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ITALIAN-AMERICAN ETHNIC CONCENTRATION, INFORMAL SOCIAL
CONTROL, AND URBAN VIOLENT CRIME: A DEFENDED NEIGHBORHOODS
APPROACH

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Sociology
in the College of Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term
2012

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of white ethnic concentration on robbery and homicide in Chicago and New York City. As one of the first to disaggregate white ethnic populations, this study has the expectation that Italian-American concentration will have a stronger influence on robbery and homicide than any other white ethnic concentrations. This study is founded on prior qualitative research suggesting that the reputation of Italian-Americans influences the behavior of outsiders in their communities. The data show there is a significant and negative relationship between Italian-American concentration and the violent crimes robbery and homicide. This relationship only exists for white ethnic concentration with robbery. These patterns occur across both cities at three different aggregate levels. The results indicate that there may be particular characteristics about Italian-American ethnic concentrations which have dampening effects on the frequency of homicide and robbery in their communities; it is speculated that a reputation for Mafia involvement is one of the protective factors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Corzine, Dr. Jasinski, Dr. Huff-Corzine, and Dr. Jarvis for their help with this document and for the support during my graduate career. The advice and professional development have been invaluable and for that I am very grateful.

I would also like to acknowledge my parents for their total support in completing this document and for their continued assistance with childcare.

To my ex-spouse's parents, I am grateful for the assistance given each week so that I could attend class.

Ethan and Xander, you guys were both troopers. You made it through!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

High rates of violent crime in urban areas in the United States perplex and exhaust criminological research. Discussed empirically for decades, the consensus that urban areas typically generate higher violent crime rates than their rural counterparts maintains its validity (Blau & Blau, 1982; Kingston, Huizinga & Elliott, 2009; Massey, 1994; Peterson & Krivo, 2005; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997). The Uniform Crime Report (UCR) for 2008 shows a violent crime rate of 381.9 for metropolitan counties (population over 100,000) and a violent crime rate of 237.8 for non- metropolitan counties (population less than 10,000 (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2008). In 2009, these rates remained constant with violent crime rates of 359.4 and 230.3 for metropolitan counties and non-metropolitan counties, respectively (FBI, 2009). These data illustrate the disparity between urban and rural violent crime rates. Variables commonly examined to explain the high violent crime rate in urban locations include total population, population density, poverty, opportunity, segregation, structural racism, and ethnic concentration, among others (Park & Burgess 1925; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1997; Shaw & McKay [1942]1969). However, in smaller aggregate levels within urban areas, pockets of crime noticeably above and below city-wide averages become evident (Park & Burgess, 1925; Sampson, 1985). Explanations for this variability in the urban crime rates at the neighborhood level share similarities with those for the higher and lower crime rates at the city level.

Segregation, ethnic concentration, socioeconomic status, and population density are applied to understanding both high and low crime rates across neighborhoods within urban areas. Placing emphasis on socioeconomic status as a factor that explains neighborhood violent crime finds its way to the foreground of the literature. Poverty, unemployment, alcohol availability, family composition, and educational attainment are frequently discussed as indicators of socioeconomic status at the neighborhood level and mentioned in relationship to violent crime rates (Blau & Blau 1982; Browning & Erickson, 2009; Morenoff & Sampson, 1997; Speer, Gorman, Labouvie, & Ontush, 1998; Sundquist, Theobald, Yang, Li, Johansson & Sundquist, 2006). Massey (1994) discusses segregation and structural racism as the root of the difference in violent crimes within urban neighborhoods. Sampson and Lauritsen (1997) agree with certain aspects of segregation as a catalyst for urban violent crime, but also report on collective efficacy as contributing to the depletion of urban violent crime despite racially or ethnically disparate circumstances. Black (1976), Cooney (1994), Patillo (1998), Suttles (1972) and Whyte (1943) theoretically and qualitatively discuss informal social control as a key factor in maintaining low violent crime rates in urban neighborhoods. Without denying the plausibility or validity of any of these suggestions, an alternative explanation for the variability in violent crime across urban neighborhoods should be explored. This study builds on current arguments for population homogeneity, collective efficacy, and informal social control as explanations for lowered rates of violent crime. Ethnic concentration is often linked to lowered crime rates at the neighborhood level through increased collective efficacy and informal social control based on cultural similarities and

strong community ties (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Hirschi, 1969; Hunter, 1985; Shaw and McKay, [1942]1969). Italian ethnic concentration, typically studied qualitatively on limited populations, has been notably discussed as an influence on neighborhood protection (Lombardo & Lurigio, 1995; Suttles, 1972). Ethnographies paint Italians as commanding authority in their respective neighborhoods based on a reputation for violence and a rumored relationship to the Italian-American Mafia (Lombardo & Lurigio, 1995; Suttles 1972; Whyte, 1943).

Shaw and McKay (1969), Suttles (1972), Hunter (1985), Sampson (1985), and Bursik and Grasmick (2001), among others, provide the framework for the argument that, despite the massive illicit dealings of the Italian-American Mafia, the residential neighborhoods in which they live and work remain relatively free of delinquency and street crime, more so than other similar urban neighborhoods. The underlying premise is straight-forward, everybody prefers to live in a safe neighborhood. This study will examine the characteristics of the defended neighborhood (DeSena, 2005; Suttles, 1972) and how they are uniquely applied to New York City and Chicago neighborhoods. The expectation is that neighborhoods with an Italian-American concentration have significantly lower rates of violent crime than other neighborhoods within these cities due to the influence and informal social control exerted through ethnic concentration and organized crime.

First, after a clarification of the impact of social organization and social control in the existing literature, this study disaggregates white ethnic concentration, which will move forward the existing literature from only disaggregating population concentration

by black, white, and Latino (Feldmeyer and Steffensmeier, 2009; Martinez, 2010; Sampson, 2002). This is important because while finding that predominantly white ethnic communities have significantly different crime rates is useful, understanding if there is a significant difference between individual white ethnic concentrations will prove more constructive; this is true not only for understanding crime but also for understanding patterns of urban development. Next, this study observes the social organization of the Italian-American neighborhoods as well as the Italian-American Mafia as vehicles for informal social control in a neighborhood setting. Finally, this study tests social disorganization theory and various ideas on social control, examining whether the criteria for patterns of social disorganization and social control hold true in the neighborhoods that have lower violent crime rates, or if the lowered rate could alternatively be explained by Italian-American Mafia presence. Because rates of violent crime in urban areas are of interest, this study will add to the discussion of the protective factors of ethnic concentration, organization and informal social control, along with the convergence of these concepts in the creation and maintenance of defended neighborhoods. There is a large potential for generating more effective urban public policy by informing the importance of informal social control for defended neighborhoods and, subsequently, neighborhood public safety. Rather than the traditional urban focus of correcting for socioeconomic status, public policies could begin to focus on community organization and individual responsibility regardless of economic position.

Chapter Outline

Chapter two overviews the relevant theoretical and empirical literature related to neighborhoods and crime. This chapter explores the contributions of ecological approaches to criminology, as well as the criticisms of these theories and the status of current empirical evidence therein. Social control is discussed as the underlying feature for both social problems and solutions in the extant literature.

Focusing on social control, chapter three delineates the theoretical framework set forth by Shaw and McKay (1969), Suttles (1972), Hunter (1985), Sampson (1985), and Bursik and Grasmick (2001), as it relates to ethnic concentration and collective efficacy in urban areas. This chapter conceptualizes similarities between the social organization of a defended neighborhood and the cultural organization of Italian-Americans. For example, Sampson (1999) highlights the importance of family composition in a socially organized neighborhood, and family composition appears to be a key factor in Italian-American culture and the culturally generated Italian-American Mafia organization. Building on previous suggestions that neighborhoods with criminal networks often experience lower rates of violent crime, this chapter discusses the social control that is potentially generated through criminal organizations. Finally, this chapter overviews the social organization, social control, and reputation needed for both the function of the Italian-American Mafia organization and the function of a successful defended neighborhood.

Chapter four outlines the data collection and methodological foundation of the empirical analysis for this project. The layout for the cities of New York and Chicago are

explained, and the agencies from which the data will be collected are discussed. Finally the analyses of choice are overviewed.

Chapter five covers the results of the descriptive statistics and the 12 negative binomial models. The relationships between the predictor variables and the violent crimes, robbery and homicide, are presented and the statistical significance of predictor variables is highlighted.

Chapter six discusses the implications of the results for the city of Chicago. A juxtaposition of the results is made for two levels of aggregation, the Chicago neighborhoods and census tracts. Finally this chapter discusses whether or not the results reflect that smaller aggregate levels are more useful for analyses than larger ones.

Chapter seven discusses the results for the City of New York and the inferences that can be made therein. Similar patterns of crime and predictors of crime are seen in both Chicago and New York City, and these patterns are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter eight focuses on the limitations and makes final concluding remarks. This confirms what we can or cannot infer from the entire study; what the patterns of significance the Italian-American and white ethnic concentrations have on the violent crimes, robbery and homicide, and what can truly be said about them.

Successfully disaggregating white ethnic concentration and quantitatively testing a subject matter that has typically been left to ethnographies and qualitative research are the two main goals of this project. Looking for patterns across cities and at different aggregate levels and understanding if the concentration of certain white ethnic groups, particularly Italian-Americans, can predict lower counts of robbery and homicide are also

of importance here. Prior qualitative studies create the framework that there should be a distinct difference in the presence of crime in communities that are predominantly Italian-American (Suttles, 1972; Whyte, 1943). Much of this study should add to the existing body of literature on informal social control and neighborhoods and crime.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A substantial body of literature supports social control as both a foundation of 20th century criminological theory and a suggestion as a factor in the reduction of urban violent crime rates (Janowitz, 1975; Park et al., 1925). “In the origins of sociology, ‘social control’ served as a central concept both for relating sociology to social philosophy and for analyzing total societies” (Janowitz, 1975, p. 82). E.A. Ross (1901) discusses the necessity of communities to “find a means of guiding the will or conscience of the individual members of society (p. 59). Many theorists have tackled the notion of social control and the phenomenon of individuals engaging in self-regulating behaviors; there is a strong will to understand exactly how communal social control occurs and why it seems to form differently across communities. “All social problems turn out to be problems of social control” (Park & Burgess, 1921, p. 785).

Social Control within Criminological Theories

“Social control and the mutual subordination of individual members to the community have their origin in conflict, assume definite organized forms in the process of accommodation, and are consolidated and fixed in assimilation” (Park & Burgess, 1921, p. 785). Essentially, social control involves suppression of individual inclinations and adoption of the norms of the community. According to Durkheim, “We are moral beings to the extent that we are social beings” (1961, p. 64). Travis Hirschi interprets this as “we are moral beings to the extent that we have ‘internalized the norms’ of society”

(Hirschi, 1969, p. 8). Social behavior is influenced by the acceptance of societal norms. Communities that push their norms on the residents could be said to have more social control over their respective areas than those places that do not have the expectation that their neighbors will share similar behaviors and beliefs.

According to Mead, “social control depends, then, upon the degree to which individuals in society are able to assume attitudes of others who are involved with them in common endeavors” (Mead, 1925, p. 275). People tend to conform to the attitudes of the individuals with whom they are closely associated, specifically if the individuals have common goals. Appearing like an early precursor to the concept of homogeneity in Shaw and McKay’s social disorganization theory (1942), this idea also shows early representations of the concepts of guardianship (Cohen & Felson, 1979) and social bonding (control) theory (Hirschi, 1969). Similar to Mead’s notion of assuming attitudes, Vincent (1896), writes “social control is the art of combining social forces so as to give society at least a trend toward an ideal” (Vincent, 1896, p. 490). Janowitz (1975) associated the early emergence of the concept of social control with Durkheim’s “organic solidarity,” Parson’s “pattern variables,” and Cooley’s “primary and secondary groups” (Janowitz, 1975, p. 82). Simmel (1955), who authored “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” focused on social control and self-regulated communities in the urban setting. The more affiliated we are with a social group the more we surrender ourselves to it, however, we retain individuality by the unique patterns of participation within the group (Simmel, 1955, pp. 140-41). “While social control involves the capacity of constituent groups in a society to behave in terms of their acknowledged moral and collective goals, it does not

imply cultural relativism” (Janowitz, 1975, p. 84). Collective morals and goals do not necessarily have to be culturally specific; they are driven and enforced by culture. Black (1970, 1984) explains that for society the written law is an uncertain guide, and rather by using informal sanctions on one another for wrong doing, social control becomes the management of conflict. Cooney (1994) argues similarly by explaining that we “rarely invoke the legal system” and that behaviors like avoidance are implemented as sanctions among the people we know that behave in ways that are not approved of either communally or culturally. Informal social control serves as an informal legal system by these standards.

