms of the evaluative criteria discussed above, while this set of literature is an improvement upon the earlier research designs, several crucial criteria remain unmet. The advantages of this comparative research will be noted first, and its drawbacks will then be emphasized.

First, these studies measure the independent variable of population size across the full range of the rural urban continuum. However, on the negative side, this variation is reduced by treating population size on the ordinal level and dividing the range of values into a small number of categories. Thus, Criterion I is only partially satisfied. Second, these studies are faithful to Wirth's conception of quantitative, rather than qualitative, relationships between his ecological variables and indicators of urbanism.

Thus, Fischer asserts that his model of Wirth's thesis "assumes a continuum in the degree of urbanism with a corresponding monotonicity in its effects," [17] and Kasarda and Janowitz [39, p. 330] similarly emphasize that "Under the Tonnie's-Wirth approach, the larger the population size and the greater the density of an area, the more attenuated would be community participation and attachments." Finally, these studies control for a series of relevant individual level variables.

However, several crucial criteria are as yet unmet by the existent literature directly concerned with Wirth's thesis. Population size is still the only operational measure of "urban" incorporated into research designs (Kasarda and Janowitz [39] alone include a measure of population density). As yet, no design includes operational measures for all three of Wirth's definitional properties. In addition, all three of these variables are treated, on the conceptual level, as exogenous variables, thus failing to meet Criterion 4. Finally, research designs have yet to incorporate measures of industrialization or to analyze potential indirect urban effects.

### The Intra-Community Studies

Although strictly speaking they do not constitute tests of the Wirth thesis, two related groups of studies deserve mention in this review. One consists of studies which examine the intra-community variation in the character of social life associated with an explicit or presumed difference in the degree of urbanism, e.g., central city vs. suburban differences in neighboring. The other group consists of the numerous studies that have attempted to determine the intra-urban effects of population density.

Some writers seemed unaware that in examining intra-city variations they were not testing the Wirth thesis. Gans [28], for example, differentiates the inner city from the outer city and the suburbs and also notes the variety of population types that inhabit the inner city. Since Wirth's "city" is by definition heterogeneous it is difficult to see how the identification of internal differentiation contradicts the Wirth thesis. The crucial difference in the two approaches is that Wirth is using the community as a whole as his unit of analysis, whereas Gans is concerned with explaining individual level differences. Wirth did not hypothesize which individuals or which sub-areas of the community would manifest greater or lesser degrees of urbanism. Other writers such as Shevky and Bell [53] and Greer [30] sought to elaborate the theory to account for areas within a city that differ in the degree to which they are urbanized. Several studies in this tradition have compared neighborhoods or census tracts within a given city (Greer [30]; Greer and Kuba [31]; Bell and Force [8]; and Bell and Boat [7]). Others have made comparisons between the major zones of the metropolitan community such as the central city and the suburban ring [6, 10, 15, 23, 61].

To the extent that Wirth intended to depict the ways in which more urban settlements differ from less urban settlements, these studies, whatever their other merits, fail as a test of the theory. Moreover, there are at least two additional problems associated with this approach. First, urbanization (sometimes and perhaps more appropriately called "family status") as con-

ceptualized and operationalized in these studies differs radically from the Wirth concept of urban and includes what Wirth would consider the consequences of urbanization. Second, the assumption that suburbs represent an intermediate category between rural and urban rather than the "overflow" of the city and an integral part of the metropolitan community, leads to the erroneous expectation that residents of the suburban ring are less urban than central city residents. The present writers believe it makes more sense to view most suburbs as differentiated and specialized sub-areas of a metropolis. Hence, their degree of urbanism is more a function of the size, density, and heterogeneity of the metropolitan community as a whole rather than the size, density, or heterogeneity of the sub-area itself.