The concept of social control (not Hirschi’s formal theory) will be the lens through which the following theories will be analyzed. The general assertion to this point is that social control is achieved through some type of collective moral standard and some type of assimilation process within a community. This idea is of central importance to the thesis of this dissertation, because the foundation of controlling criminal behavior is in understanding social control and how it is achieved. The mechanisms for social control from each of the following theories will be teased out and discussed; see *Figure 1* for a timeline of the theories of interest. Different approaches to understanding the development of social control and the effects such control can have on violent crime at the neighborhood level are of central importance here.

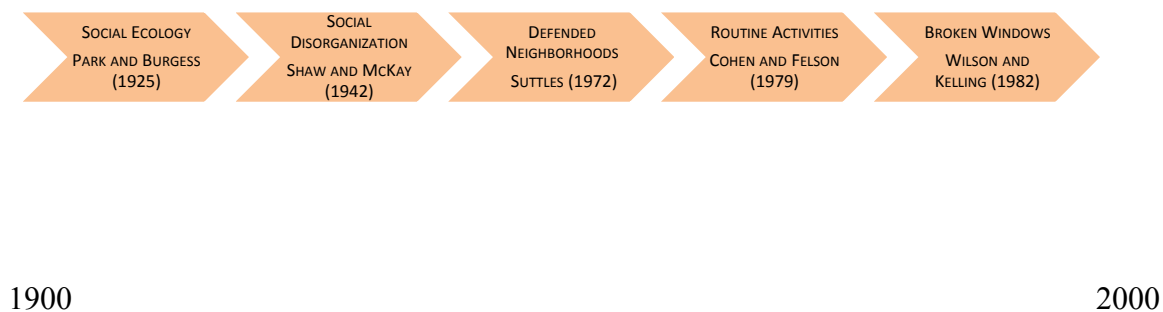


Figure 1: Timeline, Criminological Theories Emphasizing Elements of Social Control

Urban Ecology, Natural Areas, Concentric Zones, and Social Control

Robert Park discusses “natural forces” as mechanisms of social control. While this is not an explicit implication, it becomes obvious that the pattern of city development serves as a vehicle for social control. “There are forces at work within the limits of any natural area of human habitation, in fact—which tend to bring about an orderly and typical grouping of its population and institutions” (Park, 1967, p. 1). The following will outline the many different ecological views of urban development, with a focus on their influence on social control. According to Abbot (1974) and Braude (1970), the term “ecology” originates with Ernst Haeckel, a German biologist in the late 19th Century who was a proponent of Darwin (Abbott, 1974, p. 51). This idea of ecology, of the environment influencing the way that animals interact, quickly became a topic of interest in the social sciences (Abbott, 1974; Janowitz, 1975). Robert Park began investigating

the social world by applying the ecological concepts of “symbiotic and cultural levels” to human interaction (Park, 1936, 1939). The symbiotic level contains the natural competition between humans for survival and the cultural level is that which we create through communicative action and symbols. “The conscious participation in a common purpose and a common life, rendered possible by the fact of speech and by the existence of a fund of common symbols and meanings” (Park, 1936, p. 173). While communities may be formed by symbiotic “natural” processes, communication enables those communities to stay intact; the natural process of city development enables social interaction and social control.

Park (1936) observed that as one moved away from the center of the city of Chicago into the outer areas (suburbs) there seemed to be a correlation with the reduction of crime; he also noted “transition” neighborhoods which were the areas closest to the central business district with high concentrations of immigrants and new residents (Park, 1936, p 171). These areas typically have low-income housing and are convenient to the factory and other low-paying skilled labor jobs. Labeling these areas as “transitional” highlights the impermanence of these areas; they are used by new residents as a means to get established before eventually moving further away from the city-center to more “stable” areas of the city (Park, 1936, p. 171). Under this theory, the mechanism for social control is neighborhood location and spatial relationships, but most importantly this theory viewed city development as an innate, self-regulating process. “The organization of the city, the character of the urban environment and of the discipline

which it imposes is finally determined by the size of the population, its concentration and distribution within the city area” (Park et al., 1925, p. 6).

Central to Park’s thesis were what he called “natural areas,” the central business district, residential areas, industrial districts, satellite cities, slums, and immigrant colonies; these areas were not planned but naturally formed by the environment and human interaction (Park et al., [1925] 1936). “The social and physical structure of the city, with its many neighborhoods and functional areas, is then an unanticipated consequence of people attempting to live together collectively” (Abbott, 1974, p. 53). These natural areas were presumed to be found in all developing urban areas and could account for why certain ethnic enclaves and suburban areas displayed consistent characteristics across U.S. cities. Again, for Park (1936), spatial location is the underlying mechanism for social control; the specific “natural area” in which one resides determines the extent of social interaction and social organization. These natural areas sparked the interest of Ernest Burgess who took a spatial approach to the idea of ecological urban growth.

Concentric Zones

Burgess (1925) added to this theory by creating the notion of concentric zones in *The Growth of the City*, theorizing that the city comprises concentric circles radiating from the center circle, the Central Business District. Similar to Park’s “natural” areas, the zones, according to Burgess, were the Central Business District, the zone of

transition, the zone of workingmen's homes, the zone of better residences, and the commuter's zone.

This theory was based on the layout of the city of Chicago, but because concentric circles cannot be replicated in most urban areas, the validity of the arguments of Burgess' zonal theory has been damaged (Quinn, 1940, p. 210). Typically, cities develop the patterns and clusters that both Park and Burgess suggest, but not in the precise manner in which they proposed. Abbott (1974) created an inverse test of this hypothesis in Moscow, Russia, analyzing a pre-industrial city to find that the most disorganized and degraded areas were actually the outer rings of the city. Supporting Burgess' hypothesis that after a city is industrialized, the central business district becomes the center, the results highlight that prior to industrialization the inverse holds true.

Criticisms of Ecological and Zonal Theories

Criticisms of Park and Burgess include how to measure the space between zones when mapping the circles on a given urban area. Traditional linear measures (miles, kilometers, etc.) are proposed to measure space, while time as a measure of distance is also recommended because it more accurately represents individual perceptions of urban distance (McKenzie, 1926). Others suggest that cities do not conform to the proposed concentric circles but some evidence suggests that if a different measure were used for the radius of the concentric circles, then the pattern would coincide with Burgess' proposal in a more universally applicable way (Blumenfeld, 1949; Quinn, 1940). Finally, there is the argument that these ecological theories overlook individual human choice and

action (Katz, 2009). Despite the critics who consider it to be simplistic, outdated, or inapplicable to any city beyond Chicago, evidence sustains Park and Burgess in their attempt to understand urban patterns of development and settlement, and there exists substantial support that community development facilitates informal social control. The geographical location of an area can influence the behavior of residents and serve as a mechanism for social control.

Social Disorganization Theory

Building on the ideas of natural areas and community as a mechanism for social control, social disorganization theory, developed by Shaw and Mckay, ([1942] 1969), is a logical extension of Park and Burgess' (1925) concentric zone theories. Capitalizing on the idea of transitional neighborhoods, this theory focuses on population heterogeneity, low income, and high mobility (transition) as conducive to disorganization that can help explain the relative levels of crime incidents in a given area. Conversely, population homogeneity, high income, and low mobility in a neighborhood are elements of stability, which yield lower incidents of crime in a neighborhood with these characteristics.

“Delinquency is found to be highly correlated with changes in population, inadequate housing, poverty, presence of Negroes and foreign-born, tuberculosis, mental disorders, and adult criminality. The common basic factor is social disorganization or the absence of community effort to cope with these conditions. Causation of juvenile delinquency is to be sought more in terms of the community than of the individual” (Shaw & McKay, 1942, p xxxii). This ecological approach to understanding criminal behavior places

renewed emphasis on the importance of community, permanent residence, and collective efficacy as necessary factors in the social control of criminal activity. The mechanism for social control in this case is community stability.

More recent analyses of social disorganization find support for the theory. Kawachi and Kennedy (1999) test social disorganization and find that income inequality and low social capital are associated with violent crime and property crime, respectively. They conclude that “crime is a mirror of the quality of the social environment” (Kawachi & Kennedy, 1999, p. 719). Again, suggesting that social networks and social control are central to crime prevention, Osgood and Chambers (2000) find that “juvenile violence was associated with rates of residential instability, family disruption and ethnic heterogeneity” (p. 81). Markowitz (2006) finds support for social disorganization by concluding that increased crime and disorder share a positive relationship with fear, which in turn, reduces social cohesion. When residents become fearful of crime, they tend to seclude themselves more which breaks down already established social networks. Warner and Pierce (1993) continue the support for social disorganization theory with their findings that poverty, heterogeneity, density, and low family cohesion are important factors in understanding crime distribution (p. 493). Smith, Frazee, and Davison (2006), find support for social disorganization and its relationship to street robbery; the less socially organized a community, the more street robberies occur (p. 489). Clear, Rose, Waring and Scully (2003) also find a positive correlation between prison release rates and community crime rates. Finally, Bellair (1997) finds that human interaction between neighbors at least once per year had the “most consistent and generally strongest effect”

on the crimes of burglary, auto theft, and robbery (p. 677). This type of interaction can mediate the effect of ecological characteristics on crime. The distribution of overt street crimes generally supports the basic tenets of social disorganization theory. Evidence suggests that community organization is typically an influential factor on crime when it is included in a model. Specific characteristics like socioeconomic status, population density, or homogeneity continue to be debated in the literature as to their level of influence over community crime. This theory reiterates the importance of community as a mechanism of social control; the more organized a community is, the better communication it will have and, therefore, it has a better chance at maintaining informal social control.

Criticisms of Social Disorganization

Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) suggest that a major problem with social disorganization theory is that it seems like only part of the story. In other words, it overlooks the specific situations of families classified as urban poor and has led us to rely on spurious relationships for explaining urban crime; the relationships between social disorganization, detachment from the community, and delinquency are not related in the ways that are assumed by this theory (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Sampson & Groves, 1989). Further, Lander (1954), Bohm (1997) and others argue that social disorganization is circular reasoning and lends itself to an ecological fallacy by relying on crime rate data for aggregate levels and ignoring the individual striving for political or social change. Others assert that there is no discussion about how to generate lawful societal norms

informally (Meares 1998). Elliot et al. (1996) find that while social disorganization proposes low income and poverty as an indirect cause of crime, many have found it to be a direct cause of crime (Kornhauser, 1979; Byrne & Sampson, 1986). The evidence is clear that social disorganization does overlook many individual and cultural characteristics of a community, but the basic tenets are continually supported in much of the empirical findings in the literature. Community organization can serve as a mechanism for informal social control.

Defended Neighborhoods

Explicitly discussing informal social control and building on social disorganization is Suttles' (1972) concept of "the defended neighborhood." The public reputation of a neighborhood as an important asset for maintaining safe streets is central to the defended neighborhoods thesis. Neighborhood residents define and maintain this reputation; individual effort is a key factor in protecting a neighborhood (Suttles 1972). In other words, public reputations and collective efficacy are the means to obtaining social control in a community. Both Whyte (1943) and Suttles (1972) emphasize specific cultural goals as motivations for communities to organize, rather than the concepts of affluence and homogeneity suggested by social disorganization (Alba, Logan, & Crowder, 1996; Browning, Feinberg & Dietz, 2004). In other words, neighborhood context and community dynamic influence a community's organization through socially constructed goals, highlighting that socioeconomic status might not be a key factor in social organization. Rather, communities organize because of shared interest or a

common need (which could be crime prevention). For Suttles (1972), the mechanism for social control is collective efficacy, and this is obtained through community organization with a common purpose.

Among theoretical perspectives, the defended neighborhoods thesis receives little credit and is sometimes referred to as simplistic (Green, Strolovich, & Wong, 1998). Further, others suggest it is merely a thesis focused on promoting “out-groups” and preserving “racial homogeneity” (Green et al., 1998). Qualitative studies of defended neighborhoods are said to support an idea of white homogeneity as a key factor in community defense (Alba et al., 1996), reinforcing structural racism and lending no solutions to the issue of violent crime in non-white neighborhoods (Oliver & Mendelberg, 2000).

Whyte (1943), Suttles (1972) and DeSena (1990) are typically cited to support the criticism that the defended neighborhoods thesis is a white, ethnocentric proposal (Alba et al., 1996; Grattet, 2009; Green et al., 1998; Oliver and Mendelberg, 2000). However, both Whyte (1943) and Suttles (1972) make the argument that racial and ethnic homogeneity are not the only factors in the process of collective efficacy; community goals create the context for efficacy beyond racial and ethnic tension. Patillo (1998) studied an African-American neighborhood that was home to a Chicago street gang. This neighborhood exhibited the same characteristics of a defended neighborhood that are observed in white neighborhoods. The reputation of this Chicago neighborhood was well-known to be home to this gang, therefore, the neighborhood remained relatively free from violent outsiders and residents reported feeling safe comparatively under the

protection of the gang (Patillo, 1998). This is one of many recent examples that highlight that defended neighborhoods are not limited to white ethnic concentrations; other homogeneous neighborhoods are just as effective in their own defense. Tita and Ridgeway (2007) observed gang activity in Pittsburgh and note that gang meeting spots, or “set space,” may reduce crime in surrounding areas. The gang membership in this case is mostly African-American and places more emphasis on the idea that defended neighborhoods are equal opportunity for any race or ethnicity. Further, a pattern of collective efficacy is observed in Kingston, Jamaica, by Patricia Morris (2010). Within the Kingston metropolitan area, neighborhoods organized with similar political goals and through this common interest, the neighborhoods obtained effective informal social control (Morris, 2010). This case supports the idea that defended neighborhoods are not bound by ethnicity or country; the possibility for collective efficacy and informal social control depends largely on how residents organize, not ethnicity or location. As long as a neighborhood is well organized, informal social control is attainable, regardless of ethnicity or neighborhood location. The mechanism for social control is community organization around a common goal of enforcing neighborhood standards.

Criticisms of Defended Neighborhoods

Reider (1985) is typically referenced when the defended neighborhoods concept is discussed as promoting egregiously violent responses to “outsiders” (Alba et al., 1994; Green et al., 1998). The emphasis becomes the outcome of a community’s collectivity rather than the process of achieving a community social network (Grattet, 2009).

However, as proposed by Whyte (1943), Suttles (1972), and Patillo (1998), neighborhoods are not necessarily considered “safe” in the traditional sense, but despite the violent and delinquent gang overtones, the neighborhoods they studied remained relatively free of outsider violence. While this is also viewed as supportive of collective violence, the defended neighborhood proposal accents the violent reputation of the neighborhood, not the literal violent behavior; a neighborhood’s reputation serves as a valuable asset in the maintenance of safe streets.

Some empirical evidence highlights mechanisms beyond violence to explain defended neighborhoods and collective efficacy. Ley and Cybrwisky (1974) find that graffiti defines the boundaries and turfs within certain neighborhoods and that, specifically in ethnic neighborhoods, graffiti identifies tension zones (p. 491). The presence of the graffiti, in this case, serves as a warning to outsiders and aids in neighborhood defense. Buell (1980) argues that using the defended neighborhood model in South Boston adds to understanding the neighborhood’s “prolonged and intense resistance to busing and school desegregation” (p. 161). By contrast, Merry (1981) finds a failure to defend space because of fragmented social fabric in the American inner city (p. 397). This suggests that certain communities may not organize for their own defense because they lack a foundation for a social network; however, based on the literature this empirical finding is rare. In either case, understanding collective efficacy is important to understanding community behaviors.

The defended neighborhood is generally well organized with a strong city-wide reputation. Both organization and reputation are the mechanisms of social control

supported by this idea, and the informal social control that is obtained through these means is said to be extremely effective.

Routine Activities Theory

Following along the same lines of prior theories by discussing elements of informal social control as crime prevention, Cohen and Felson (1979) write that they center their theory around the criminal act rather than offenders' motivations or ecological influences on criminal behavior (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p. 589; Felson, 1997, p. 20). Noting holes in the criminological literature, routine activities theory argues that viewing criminal acts as events could shed more light on criminal activity (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p. 591). These claims are founded in the knowledge that most studies at the time were exploring "collective efficacy, spatial analysis, urban layouts and social interaction" (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p. 591). Instead, they would study crimes as events: "specific locations in space and time, involving specific persons and/or objects" (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p. 589). With a focus on predatory crime, they developed three predictive factors of crime incidence: motivated offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians. The lack of at least one of these criteria is enough to prevent the crime from taking place (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p. 590). In other words, crime can be prevented by the presence of capable guardians or by making targets unattractive, especially if you operate under the assumption that there will always be a motivated offender. Here is where informal social control is emphasized through the suggestion that criminal behavior can be controlled by surveillance (guardianship) and

also making targets unsuitable (installing locks, alarms, etc). While this theory originated as a deviation from ecological crime theories, empirical research discussed below tests this theory at the neighborhood level and argues its usefulness as such.

Messner and Tardiff (1985) find routine activities theory to be a useful approach to understanding the urban ecology of homicide, finding that both spatial and temporal factors contribute to victimization (p. 241). Suggesting that area of the city is just as much a factor in homicide as time of day, Messner and Tardiff (1985) support the idea that space and time are more predictive of crime than other social characteristics. Felson and Cohen (1980) find support for routine activities through the human ecology perspective noting that social factors can prevent the convergence of a victim and an offender through space and time (p. 389). This implies that capable guardians can intervene between a victim and offender's potential interaction through space and time. Felson (1987) writes that the privatization of "substantial portions" of the developing metropolis will provide "natural surveillance" suggesting that this could potentially reverse the trends of increases in crime rates while a city rapidly develops (p. 911). Social factors might influence a potential victimization because private businesses are likely to have a strong surveillance system; this surveillance influences and deters incidents of victimization. Roncek and Maier (1991) find that the density of business placement is actually a factor in community victimization rates because business districts create higher potential for anonymity and a lower potential for guardianship after 6pm when businesses shut down (p. 725). Sampson and Wooldredge (1987) find empirical support for a predatory victimization model where guardianship and opportunity share

negative relationships with criminal activity. The community plays an important part in both the protection and predation of its residents (p. 371).

Meithe, Stafford, and Long (1987) find strong “interaction effects between the demographic characteristics of victims and certain routine activities that occur at night and away from home, but only for victims of property crime” (Kennedy & Forde 1990, p. 137). Routine activities that keep individuals away from home at night contribute to property crime victimization but not other types of victimization. If an individual is not at home, their property is more vulnerable to victimization. Kennedy and Forde (1990) use the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey and find that personal crimes “are contingent on the exposure that comes from following certain life-styles” (p. 137).

Lifestyle choices potentially overexpose individuals to opportunities for personal victimization. Anderson and Bennet (1996) find that motivation and measures of guardianship were significant for crimes with women as victims, and that this theory holds true in developed nations more than less-developed ones (p. 31). When women are the suitable target, offenders may be more motivated; however, guardianship might be more effective as a protective factor. Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996) argue that rather than variables measuring lifestyle and lifestyle choices, the characteristics of the targets make a “significant contribution to assault” (p. 3). This suggests that research focused on the characteristics of a target, rather than capable guardianship or other lifestyle choices, may give more insight into patterns of victimization. In this case, guardianship is the mechanism for social control; capable guardians, or surveillance techniques can act as a deterrent to criminal behavior and decrease victimization.

Criticisms of Routine Activities

There is a significant body of evidence to support guardianship as an important factor, in addition to spatial and temporal considerations, in the deterrence of criminal behavior as supported by Cohen and Felson (1979). However, other evidence notes the characteristics of the targets that are factors in occurrence or deterrence of a criminal act (Bennett, 1991). Massey, Krohn, and Bonati (1989) note that offender motivation remains a struggle to quantify and understand with the routine activities approach. Kennedy and Baron (1993) suggest this theory falls short in an explanation for how social interactions can begin calm and escalate into a violent altercation; certain individual choices are overlooked. Although we lack enough evidence to conclude one way or the other, social control appears to be a big part of the deterrence of crime in routine activities theory. Viewing guardianship as social control, many neighborhoods with organized criminal groups obtain social control through their guardianship of the area. Most organized criminal groups use heavy surveillance to protect their criminal business interests, and this surveillance could be the mediating factor in the convergence of offenders and victims in their neighborhoods. In this case, guardianship and surveillance act as the mechanisms for social control to protect business interests.

Broken Windows

Another idea that includes elements of informal social control as crime prevention at the neighborhood level is the “broken windows” thesis. In 1982, Wilson and Kelling

asserted that crime and disorder could be avoided if we focus law enforcement efforts on minor disorder violations. By keeping neighborhoods free from disarray and degradation, a reduction in the levels of crime will occur; people tend to behave if things look nice (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). This was based on a study that Philip Zimbardo (1973) conducted in the Bronx by leaving an abandoned vehicle and waiting to see how long before delinquent behavior occurred. Broken Windows is not a “theory” of crime; it is merely a concept that made its way into empirical testing in the criminological field. Wilson admitted in a 2004 interview that “broken windows” is not a theory, rather it is an assumption based on observations “that a deteriorating quality of life caused the crime rate to go up” (Harcourt & Ludwig, 2006, p. 315). Nevertheless this concept has made quite an impact in the way urban areas focus their police and city clean-up efforts. New York City is one urban location that adopted this philosophy in their policing by focusing on reducing misdemeanor crimes and minor vandalism in an effort to deter felony crimes and more destructive behaviors.

Since Zimbardo’s (1973) study and the infamous Wilson and Kelling (1982) article, this “concept” has been repeatedly tested. Proponents of this theory claim that cleaning up the streets in Manhattan’s Time Square in New York City helped to relieve that area of the city from its high crime problem (Harcourt & Ludwig, 2006; Messner et al., 2007). Broken windows theory and misdemeanor policing as effective in crime reduction in New York City is challenged, however, because if solving crime were as easy as wiping up graffiti and fixing broken windows, then we probably would not still be looking for answers to the crime problem (Akers, 1997).

Corman and Mocan (2002) posit that the broken windows hypothesis maintains validity in cases of robbery and motor vehicle theft. They cite that while both “economic and deterrence variables are important in explaining the decline in crime,” deterrence measures explain more than economic ones (Corman and Mocan, 2002, p. 21). Cerda, Tracy, Messner, Vlahov, Tardiff, and Galea (2009) find that misdemeanor policing dramatically reduces homicide rates, “but there is still no support for the hypothesis that physical disorder is a mediator of the impact of such policing” (p. 533). Sampson (1986) finds support for a reduction in adult robbery (specifically that committed by black adults) when there are frequent arrests for public order offenses. Cities with a high risk of imprisonment have lower rates of juvenile robbery offending (Sampson, 1986, p. 271).

Criticisms of Broken Windows

Evidence remains mixed as to whether or not this approach is effective. Harcourt and Ludwig (2006) argue that Sampson et al. (2002) and Corman and Mocan (2002) are unable to say definitively if broken windows policing serves as a predictor of crime reduction because most areas with high crime during the 1980s saw subsequent large decreases in crime in the 1990s, even if no specific crime control method were in place (p. 276). Newton’s Law of Crime, which is generally what goes up the most will also come down the most, suggests that there is no linkage between criminal behavior and clean communities (Harcourt & Ludwig, 2006, p. 276). Suggesting that other aspects of publicly enforced neighborhood change affect crime and disorder, Harcourt and Ludwig praise a renewed focus on proactive policing measures and the relationship between

increased spending on police forces and crime reduction over all (Harcourt & Ludwig, 2006).

There is no consensus as to whether or not misdemeanor policing is an effective tool for crime reduction, but there is some merit to the idea that neighborhood upkeep may influence the crime rate. Not necessarily because of the act of cleanliness, but because the appearance of the neighborhood is a common goal that a community shares. This suggests that some type of community cohesion exists. If a community has enough social control over the appearance of buildings, yards, etc., then it could be said that just as much informal social control would be exerted over criminal activity. The mechanism for social control then is the common goal of neighborhood upkeep. See *Figure 2* for a diagram of the mechanisms for social control that have been delineated thus far.



Figure 2: Mechanisms of Informal Social Control in Criminological Theories

Neighborhoods and Crime

Recent literature examines crime at the neighborhood level utilizing theories focused around social control or collective efficacy as mechanisms to deter crime. Chappell, Monk-Turner, and Payne (2010), examine “broken windows” and fear of crime and emphasize the interaction of social disorder with physical disorder within a neighborhood. Social disorder (lack of cohesion and control) may be a more legitimate determinant of violent crime than the physical disorder suggested by “broken windows.” Stults (2010) points out that a lack of organization of neighborhood residents and family disruption are predictive factors in neighborhood homicide counts. Kirk and Matsuda (2011), Simons and Burt (2011), Leverentz (2011), Zimmerman (2010), and Bernasco and Block (2009) emphasize collective efficacy as a key factor in the reduction of urban neighborhood violent crime. Neighborhoods with residents taking initiative in their own crime prevention will enjoy lower levels of overt violent street crime (Bernasco & Block, 2009; Kirk & Matsuda, 2011; Simons & Burt, 2011). Alongside collective efficacy is neighborhood stability as a means of obtaining solid social control (Katz & Schenbly, 2011; Simons & Burt, 2011; Velez, 2009). While Sampson (1986) and Leverentz (2011) among others suggest stability as a factor in the reduction of violent crime, others suggest stability as a factor in the development of gangs, illegal markets, and community cynicism toward law enforcement (Bernasco & Block 2009; Katz & Schenbly, 2011; Kirk & Matsuda, 2011; Miller & Gibson, 2011). The most recent literature on neighborhoods and crime emphasizes collective efficacy and neighborhood stability as

facilitating social control and as preventative against overt violent street crimes (Katz & Schenbly, 2011; Leverentz, 2011; Zimmerman, 2010).