It should also be noted that there is a related tradition of literature dealing with possible effects associated primarily with intra-urban variation in population density. The multidimensional nature of the concept "density" has been emphasized by this literature [12, 27, 32, 46, 51, 57]. Thus, "external" density or what Mitchell [47] refers to as the "macro" urban environment "the number of inhabitants per territorial unit," is contrasted with the "micro" urban environment or "internal" density (number of inhabitants per dwelling unit or per room), "structural" density (the tendency for a community to be characterized by multiple-unit dwellings), and Galle et al's [27] "inclusive concept of interpersonal press" or "overcrowding at the interpersonal level" tapping both of these "micro" dimensions.

This literature has been preoccupied with the possible deleterious effects of density upon social life, with a focus upon indicators of personal disorganization and/or pathology as dependent variables. However, as recent reviews of this literature conclude [22, 25, 67], the empirical findings to date are inconclusive concerning the existence of "density effects." As Fischer, et al [22] conclude:

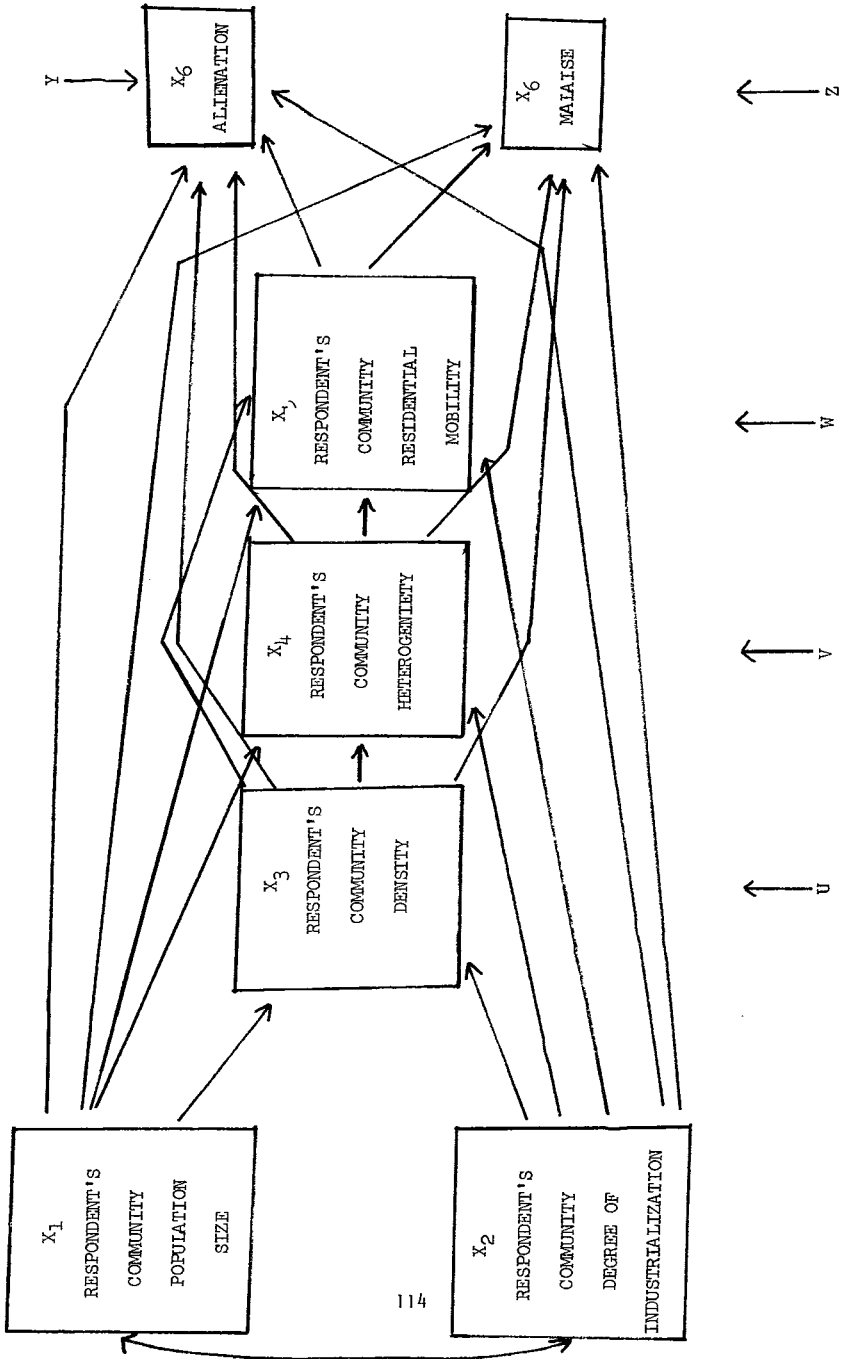
This has been a very critical review. Though we believe the question of density effects on people to be very important, touching the very foundation of man-space relationships, it still remains largely an open one. Those who draw firm conclusions about density and behavior are either speculating or making astonishing inferences from flimsy evidence.