It has been well established that these theories are all linked by the underlying construct of social control. Whether formal or informal, communities that are associated with lower crime rates typically have some type of effective communal social control. There are no precise formulas for the conditions of crime, particularly at aggregate levels, and studying crime at the level of a community or neighborhood is difficult and often imprecise. However, the insight gained into the maintenance of social control, social boundaries, and human interaction at various urban levels is nonetheless valuable. Social control is the most accessible aspect of crime reduction, and empirical testing at the city and community levels should include production and maintenance of community cohesiveness. Informal social control as a mechanism for public safety is valuable, and there are many examples of its effectiveness. The following chapter builds on this idea of collective efficacy as informal social control within a community while underscoring ethnic concentration, specifically Italian-American, and neighborhood contextual effects.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social organization, collective efficacy and social control pervade ecological research focused on urban crime patterns (Browning, et al., 2004; Kawachi et al., 1999; Morenoff et al., 2001; Sampson et al., 1997). Understanding the concentration of violent crime rates in certain areas of a city while other areas experience relatively lower rates of predatory offenses continues to be at the foreground of urban criminology (Block, 1979; Kingston et al., 2009; Masi, Hawkey, Piotrowski, & Pickett, 2007; Sampson et al., 2005; Speer et al., 1998). Most often asserted as a product of inequality, high rates of violent crime continue to cluster within urban areas, and this clustering is of interest here. The previous chapter highlighted the many implications of neighborhood composition, social context, collective efficacy and social control for the patterns of urban violent crime. This chapter begins to disaggregate white ethnic concentration, something the extant literature is missing at present, and there is a focus on the frequently mentioned paradox of the defended neighborhood (Browning et al., 2004). Many neighborhoods that enjoy lowered rates of violent crime are often neighborhoods with internal organized criminal groups (Patillo, 1998; Reider, 1985; Suttles, 1972). Gang activity, delinquent behaviors, and illicit businesses exist in neighborhoods that simultaneously maintain relatively safe streets (McIllwain, 1999; Patillo 1998; Suttles, 1972). This intricate balance of known neighborhood criminal activity and low recorded violent crime is the phenomena of interest in this chapter.

Desena (2005), Patillo (1998), Suttles (1972), and Whyte (1943) conducted ethnographies of these unique neighborhoods that maintain social control without the

traditional elements of high socioeconomic status and access to public social control like reliable law enforcement (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Hunter, 1985). The findings of the aforementioned research paint the picture that many times collective efficacy and tight social networks can protect a neighborhood, even if those social networks stem from existing criminal activity like street gangs or drug dealing. In sum, not all perceived safe neighborhoods are white, affluent, and crime free, lending support to the argument that collective efficacy and social networks are far more important than socioeconomic status and racial segregation to defending a neighborhood.

The following details the elements of a defended neighborhood and its conceptual roots within social disorganization theory. The neighborhoods of Italian-American ethnic concentration in New York City and Chicago are discussed within the framework of a defended neighborhood in an effort to highlight the fact that ethnic concentration, or homogeneity, is less important to neighborhood safety than social networks and social control.

The Defended Neighborhood

Suttles (1972) discusses *defended neighborhoods* to describe communities whose members collectively eradicate selected delinquency and crime from their community. “The residential group which seals itself off through the efforts of delinquent gangs, by restrictive covenants, by sharp boundaries, or by a forbidding reputation—what I will call the defended neighborhood—was for a time a major category in sociological analysis” (Suttles, 1972, p. 21). These communities are able to exert formal and informal social

controls on community residents, on outsiders to the neighborhood, or on both. The literature makes clear that four elements are necessary to establish a successful defended neighborhood: fear, reputation, organization (disorganization), and social control. The following sections will present an overview of these elements of defended neighborhoods.

Fear and Reputation

Personal views of a neighborhood vary; for some it might be the two block radius from their home, for others it might be the area they travel between their job and their home, and for others their “neighborhood” is simply the street on which they live. However, there are typically general areas defined by the public and adopted by residents that are considered “neighborhoods” and are often used as a reference point for residents to identify where they live. In several larger cities, including New York City and Chicago, these neighborhoods have official status and have been widely used by planning agencies and other municipal offices, in some cases for over a century. Suttles (1972) writes, “The Neighborhood,’...has a more fixed referent and usually possesses a name and some sort of reputation known to persons other than the residents” (p. 37). This public reputation of a neighborhood is often its most important asset, and it is the responsibility of neighborhood residents to establish and maintain this reputation. If neighborhood residents desire safe streets, it is they who have to do the work and make the effort to keep their streets safe. This ranges from physically stopping the crime to gaining influence with the police department and other local officials to help in crime

reduction and prevention. Whatever the resources of the neighborhood, residents being involved is the key to a successful defense.

For residents to become actively involved in securing their neighborhood, there first has to be an element of fear. This perceived threat could stem from inside or outside the neighborhood; but there has to be a feeling of imminent danger or “urban unease” on some level for people to take up the cause of their neighborhood (Boggs, 1971; Liska & Baccaglioni, 1990; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; Taylor & Hale, 1986). Conversely, as citizens come together to defend their community, they must create a reputation of fear for the rest of the city and find a successful way to advertise their defenses, letting others know that if they mess with people in this neighborhood, there will be negative consequences (Suttles, 1972).¹ This can be done through the social networks they create that collectively comprise the organization of the neighborhood.

Shaw & McKay (1942/1969) developed the theory of social disorganization as a way to explain why some neighborhoods experience different levels of delinquency, deterioration, homicide, and other violent crimes. Briefly, social disorganization theory explains that the more organized the residents are in neighborhoods, the more social control the neighborhood experiences and, therefore, the lower the level of homicide, violent crime, and deterioration (DeSena 1994; Kornhauser, 1979; Shaw & McKay, 1942/1969; Suttles, 1972). In other words, the denser the social networks in a given community, the better it can fight against street crime, including homicide, delinquency,

¹ Most larger cities have one or more neighborhoods with a reputation for applying negative sanctions to street crime, for example, Little Italy and Hampden in Baltimore, the Hill in St. Louis, and Bensonhurst in New York City. Little Italy, the Hill and Bensonhurst are Italian neighborhoods; although it has experienced some gentrification recently, Hampden had long been a white working-class neighborhood.

and neighborhood deterioration (DeSena 1994; Krohn 1986). There is the longstanding argument that socioeconomic status affects the level of community stability (Kornhauser, 1979; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Shaw & McKay 1942/ 1969; Whyte 1941). However, Whyte (1941), Suttles (1972), and Kornhauser (1979) recognize that those with low socioeconomic status and high rates of delinquency or violent crime do not necessarily suffer from a lack of organization. Whyte (1941) discusses the “Millers” and their highly organized order of operations, despite their low socioeconomic status. The neighborhoods that succeed in maintaining relatively “safe” streets, regardless of socioeconomic status, have been described by many as *defended neighborhoods*.

Social Control (or Networks)

Hunter (1985) disaggregates social control into three categories: personal, public and parochial. *Personal* control is among families and friends; those who are closest to each other have a stronger effect on monitoring and maintaining desired behavior (Bursik & Grasmick, 2001; Hunter, 1985). “Within such groups, social control is usually achieved through the allocation or threatened withdrawal of sentiment, social support, and mutual esteem” (Bursik & Grasmick, 2001, p. 16). Hirschi (1969), Kornhauser (1978), and Crutchfield et al. (1982) describe family composition as an important factor in organizing and stabilizing a community. Sampson (1985) writes, “It is suggested that areas with pronounced family disorganization are less able to provide an effective network of social controls. In contrast, communities with a strong familial base are likely to be areas where families know each other and provide mutual support” (p. 11). Family

composition appears to be a key factor in the defended neighborhood. *Parochial* control derives from schools, churches, and other formal institutions that expect certain behaviors from participants. Bursik and Grasmick (2001) clarified that "...the parochial order refers to relationships among neighbors who do not have the same sentimental attachment" (p. 17). Finally *public* control comes from the police department and other government agencies. "The second, and perhaps most important, external resource concerning the control of crime concerns the relationships that exist between the neighborhood and the police department of the city in which it is located" (Bursik & Grasmick 2001, p. 17). A defended neighborhood is at its strongest if all three of these aspects of control are maintained. Neighborhoods that have strong family composition, solid public schools, and a reasonable amount of local tax money to support their police department have a stronger defense against delinquency and street crime (including homicide) than those neighborhoods with none or only one of Hunter's (1985) three P's of social control. "Hence, the greater density of networks among persons in a community, the greater the constraint on deviant behavior within the purview of the social network" (Krohn 1986, p. 84). The more connected a neighborhood is through social networks, the more social control that neighborhood will have. The more influence a community has in all areas, Personal, Parochial and Public, the greater the chances are of successful defense against street crime and delinquency.

Neighborhoods and Socioeconomics

Shaw and McKay ([1942]1969) focused on the socioeconomic aspect of social organization as did Suttles (1972) and Kornhauser (1979), but in the latter works it becomes clear that SES may not be a very good predictor of how well a neighborhood is defended. Those with higher levels of financial resources and political clout can afford more Public control and probably more Parochial control. “In cities and suburbs, middle-class neighborhoods may experience less noise and nuisance from teenagers and night-time revelers than working-class neighborhoods, but are usually quicker to seek official help eliminating it” (Cooney, 2009, p. 488). However, neighborhoods with any level of SES can achieve familial or Personal control. There are accounts of lower-class neighborhoods being defended by women and street gangs, but this is rare among those who are less economically endowed (Patillo, 1998; Shaw & McKay, [1942]1969; Suttles, 1972). In either case, a component of creating neighborhood safety involves citizens organized in some type of social network willing to actively work toward eradicating the presence of street crime (including homicide) in their neighborhood (Kornhauser, 1979; Krohn, 1986; McIllwain, 1999; Suttles, 1972).

“In a very real sense, many of our slum communities in large cities come to approximate warrior societies because they must perform so much of their own policing and other functions which are ostensibly the responsibility of public institutions” (Suttles, 1972, p. 191). Those of lower socioeconomic status are many times more tightly networked than those who have more of an economic advantage, and they will personally fight for the neighborhood, taking up where the government leaves off. “In a sense, violent crime becomes a workplace dispute mechanism for them because it is one of the

few viable social control options that they possess” (Martinez, 2010, p. 190). The literature, however, makes clear that this is not an actual sign of social disorganization. “Thus in these defended communities, a significant amount of delinquency did not represent internal social disorganization but *organized* responses to perceived external threats” (Heitgard & Bursik, 1987, p. 785). Moreover, if a slum neighborhood has a reputation for violence or other street crime, it lowers the likelihood that outsiders will enter their territory; delinquency in one’s own neighborhood can be a deterrent to external threats. Neighborhoods with a higher socioeconomic status may be able to afford the outside Public and Parochial control, but they might not have strong Personal networks. Higher socioeconomic status neighborhoods are more likely to have women that stay home and keep watch over the neighborhood, however, “the segmental character of urban life leaves only some people free some of the time to invest their energy and interests into the defended neighborhood” (Suttles, 1972, p. 37). DeSena ([1994]2005), discusses the Brooklyn neighborhood of Greenpoint. The women of this neighborhood keep very close tabs on all of the social action and closely monitor who they allow into the neighborhood by tightly controlling the rental and sale of property. They have established a tight social network that aids in protecting the neighborhood (DeSena, 2005). Other recent studies grounded in the defended neighborhoods perspective have emphasized the use of violence by residents in reaction to perceived external threats (Christopher 2008; Grattet, 2009; Green, Strolovich, & Wong, 1998). These investigations have focused on a direct impact of white defended neighborhoods on bias crimes against minorities.

Based in the existing literature, for a neighborhood to have the best defense against outsiders, it must have the elements of fear, reputation, social organization, and social control. Some urban neighborhoods with a heavy ethnic concentration, particularly Italian-American, exhibit all of these characteristics.

Ethnic Concentration and Criminal Networks

The literature typically disaggregates racial and ethnic concentration as simplistically black, white and Latino (Feldmeyer and Steffensmeier, 2009; Martinez, 2010; Sampson, 2002). This dissertation begins to disaggregate white ethnic concentration beyond the standard elucidations that only ethnic concentration provides protection to a neighborhood. Building on the assertions of known contextual factors influencing lowered violent crime rates, it is necessary to attempt an understanding of the social ties and social networks that exist within given ethnic concentrations. In order to study Italian-Americans as an ethnic group of interest, it is first important to understand some of the social and cultural aspects of Italian-American concentration, including the linkage to the Italian-American Mafia.