#### AN ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

This review of the literature leads us to conclude that the subtlety and complexity of Wirth's thesis awaits a more adequate empirical test than presently exists in the literature. Guterman's [33] call for a "fresh look" at Wirth's thesis with "research based on adequate measures and adequate design," remains relatively unheeded.

Figure 1 specifies a causal model developed to test selected propositions derived from Wirth's thesis. The model tests the relationships between a series of community contextual variables, that is, those which characterize a member by a property of his collective, and two individual level

FIGURE 1: Urbanism: A Path Model



characteristics which are obtained without making any use either of information about the relationships of the member being described to other members [43].

There are two exogenous variables in the model -- respondent's community population size and degree of industrialization. These are viewed as directly affecting variations in all of the endogenous variables and as a result, having indirect effects upon the indicators of urbanism. Variation in respondent's community density is seen as partially explained by the two exogenous variables, and in turn affects the balance of the model's variables. Respondent's community heterogeneity is perceived as affected by the preceding variables noted above and to similarly have causal effects upon the balance of the variables in the model. The final community contextual variable in the model is respondent's community residential mobility. This variable is perceived as dependent upon all preceding contextual variables, and to have direct effects upon variation in the dependent variables. All of the contextual variables, with the exception of mobility, are assumed to have both direct and indirect effects upon the two indicators of urbanism.

Finally, the two dimensions of urbanism which the model focuses upon are expressions of alienation and malaise, the latter being a "domain of subjective psychological states encompassing dissatisfaction, unhappiness, despair and melancholy" [19, p. 222]. It should be noted that, while these indicators of urbanism are what might generally be considered negative aspects of social life, Wirth's thesis should not be interpreted as predicting only negative effects of increases in community population size, density, and heterogeneity. Wirth's essay includes propositions related to several dimensions of social life which would be valued as positive aspects of social life. For example, he speaks of the increased tolerance of urbanites for individual differences, and of the freedom in urban settlements derived from the lack of excessive informal controls present in smaller, more homogeneous communities. The test proposed here, therefore, tests only some of the predicted consequences of urbanization, however, the design is appropriate for testing other consequences if the relevant data were available.

The research design for testing this model merges aggregate level census data with individual level attitudinal data from the 1972 National Election Study carried out by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. This survey meets the minimum requirement for contextual analysis -- it retains the identity of the respondent's community of residence. This allows the individual level survey data to be merged with aggregate census data measuring the respondents' community characteristics.

In conclusion, we might review the proposed design in terms of the criteria previously developed for evaluating tests of the Wirth thesis. In the proposed design, the concept of "urban" is treated as an interval level variable and measures are taken across a wide range of the rural urban continuum; the relationships among variables are conceptualized as quantitative rather than qualitative; "urban" is considered to be a multidimensional concept and is operationalized by measures of all three of Wirth's definitional characteristics; the logical status of these three variables reflects Durkheimian theory; the effects of industrialization are accounted for; the path analytic model allows

for the analysis of both direct and indirect effects among variables, and finally, the effects of relevant individual level characteristics upon the dependent variables, such as socio-economic status and racial identity are controlled by predicting their effects on the dependent variables through multiple regression analysis and then allowing for them so that only the variance unexplained by the individual level variables is used to identify the parameters of the causal model. In short, the alternative design proposed here seems to be a more adequate test of selected propositions concerning "Urbanism as a Way of Life" than has previously been attempted.

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