Cultural Roots of the Italian-American Mafia

La Cosa Nostra, or “this thing of ours,” is the slang term for those involved in Sicilian and Italian-American crime families known more widely as “the Mafia” (DeStefano, 2007; Maas, 1999; Orvis & Rush, 2000). Beginning in the 19th century, the

Mafia developed in Sicily as a way to protect citizens from a government that was widely perceived as unstable and unfair. Imported from Sicily, the U.S. Mafia was a collection of Italian immigrants who opted for bootlegging and other black market enterprises rather than the janitorial and unpleasant jobs typically held by immigrants in the early 20th century (DeStefano, 2007; Maas, 1999;). These bootlegging organizations have strong roots in family and are intricately organized (Block & Chambliss, 1981; Ianni & Reuss-Ianni, 1972). Traditionally, there is a strict code, *Omerta*, by which all members of the organization were required to live by or they would be punished, usually severely. Living by *Omerta* means that you never talk about the organization or compromise the organization by giving away information (DeStefano, 2007; Maas, 1999). For the most part, the *Omerta* historically worked; it was not until the 1980s that Mafia members began to work as informants for the FBI (Jacobs, Panarelli, & Worthington, 1994). The *La Cosa Nostra* grew rapidly in the United States during Prohibition; there was opportunity to make substantial money with little risk, but most of their dealings are far from upstanding (Block, 1980; Block & Chambliss, 1981; Ianni & Reuss-Ianni, 1972). The Mafia grows strong roots in society through extortion and bribery and for some time even the FBI denied its existence. Until the 1980s there was no massive crack down on Mafia operations (Jacobs et al., 1994). Many believe that the Mafia is no longer operating or that it never was in the first place; but if you read the news it becomes obvious that that is not true (AP, 2007). Further, the Mafia always has replacements ready when other members die or go to jail. The organization is set up to keep renewing

itself in both favorable and unfavorable conditions (Ianni & Reuss-Ianni, 1972; Maas, 1999).

Characteristics of the Defended Mafia Neighborhood

Neighborhoods with an Italian-American Mafia presence possess all of the characteristics suggested for a defended neighborhood: fear, reputation, organization, and social control.²

Fear

Fear is an essential component of the defended neighborhood and the *La Cosa Nostra* invokes widespread fear (Boggs, 1971; Liska & Baccaglioni, 1990); Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; Taylor & Hale, 1986). In cities with an active Mafia family, it is commonly believed that you may be injured or killed if you do the wrong thing inside a neighborhood or business establishment controlled by the Mafia; this fear of immediate and severe punishment deters residents and outside street criminals from acting out. Discussing Chicago's Addams Neighborhood, Suttles (1972) notes that "the Italian boys, as well as the Mexican, Puerto Rican, and black ones, tended to behave rather gingerly when in the presence of their Italian male elders. Rumor had it that many of the Italian males had ready access to professional "skullers" and could carry out heavy handed retaliation against anyone who challenged their authority or dignity" (Suttles, 1972, p.

² It is important to note that not all cities have a branch of La Cosa Nostra. There is a general consensus that the strongest Mafia families are found in New York City and Chicago.

202). A former resident of Chicago's Little Italy explains "The outfit guys never bothered anybody except their own...If you'd cross them, they would take care of you...you could even say they protected the neighborhood. Nobody came on Taylor Street to do robberies or to break into houses, they'd be dead if they tried anything like that" ([Respondent 24] Lombardo & Lurigio, 1995, p 106). These are some of many examples where the social network of the Mafia has stabilized its reputation for violence. Rumors can have a profound effect on the behavior of people in particular neighborhoods, although they may be embellished and not completely based in reality.

The Reputation

The Italian-American Mafia has a notorious reputation for retaliating against those who cross them. This idea is reinforced in popular culture by films like the *Godfather*, *Goodfellas*, *Casino*, and *Dick Tracy* and TV series like *The Sopranos*. Without even coming into contact with the Mafia, the general public already has a preconceived idea about the organization based on media representation.

The reputation of the Mafia and their association with particular neighborhoods is so strong that it extends far beyond adjacent communities; residents in all five New York City Boroughs are aware of the Mafia presence in Bensonhurst and other sections of the city (Ianni & Reuss-Ianni, 1972). The Mafia not only put their roots in their neighborhoods; they tend to take over government, business, and local industry; for example, garbage trucks, construction, the garment district, and the waterfront in Manhattan. As the Mafia get deeply involved within a city, both financially and

physically, more and more people become an indirect part of “this thing of ours” (Block, 1980; Maas, 1999). “People who understood power and ‘the way things worked’ recognized the Mafia as a force in politics, vice, and legitimate business including shipping, trucking, garbage disposal, and the garment trade” (Jacobs et al., 1994, p. 3). Members of the Five Families were elected to government offices and took jobs in the police department to make things like bribery, extortion and other crimes a bit easier, and to also allow for protection from the government and the police department (DeStefano, 2007). The Mafia is rarely questioned or opposed by local law enforcement; a position they achieve through bribery (Jacobs et al., 1994). “Remarkably, until well into the 1960s the FBI, under the leadership of J. Edgar Hoover, disputed the very existence of an American Mafia” (Jacobs et al 1994, p. 45). Finally the element of fear that the Mafia carries elevates the neighborhood to an even higher defended status. Not only do people in the neighborhood behave; people from outside the neighborhood behave according to the regulations set forth by the organization. “People fear the violence, because it often spills over and hurts innocent bystanders. But at the same time, people give the mob credit for occasionally mediating in community disputes and for enforcing a certain set of rules on the street” (Dillon, 1992, p. 35). In neighborhoods defended by street gangs outsiders can see what they are up against, but in Mafia neighborhoods everything is behind closed doors. The blending of tall tales and true stories that circulate about the Mafia maintains this reputation even if their presence wanes in a neighborhood (Suttles, 1972).

The Organization

The Mafia organized their families and their businesses under strict rules and codes that many times extend into their neighborhoods. The strict code of rules applies to their families and organization but also in the neighborhood they choose to live or work in (Block, 1980; Ianni & Reuss-Ianni, 1972). Criminologist James Jacobs from NYU also believes that the Mafia and other organized criminal activities can make a neighborhood safer (DeStefano 2007). Jacobs said “Mafiosi were a force for stability in neighborhoods...They wanted to live in safe neighborhoods, and because they had a reputation for violence and a willingness to use violence, the neighborhoods in which they had presence were safe” (DeStefano, 2007, p.60). The vast organization and social network that the Mafia constructed is responsible for social control through its reputation, both real and rumored, for retaliation.

Social Control

A final detail of the defended Mafia neighborhoods is the emphasis on family values. As previously noted, family composition is a significant predictor of social disorganization and is most likely a significant factor in the organization of the Mafia and their neighborhoods (McIllwain, 1999; Sampson 1985; Sampson & Groves, 1989). The Mafia home life builds this personal control through emphasis on respect and trust. Because Italian heritage is one of the most important elements of *La Cosa Nostra* (except in Chicago, you cannot be considered for full membership unless you are Italian), many

people involved in the organization carry the same family and religious values (DeStefano, 2007; Ianni & Reuss-Ianni, 1972; Maas, 1999). This makes it easier for the family values to cross over into the neighborhood; it is not solely fear that drives the organization; strong family values aid in creating a successfully defended neighborhood. Within neighborhoods the Mafia make trade-offs with residents so that their illegal businesses behind closed doors will not be of concern; providing safety for residents is one of the benefits of looking the other way in the presence of their illegal enterprises. The social network of the Mafia extends far beyond their tiny neighborhood. "Network density refers to the extent to which all actors in a social network are connected by direct relations. When network density is high, the ability to control delinquency is increased because the behavior of participants in such a network is potentially subject to the reactions of all network members" (Sampson & Groves, 1989, p.779). Mcillwain (1999) discusses social networking as a new framework for understanding organized crime; the criminal organizations are successful on the large scale because they are so tightly networked. James Jacobs explains "So, the Mafia was functional. That's why it lasted so long, why it was so powerful, because it served needs" (DeStefano, 2007, p. 61).

Residents of neighborhoods with reputations for being home to Mafia members are fully aware of the Mafia presence (both rumored and real) in their neighborhood, and the majority of those living there do not mind (Bohlen, 1989; Dillon, 1992). For them it is extra security; the same kind of security that the Mafia was initiated for back in Sicily; protection for those who cannot protect themselves. Despite the vast underworld of criminal activity, rumored Mafia neighborhoods are continually discussed as some of the

safest neighborhoods within New York City and Chicago. The infamous “Five Families” of the American Italian Mafia call Bensonhurst in south Brooklyn home. The Gambino, Columbo, Bonnano, Genovese, and Luchese families operate throughout New York City, but are densely located in South Brooklyn (Bohlen, 1989; Dillon, 1992; DeStefano, 2007). The “Outfit” in Chicago is discussed as residing in several different Chicago area neighborhoods (DeStefano, 2007; Gage, 1971; Maas 2002). Howard Feur, district manager of the community board for Bensonhurst says “It is not uncommon for people to have lived here all their lives, for their parents to have lived here before them. These are people who are happy in their community...The biggest problem’ is the subways, they don’t run on time” (Bohlen, 1989, p. A1). Most Italian-American concentrations that are rumored to be Mafia related are touted as being quiet, safe, family-oriented, and extremely aware of outsiders (DeStefano, 2007; Ianni and Reuss-Ianni, 1972; Maas, 1999).

Most Mafia neighborhoods are also described as unchanged for decades; this could explain the ability of these neighborhoods to have such dense social networks and strong social control (DeStefano, 2007; Maas, 1999). Having substantial time to develop and maintain reputations of quiet streets but underground fear enhances the effectiveness of collective efficacy and social control in these areas, lending further support to low mobility as suggested by social disorganization theory. Strong organization, social networks, and the strong reputation for violence create fear and deter delinquency and street crime. Italian-American concentrations within urban areas appear to have effective

defended neighborhoods, because they tend to envelop all of the basic criteria set forth by Bursik and Grasmick (2001), Shaw and McKay ([1942]1969), and Suttles (1972).

The literature on defended neighborhoods suggests that communities with organized criminal networks would have lower numbers of violent crime incidents than other neighborhoods or communities because of the informal social control that organized crime can exert on residents and outsiders. The traditionally organized Italian-American Mafia families possess the characteristics that are emphasized by defended neighborhood theory and would diffuse throughout the neighborhood. People are less likely to participate in overt illegal behaviors because they do not know who is watching, and the fear of what the Mafia might do keeps residents and visitors to the neighborhood relatively well-behaved. This study provides a quantitative extension to the existing literature on defended neighborhoods, which up to this point has been predominantly ethnographic. Logically, a more holistic and quantitative approach would be more generalizable than the existing qualitative studies because it goes beyond singular neighborhoods to estimate the trends within an entire city. The next chapter will delineate the methods and data collection adopted to consider this possibility.

CHAPTER 4: HYPOTHESES, DATA, AND METHODS

In order to test the hypotheses that urban neighborhoods with high Italian-American and white ethnic concentrations have lower violent crime counts compared to other sections of a city, the census tracts and neighborhoods in Chicago and the community districts in New York City will be examined. The basic tenets of defended neighborhoods, social organization, informal social control, and neighborhood reputation will be examined.

Choosing the Study Areas

New York City and Chicago differ in total population and population density, but are similar in the role of ethnic immigration in the historical development of neighborhoods that are the focus of this study. In Chicago, a slow Italian migration of merchants, barbers, and vendors began in the 1850s and, by the 1880s, many Italians gained success as saloonkeepers and restaurateurs (Holli, 1995; Nelli, 1969; Quaipe 1916). By 1920, Chicago was the third largest “Italian” City, behind New York City and Philadelphia, respectively (Candeloro, 1995). The Italian population grew quickly and they settled in enclaves all over the city much to the resistance of the German, Irish, and Swedish populations (Holli, 1995). Remaining largely blue-collar workers, even through Prohibition, the Italians made their ethnic mark on Chicago through food, religion, and culture (Gage, 1971; Holli, 1995; Nelli, 1969; Randall & Randall, 1999). Though Al Capone (not a native Chicagoan) began to change the Italian image, they still retained

their ethic of hard work despite their growing reputation for violence, extortion, and decadence (Gage, 1971; Holli, 1995; Jacobs, 1999; Lupo, 2009).

Similar to Chicago, New York City developed through the many small and large waves of immigration the U.S. has experienced (Carwile & Hollis 2004; Gabaccia, 1984; Gage, 1972; Smith, 1985). In its early days of development there were few tenements to claim and few homeowners established in those buildings (Sherzer, 1992). During the 19th Century, New York City was divided into wards that showed heterogeneity through ethnicity and employment; there were not enough immigrants yet to have ethnic and class segregation (Carwile & Hollis, 2004; Kessner, 1977; Sherzer, 1992). Wards at this time were for jurisdictional purposes. Low “ethnic diffusion, occupational differentiation and homeownership” are cited as the reason for the lack of neighborhood formation at this time (Sherzer, 1992, p. 57). The second great wave of immigration around the turn of the 20th Century is said to be when New York City began to form distinct ethnic neighborhoods (Gabaccia, 1984; Gage, 1972; Kessner, 1977; Smith, 1985). During this time an influx of Italian immigration commenced, and many ethnic neighborhoods in New York City became distinctly Italian, predominantly Sicilian, and developed a strong history of personal networks, social control, and underground enterprise and opportunity (Gabaccia, 1984; Gage, 1971; Smith, 1985). The neighborhoods considered “Italian” (and still are at present) by city residents are Little Italy in Manhattan, Bensonhurst in Brooklyn, Howard Beach in Queens, and Staten Island (Smith, 1985). Chicago’s well-known Italian neighborhoods are also spread around the city. The west side is home to Little Italy which is the largest of the neighborhoods, the south side of the Loop was and

still is a concentration of Italians but many moved into what is now Chinatown. Little Sicily on the north side and the Roseland neighborhood in the suburbs are also well-known Italian concentrations in Chicago (Candeloro, 1995).

Both Chicago and New York City developed rapidly at the turn of the 20th Century and at this time began to divide into distinct neighborhoods and areas that grew from initial ethnic enclaves (Holli, 1995; Kessner, 1977). Because of the timing of neighborhood development and ethnic concentration historically, the distinct neighborhood areas of the cities and the well-known large Italian-American populations and strength of Mafia families, New York City and Chicago are the most appropriate urban areas for this study.

Hypotheses 1-6

Based on qualitative research by Whyte (1943), Suttles (1972) Lombardo and Lurigio (1971) and others, the influence of densely populated Italian neighborhoods on public street crime becomes curious. Much of the current qualitative findings suggest that Italian presence within a community shares a negative relationship with overt violent street crime. If the assumption is made that the neighborhood reputation of Italians influences the behavior of outsiders and that densely populated Italian neighborhoods experience lowered violent crime, then the following should be true:

H1: There is a negative and significant relationship between Italian-American population concentrations and robbery in Chicago Census tracts.

H2: There is a negative and significant relationship between Italian-American population concentrations and homicide in Chicago Census tracts.

H3: There is a negative and significant relationship between Italian-American population concentrations and robbery in Chicago Neighborhoods.

H4: There is a negative and significant relationship between Italian-American population concentrations and homicide in Chicago Neighborhoods.

Further, this phenomenon should be replicated in an additional urban area that has pockets of densely populated Italian neighborhoods, so consistent with the assumption of Italian neighborhood influences on outsider behavior, then:

H5: There is a negative and significant relationship between Italian-American population concentrations and robbery in New York City community districts.

H6: There is a negative and significant relationship between Italian-American population concentrations and homicide in New York City community districts.

Hypotheses 7-12

However, the assumption that Italian-American neighborhoods experience lowered violent crime because of their pre-existing reputations may not be accurate, because the important variable may be homogeneity and denser community organization based on cultural ties and similar goals, regardless of ethnicity (Shaw and McKay, [1942]1969; Suttles 1972). So, if communities with dense white ethnic concentration

will be better organized and protect their neighborhoods, than the following should be true:

H7: There is a negative and significant relationship between white ethnic population concentrations and robbery in Chicago Census tracts.

H8: There is a negative and significant relationship between white ethnic population concentrations and homicide in Chicago Census tracts.

H9: There is a negative and significant relationship between white ethnic population concentrations and robbery in Chicago neighborhoods.

H10: There is a negative and significant relationship between white ethnic population concentrations and homicide in Chicago Census neighborhoods.

 Holding true to the assumption of white ethnic cultural homogeneity influences outsider behavior, then:

H11: There is a negative and significant relationship between white ethnic population concentrations and robbery in New York City community districts.

H12: There is a negative and significant relationship between white ethnic population concentrations and homicide in New York City community districts.

Dependent Variables

Homicide and robbery are the crime measures of interest for this study. These violent crimes are a major concern for the public and the police in any urban area and

will serve as the dependent variables for the analyses. Further, these data are some of the most reliable of all of the reported crime data (O'Brien, 1985). "The severity of these two violent crimes, coupled with their high visibility, make them the most reliably reported crimes" (Landau & Fridman, 1993, p. 170). The counts were collected at the census tract level for Chicago (which were then aggregated at the neighborhood level) and for the community district level for New York City.

Independent Variables

The proxy variable *Italian ancestry*, is defined as the percentage of residents in census tracts and neighborhoods in Chicago and community districts in New York City that report their first ancestry as Italian. This choice is based on two considerations. First, the New York City Mafia families only accept Italians as full members, so potential recruits and organizational strength are most likely to be concentrated in neighborhoods with a strong Italian presence. Second, the neighborhoods where the Five Families originated in New York City and where the Outfit originated in Chicago were all at one point Italian enclaves (Gage, 1972; Holli, 1995; Ianni & Reuss-Ianni, 1972; Maas, 1999; McIlwain, 1999).

The problem with this choice of a proxy measurement for Mafia presence is that social disorganization theory asserts that any neighborhood with a strong concentration of an ethnic group would enjoy lowered crime levels because of the ameliorating effect of population homogeneity (Bursik & Grasmick 1993). This introduces an alternative explanation: if a negative relationship between percent Italian and homicide rates is

found, it may have nothing specifically to do with Italian concentration, but more to do with an ethnic enclave per se. The variable *ethnic concentration* will be included in a second model that excludes percent Italian. This variable is measured as the highest percentage of any white ethnic group within each Census tract; if ethnic concentration per se reduces the homicide and robbery rates in New York City and Chicago neighborhoods, this variable should have a negative and significant effect.

Neighborhood characteristics

The following data are measures of the neighborhood characteristics that consistently have been associated with different levels of crime (Land, McCall, & Cohen, 1990; McCall, Land & Parker, 2010). The neighborhood demographic and socioeconomic characteristics included in the analyses are percent Black, percent on public assistance, percent female-headed households with dependent children, population change from 2000-2010, population density, median family income, percent owner occupied housing, percent with high school or higher education, and percent of population under 18.

Socioeconomic Indicators

The percent of households on public assistance, the percent with official poverty status, the percent of female-headed households with dependent children, percent using public transit as their only option, the percent owner occupied housing, and the percent with

high school or higher education are included as indicators of the socioeconomic status of the areas examined.

After checking for multicollinearity using regression with OLS estimators, the variables measuring public assistance, poverty, female-headed households and education of high school or higher were converted to z-scores and combined into a composite variable called Low SES. Because of the direction of the relationship between an education of high school or higher and both robbery and homicide, this z-score was multiplied by - 1 before it was added with the other variables in order to calculate the composite variable measuring low socioeconomic status. The variables measuring public transit and owner occupied housing were left out of the composite variable based on the VIF scores below 4 and their insignificant relationships in the factor analysis. Instead, they are used separately as additional controls for socioeconomic status. In the New York City models, percent under 18 was highly collinear with the variable measuring Low SES (VIF scores of 7 and 10 respectively). Because the percent under 18 measure is not integral to this study, for these models it was left out with a resulting reduction of the VIF score for Low SES from 10 to 2. Percent owner occupied in New York City also had some multicollinearity with LowSES with a VIF score of 4.5. While a factor analysis suggested that it most likely could be left out of the composite variable, the VIF indicated it would be better to combine owner occupied into Low SES.

Other Measures

A variable that measures mobility is used because social disorganization theory suggests higher population mobility can lead to augmented crime rates. This variable is defined as the percentage of the population that moved to a different house in the last 3 years. Population density has been positively associated with increased levels of homicide in several studies (McCall et al., 2010). This variable is defined as the population per square mile in each city. Percent of population under 18 is the percentage of those under the age of 18 in each level of aggregation for Chicago and the community districts in NYC; the assumption being that individuals under the age of 18 are more susceptible to becoming involved in criminal activity. The black homicide rate is substantially higher than that for whites in the United States, so percent black is included as a measure of racial population composition and defined as the total percent of residents who identify themselves as black in the census tracts and neighborhoods for Chicago and the community districts in New York City.

The following independent variables are available in percentages from the American Community Survey (2006-2010). However, to obtain the total percentages for the Chicago neighborhood data which is aggregated from the Chicago census tract data, some individual variables are calculated. Percent of female-headed households is calculated by dividing the number of female-headed households by the total number of households in the district and multiplying by 100. The Percent under the age of 18 is calculated by dividing the number under 18 by the total population of the tract and

multiplying by 100. Population density is calculated by dividing the total population by the number of square miles in the neighborhood.

Data Collection

Data for demographic and socioeconomic indicators comes from the United States Census American Community Survey averages for 2006-2010. The crime data for murder and robbery were collected as counts from the New York City and Chicago Police Department's 2010 and 2011 reported crime data. The crime data for Chicago came with coordinate projections so the crime counts were visible on a map of Chicago census tracts; a neighborhood map overlay was used to get the same crime counts at the neighborhood level. The New York City crime data came from their COMPSTAT annual reporting forms for each precinct within the 5 boroughs.

The units of analysis for this study are census tracts (Chicago), neighborhoods (Chicago), and community districts (New York City); these are used as proxy measures for the general idea of neighborhood or community within an urban locale. The research on neighborhoods and crime commonly employs this methodology, so the choice to approximate neighborhoods has a well-established foundation (Bernasco & Block, 2009; Graif & Sampson, 2009; Hipp, 2007; Sampson, 2008; Stults, 2010). There are 786 census tracts for Chicago city, 220 neighborhoods for Chicago city, and 59 community districts for New York City. The Geographical Areas Reference Manual cites 2500-8000 people as the average populations for census tracts. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011, p.10-1).

Analytic Plan

There are eight models for Chicago and four models for New York City. For each level of analysis in Chicago and New York City, two models have robbery as the dependent variable; one includes Italian ancestry and the other includes ethnic concentration. The other two models have homicide as the dependent variable; one model includes Italian ancestry and the other includes ethnic concentration. A total of twelve models are estimated for this research project.

A negative binomial regression analysis is used to examine the relationships between the social characteristics and the crimes homicide and robbery in both New York City and Chicago. Similar to the Poisson regression, but considered to be a more general model, the negative binomial regression can account for greater variance in the model (Berk & Macdonald, 2007; Gardner, Mulvey, & Shaw, 1995; Land, McCall, & Nagin, 1996; Osgood, 2000). When measuring crimes at lower aggregate levels like census tracts and neighborhoods, more zeros will be present in the data, thereby increasing the variance between cases by a large number and affecting a normal distribution pattern (Gardner et al., 2007, 1995; Land et al., 1996; Osgood, 2000). Therefore the count variables of robbery and homicide are logged by the regression model so as to create a normal distribution. This can be seen as follows:

$$\log(X) = Y + b_1 + b_2 + b_3 \dots$$

Equation 1: Negative Binomial Regression Equation

Equation 1 replicates the Poisson regression, but the negative binomial regression models measure two parameters: mean and dispersion (Berk & Macdonald, 2007; Osgood, 2000). When the dispersion parameter becomes zero, the model follows a Poisson distribution (Gardner, et al., 1995; Walker & Maddan, 2008).

$$\Pr(Y = y | \lambda, \alpha) = \frac{\Gamma(y + \alpha^{-1})}{y! \Gamma(\alpha^{-1})} \left(\frac{\alpha^{-1}}{\alpha^{-1} + \lambda} \right)^{\alpha^{-1}} \left(\frac{\lambda}{\alpha^{-1} + \lambda} \right)^y$$

Equation 2: Negative Binomial Probability Equation

In *Equation 2* the two parameters of the negative binomial regression are visible: λ and α . λ is the mean or expected value of the distribution while α is the over dispersion parameter. Again, when $\alpha = 0$, the negative binomial distribution is the same as a Poisson distribution (Osgood, 2000; Walker & Maddan, 2008).

This analysis is appropriate when the dependent variable is a count measure and when the crimes (like homicide and robbery) are rare and do not comprise a normal distribution (Grogger & Carson, 1991; Osgood, 2000). Both of these criteria are present in the data being used; both dependent variables are count variables and there were slight issues with the distribution curve. For the census tracts homicide (skewness = 2.6, kurtosis=14.7), and robbery (skewness=1.8, kurtosis=6.4) do not follow a normal distribution and Chicago neighborhoods show similar distributions for homicide (skewness = 1.9, kurtosis=6.2) and robbery (skewness=1.6, kurtosis=5.3). For the New York City community districts, homicide (skewness=.97, kurtosis=3.9 and robbery (skewness=.83, kurtosis=3.7) are far less skewed than the crimes in Chicago, but are still

not following a normal distribution pattern based on kurtosis scores. This further reinforces the choice to use this type of estimation.

Spatial Autocorrelation

Spatial autocorrelation, as a term, is almost self-explanatory. This statistical issue implies that the cases within the dependent variable are actually correlated with themselves at a given spatial level (Anselin, 1995; Mitchell, 2005; Paradis, 2012). This is a problem that can occur when data is aggregated because the statistical assumption of independence between cases is violated. Prior to presenting the results, it is important to discuss the issue of spatial autocorrelation as this determines how the results can be interpreted. Along with twelve regression models, a spatial analysis is estimated. Because regression analysis does not account for spatial dependency, testing for spatial autocorrelation serves as a necessary step in circumventing the assumption that the observations are independent from one another (Graif & Sampson, 2009; Kelejian & Robinson, 1992; Morenoff & Sampson, 1997; Ord & Getis, 1995). This observes the clustering of homicides and robberies to clarify if the results could be the influence of Italian –American concentration, ethnic concentration, or simply the co-variation of the robbery and homicide counts from adjacent neighborhoods.

In order to test for spatial autocorrelation, typically the global and local Moran's I equations are employed. The Moran's I index is a spatial analysis that can evaluate first order and second order spatial effects; these are global and local respectively (Anselin,

1995; Goodchild, 1986). Global Moran's I can evaluate clustering and dispersion at a general level (i.e., is there clustering or not) (Anselin, 1995; Griffith, 1987; Mitchell, 2005). "Global Moran's I evaluates whether the pattern expressed is clustered, dispersed, or random" (Mitchell, 2005). Basically, this analysis estimates whether or not homicides and robberies are randomly dispersed (i.e., throwing them down like confetti) or if there are features from the levels of aggregation that have an effect on the clustering or dispersion of the crime events. A Z-score is calculated to determine if the null hypothesis, that the pattern of incidents is random, should be accepted or rejected (Getis & Ord, 1992; Goodchild, 1986; Mitchell, 2005). The equation for I is:

$$I = \frac{n \sum_i \sum_j w_{ij} (x_i - \bar{x})(x_j - \bar{x})}{\sum_i \sum_j w_{ij} \sum_i (x_i - \bar{x})^2}$$

Equation 3: Moran's I Equation

In *Equation 3* x_i and x_j are a given variable and i is not equal to j (Mitchell, 2005; Paradis, 2012). It can be seen that we are subtracting the variable score from the mean score and multiplying it by the sum of i , j , and w_{ij} which are the weights (dichotomous 1 and 0) (Anselin, 1995; Mitchell, 2005). Next this is divided by the sum of all weights, $\sum_i \sum_j w_{ij}$ and multiplied again by the expected i minus the mean and squared. This gives us the observed I value (Mitchell, 2005; Paradis, 2012). The expected I value is calculated by $I_e = -1/(n-1)$. If the observed value is greater than the expected value, we would consider

this positive autocorrelation (clustering), and if the observed value is less than the expected value this is considered negative autocorrelation (dispersion) (Mitchell, 2005). Moran's I scores that are values of 0 would indicate that the events are unequivocally randomly located (Anselin, 1995; Goodchild, 1986; Mitchell, 2005; Paradis, 2012). Scores above or below zero from 1 to -1 indicate that the events are clustered or dispersed. A positive value points to clustering where a negative value shows dispersion. For a Moran's I score to be considered statistically significant at the .05 level, the Z score needs to fall outside of the range -1.96 to +1.96 (Anselin, 1995; Mitchell, 2005; Paradis, 2012). This is the criteria for the analyses in this study.

Anselin's Local Moran's I

Local Moran's I can further indicate where specifically the clustering is occurring (i.e., which census tracts or neighborhoods are experiencing the phenomenon) and which areas are experiencing it more significantly than others (Anselin, 1995). Local Moran's I follows the same procedure with more detailed output. Rather than just a generalization of the clustering of robberies or homicides, local Moran's I determines which features of the city are most significant and why (Anselin, 1995; Mitchell, 2005). Local Moran's I has the capability of showing if a low clustering area is surrounded by a high clustering area, which aids in a better understanding of the phenomenon (Anselin, 1995; Mitchell, 2005). Both of these analyses can be performed in Arc GIS and Geoda. While the Moran's I score is always the same from both programs, Geoda uses Monte Carlo and Arc GIS uses standardization making the z-score different in the analyses from both

programs. The difference in z-score can affect the significance of the clustering or dispersion, again complicating the interpretation of results.

Application of Spatial Autocorrelation with Count Data

There is one specific issue when dealing with spatial autocorrelation in the present study, the data being used is a raw count of the robberies and homicide from 2010 and 2011 in New York City and Chicago. While many are in favor of using Moran's I on "join-count" data (which are total counts by level of aggregation rather than individual incidents) on the dependent variable only, others feel that even if a global Moran's I is estimated and shows no extreme signs of autocorrelation, further checking of the predictor variables and neighboring residuals is necessary to fully understand the process. However, in the present, there are few solutions for spatial regression with count data; rates are almost always required. Converting the dependent variable to a rate in order to estimate spatial regression is unacceptable because the size of the population is not heterogeneous across the spatial areas being analyzed and "often lead to variance inflation and biased type 1 error probabilities" (Jackson, Huang, Xie, & Tiwari, 2010; Zhang & Lin, 2007, p. 2). The suggestion of creating weights variables and estimating a proper type of Poisson regression for rare events is also not viable, because despite including spatial areas as variables, the problem of population heterogeneity still exists, even if appropriate population weights are used (Jackson, Huang, Xie, & Tiwari, 2010; Zhang & Lin, 2007). Beyond this, testing residuals of the negative binomial regression is problematic because they cannot be calculated and interpreted the way that is standard for regression with OLS estimators. Standard negative binomial results are not interpretable

(they must be converted to incidence rate ratios), and the same holds true for the residuals. Seemingly, all options for accurate ad hoc testing for spatial autocorrelation with count data for rare events create some type of statistical bias. No matter which option is chosen, the results must always be interpreted with caution. Global and local Moran's I are the only analyses that are cited as acceptable for using aggregated count data in a specifically exploratory study, such as the present one (Huo, Li, Sun, Zhou & Li, 2012; Lavigne, Ricci, Franck, & Senoussi, 2010; Li, Calder, & Cressie, 2005; Perry et al., 2006; Zhang & Lin, 2007). Some write that testing beyond global Moran's I with spatial regression is always necessary because global Moran's I acts as the average, and higher and lower incidences of clustering may still be influencing the results (Griffith & Haining, 2006). However, many suggest that if the global Moran's I is not significant, it really is not necessary to do further testing. Beyond this, spatial regression is just not appropriate for count data of rare events. Because the results for global Moran's I were not significant for any of the dependent variables in both New York City and Chicago, the Local Moran's I method is used as an additional mechanism for understanding, but further examination beyond this step was deemed redundant for this exploratory research.

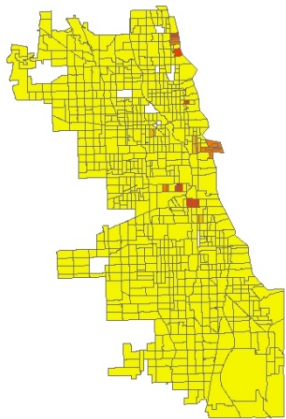
Calculating the Moran's I

Calculating the Global Moran's I involved creating distance thresholds and analyzing the data based on these distances. The distance threshold is determined by subtracting the mean coordinates of the shape area from the maximum coordinates of the shape area. These are both squared and added together, and then the square root of the

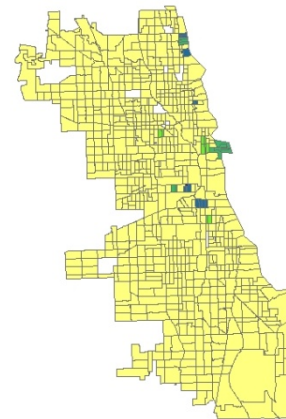
total is applied to get an appropriate boundary distance for the analysis. This distance threshold is used in the Moran's I fixed distance threshold with row standardization for both robbery and homicide at the 3 different spatial areas used in this study. After calculating univariate Global Moran's I for the robbery count and the homicide count in Chicago neighborhoods and census tracts (distance threshold 2000 ft. and 1000 ft. respectively), the Moran's I scores were not significant. This indicates that homicides ($I=.16$, $z=.66$) and robberies ($I=.44$, $z=1.86$), in Chicago census tracts are likely to be independent from neighboring events. Chicago neighborhoods also experience independence from neighboring events for robbery ($I=.3$, $z=1.42$) and homicide ($I=.34$, $z=1.58$). The New York City community districts (distance threshold 5000 ft.) also have Moran's I scores that are not significant for robbery ($I=.02$, $z=1.9$) or homicide ($I=-.015$, $z=1$). These results suggest that the crimes are not being influenced by neighboring events. This is important, because it lends small support that each case can be treated as independent from the other as the negative binomial regression assumes. If we rely on the results of the Global Moran's I, then we can interpret the results in the standard way and not be worried about inflated coefficients or probabilities.

Even though the global Moran's I indicate there is no spatial autocorrelation happening with the dependent variables, this is an overall average of the autocorrelation on the features for the entire spatial area of each city. This means there are most likely areas that experience significant clusters of robbery and homicide, but they are averaging out in the Global results. Anselin's Local Moran's I is estimated next to see where there might be significant clusters of robbery and homicide that are occurring within Chicago

and New York City. *Figure 3* shows the results for the Local Moran's I at the Chicago Census tract level. The image on the left shows the pattern of robbery and the image on the right presents the pattern of homicide.



Robbery Pattern



Homicide Pattern

Figure 3: Local Moran's I Results for Homicide and Robbery in Chicago Census Tracts, 2010-2011, N=786

The darkest areas are the ones considered clusters and the lightest areas are the most dispersed, neither of these features are statistically significant at the .05 level. Both violent crimes are concentrated in similar census tracts within Chicago, highlighting that even though these areas are not significantly clustered, perhaps these are the areas experiencing crime in high density. A hot spot analysis would need to be used to determine if this is the case, but for now it is still an interesting finding. Finally, it is of notability that the areas with clusters are very few, indicating that perhaps the Global

Moran's I accurately depicted little spatial autocorrelation among the dependent variables, robbery and homicide.

In the Chicago neighborhoods, there are more clusters of both robbery and homicide than there were at the census tract level, most likely because of the increase in the parameters for analysis. *Figure 4* shows that the concentration of robberies and homicides on the west side and the south side of Chicago are a change from the census tract level. While the clusters are not large in area, a change between the results of the aggregate levels is noticeable. This highlights that at the larger aggregate levels in Chicago, the clustering of robbery and homicide changes and, in certain parts of the city, increases in spatial area.

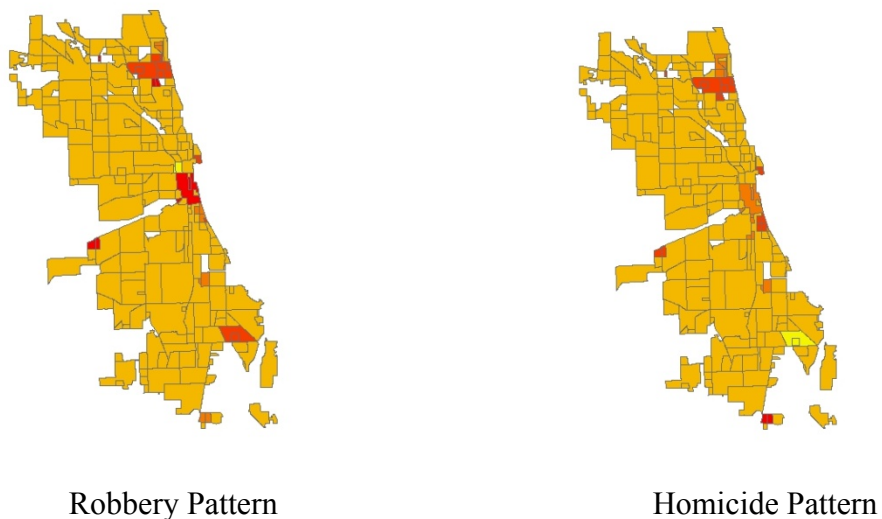


Figure 4: Local Moran's I Results for Homicide and Robbery in Chicago Neighborhoods, 2010-2011, N=220

For both robbery and homicide at each aggregate level in Chicago, the majority of the city (in the moderate colors) is not significantly clustered or dispersed. The most important element to take away from the Local Moran's I is that at the larger aggregate levels, more clustering of the crimes robbery and homicide are visible. These results again lend support to the assumption that the Global Moran's I was pretty accurate in the results.

Figure 5 shows the results from the Local Moran's I for New York City. This aggregate level is the largest that this study examines; while this makes it difficult to compare to Chicago, the results are still of interest.

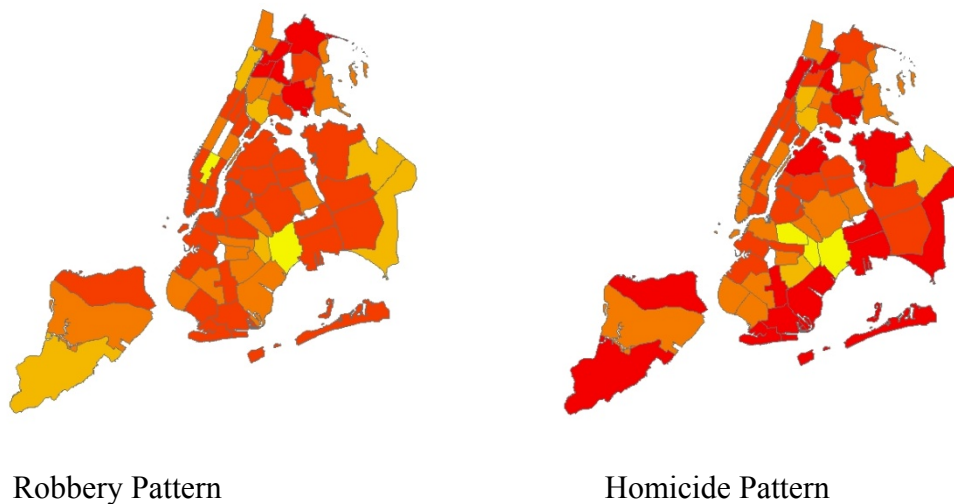


Figure 5: Local Moran's I Results for Homicide and Robbery in New York City Community Districts, 2010-2011, N=59

Again, the darkest portions of New York City are the most clustered areas of robbery and homicide. For robbery the clustering is not as prevalent as homicide. There are a few clustered spots of homicide in south Brooklyn, the eastern parts of Queens and the Bronx and throughout Staten Island. Robbery exhibits a similar pattern in Brooklyn and the Bronx, but less on Staten Island, which could be of interest because this is the most suburban part of New York City. Overall, while there are areas of clustering, the city itself does not show a large pattern of clustering of the violent crimes. This can lead to the inferences that the global Moran's I was accurate in that both robbery and homicide are located at random and that the violent crimes are not being affected by residuals in neighboring areas.

In the next chapter, the results from the negative binomial regression models are overviewed. Based on the two Moran's I analyses, the results will be interpreted as if each unit of analysis is independent from the others. The implications for this are as follows: the assumption that there is no spatial dependence can still be inaccurate, and the statistical significance of the coefficients might be inflated. Certain predictors of robbery and homicide may be interpreted with strong relationships, even when they should not be. However, statistical inferences will be made with caution, keeping in mind the potential statistical bias.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

In order to understand the results of the 12 negative binomial regression models, first the descriptive statistics for Chicago and New York City will be summarized. Next, the results for Hypothesis 1-6, focused on the influence of Italian-American ethnic concentration will be reviewed, followed by hypotheses 7-12, which are focused on the influence of white ethnic concentration.

Descriptive Statistics

Chicago Census Tracts

The social characteristics and crime statistics were collected for each Chicago census tract (N=786). *Table 1* shows the descriptive statistics for the data for the Chicago census tracts. The average population per tract is 3406, the population density has a mean of 19,203 people per square mile (SD=21,892)

Variables of Interest

The mean homicide count per census tract is 1 and the mean robbery count per census tract is 37. On average, small city areas are experiencing at least one homicide and close to forty robberies. The mean percent foreign-born is 18.8 percent (SD= 16.7), the mean for ethnic concentration is 8 (SD=9.3) percent and the mean for the variable measuring the Italian population is 2.8 percent (SD=3.9). Demographically, the average

census tract is approximately 1/5th foreign-born, and 1/10th white ethnics with a small proportion of Italians.

Race and Socioeconomics

The average percentage of black individuals is 38.7(SD=41.7), the mean percentage of owner occupied housing is 42.2 percent (SD=36.7), the average for percent mobility is 16.5 (SD=9.25). Home ownership and percent black are nearly the same in mean proportion across census tracts, both around forty percent. On average, nearly half of any given census tract will be homeowners or identify themselves as black. Chicago census tracts show an average of 20 percent of the households are female-headed (SD=15), 4 percent of households are on public assistance (SD=4.6), and 52 percent of the population in each census tract has completed high school or a higher level of education (SD 15.7). While half of any given census tract completed high school or higher, 1/5th of households are female-headed on average, and a small percentage in each tract subsidizes their income with public assistance of some type. See *Table 1* as a reference for the descriptives for Chicago Census tracts.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Census Tracts 2006-2010 and the Reported Robbery and Homicide Incidents 2010-2011 in Chicago (N=786)

Variable	Mean	SD	Max	Min
LowSES	0.00	3.3	12.8	-5.5
Owner Occupied	42.2	36.7	98.1	0
Percent Public Assistance	4.3	4.6	20.9	0
Percent Female-headed	20.8	15.1	75.6	0
Percent H.S. or higher	52.1	15.7	91.8	12.6
Percent Mobility	16.5	9.3	75.6	0
Percent Italian	2.8	3.9	29.2	0
Density	19,203	21,892	120,868	470.3
Ethnic Concentration	8.1	9.3	60.9	0
Percent Under 18	23.8	9.7	71.5	0
Percent Black	38.6	41.7	100	0
Percent Foreign-born	18.8	16.7	65.7	0
Percent Public Transit	20.6	14.9	87.7	0
Homicide	1.1	1.7	17	0
Robbery	36.6	34.7	214	0
Total Population	3405	1709	13,117	73

Chicago Neighborhoods

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the data for the Chicago neighborhoods. The social characteristics and crime statistics were collected for each Chicago neighborhood (N=220). The average population per neighborhood is 7705 (SD=5271) and population density has a mean of 9336.3 people per square mile (SD=12,989).

Variables of Interest

The mean homicide count per neighborhood is 2.4 (SD=3.5) and the mean robbery count per neighborhood is 91 (SD=95.6). The average Chicago neighborhood will experience 2.4 homicides and close to 100 robberies.. The mean percent foreign-born is 19.1 percent (SD= 16.7), the mean for ethnic concentration is 9 percent (SD=8.9), and the mean for the variable measuring the Italian population is 3.3 percent (SD=4.41). Again, the typical Chicago neighborhood will be 1/5th foreign-born, and approximately 1/10th white ethnic concentration with a small number of Italian-Americans.

Race and Socioeconomics

The average percentage of black individuals is 38.9 (SD=37.4), the mean percentage of owner occupied housing is 54.9 percent (SD=44.3), the average percentage of those using public transit as their only option is 28.6 (SD=12), and the average for percent mobility is 15.9 (SD=7.4). On average, 3 percent of the population of Chicago

neighborhoods are on public assistance (SD=3). Over half of the population of Chicago neighborhoods are homeowners, on average, about 1/3 are using only public transportation, and almost 1/5th have relocated recently. Chicago neighborhoods show an average of 55 percent of their populations obtaining a high school education or beyond (SD=14), with an average of 19 percent of households being female-headed (SD=13). 1/5th of households are female-headed, while over half of any given Chicago neighborhood are educated through high school and beyond. Slightly under 1/2 of the population, on average, identifies themselves as black. See *Table 2* as a reference for the descriptive statistics for Chicago neighborhoods.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Neighborhoods 2006-2010 and the Reported Robbery and Homicide Incidents 2010-2011 in Chicago (N=221)

Variable	Mean	SD	Max	Min
LowSES	0.00	3.37	14.3	-5.9
Owner Occupied	54.9	44.3	98.1	0
Percent Public Assistance	3.3	3.1	20.9	0
Percent Female-headed	19.5	13.5	62.7	0
Percent H.S. or higher	55.8	14.0	89.7	19.3
Percent Mobility	15.9	7.4	43.8	1.25
Percent Italian	3.4	4.4	29.2	0
Density	9336	12989	22,453	797
Ethnic Concentration	9	8.9	43.6	0
Percent Under 18	17	35.2	60.7	.27
Percent Black	38.9	37.4	98.8	0
Percent Foreign-born	19.1	16.7	63.8	0
Percent Public Transit	28.6	12.0	81.7	5.8
Homicide	2.4	3.5	17	0
Robbery	90.6	95.6	438	0
Total Population	7705	5271	29,716	797

New York City Community Districts

The social characteristics and crime statistics were collected for each New York City community district (N=59). *Table 3* shows the descriptive statistics for the data for

the New York City community districts. The average population per district is 135,681.5 (SD=45,806), with a mean population density of 41,868.95 people per square mile (SD=22,510).

Variables of Interest

The mean homicide count per community district is 14.7 (SD=11.8), and the mean robbery count per community district is 685.6 (SD=354.1). New York City community districts will experience about 15 homicides and close to 700 robberies, on average.

The mean percent foreign-born is 34.9 percent (SD= 16), the mean for ethnic concentration is 11.4 percent (SD=11), and the mean for the variable measuring the Italian population is 7.5 percent (SD=9.3). Typically slightly over 1/3 of any given community district will be foreign-born, while 1/10th will be of white ethnic concentration, and close to 1/10th of any given community district will identify as Italian-American.

Socioeconomic Indicators

The average percentage of black individuals is 24.7 (SD=26.2), the mean percentage of owner occupied housing is 28.2 percent (SD=17.7), and the average for percent mobility is 10 (SD=8.2). About 1/3 of community district residents are home owners, 1/5th identify themselves as black, and 1/10th have moved in the last few years.

On average, 20 percent of the population is on public assistance (SD 12.4), 14.5 percent of households are female-headed, and 70.5 percent of the population completed high school or a higher level of education. The majority (over 2/3) of community residents are educated at least at the high school level, but 1/5th of households collect public assistance in some way, while over 1/10th of households are typically female-headed. See *Table 3* as a reference for the descriptive statistics for the New York City community districts.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Community Districts 2006-2010 and the Reported Homicide Incidents

2010-2011 in New York City (N=59)

Variable	Mean	SD	Max	Min
LowSES2	0.00	4.4	8	-8
Owner Occupied	28.2	17.8	76	5
Percent Public Assistance	20.9	12.4	45	3
Percent Female-headed	14.5	9.7	34	1
Percent H.S. or higher	70.6	13.1	95	43
Percent Mobility	10	8.1	36	6
Percent Italian	7.5	9.3	51	0
Density	41868	22510	97251	6109
Ethnic Concentration	11.5	11.01	51	0
Percent Under 18	24.7	7.6	37	6
Percent Black	24.7	26.2	93	0
Percent Foreign-born	34.9	16	80	10
Homicide	14.6	11.9	48	2
Robbery	685.5	354.1	56	777
Total Population	135681.5	45806.2	242952	34420

Results for Hypotheses 1-6

Model 1

Table 3 reviews the results for model 1, this model focuses on Chicago census tracts and uses robbery as the dependent variable. The variable of interest in this model

is the percent of Italian-American ethnic concentration. Low socioeconomic status shows the expected positive relationship with robbery ($b=.088$, $p < .000$). The logs of the expected robbery count will increase by a factor of .088 with each unit increase in low socioeconomic status. The robbery rate will increase by 1.1 for each unit increase in low socioeconomic status. This indicates that when more people have low socioeconomic status in the community, the likelihood that a robbery will occur increases. Percent black also shares a positive relationship with robbery ($b=.011$, $p < .001$). The logs of the expected robbery count will increase by .011 with every increase in the percent black in the population. For each additional 1% increase in the black population of a community district the robbery rate will increase by 1. Similar to low SES, the census tracts with more people identifying themselves as black have an increased likelihood of robbery. Population density shares an interesting negative relationship with homicide in Chicago census tracts ($b=-.000$, $p < .000$). The logs of the expected robbery count will decrease with every 1 unit increase in population density. When all other variables are held constant, the robbery rate will decrease by a factor of .999 for every 1 unit increase in population density. Robberies will be less prevalent in communities that have higher population density.

Percent mobility and percent under 18 also have significant relationships. Mobility is positively related to robbery ($b=.022$, $p < .000$). The log of the expected robbery counts increases by .021 for each percentage increase in population mobility. The robbery rate will increase by 1 for each percentage increase in population mobility. More generally, the higher percentages of people moving out of a community, the

increased likelihood of a robbery incident occurring. Percent under 18 is negatively related to robbery ($b = -.021$, $p < .000$). The logs of the expected robbery count will decrease with every 1 percent increase in the under 18 population. When all other variables are held constant, the robbery rate will decrease by a factor of .988 for every 1 percent increase in the under 18 population. Census tracts in Chicago with large percentages of individuals under the age of 18 have a decreased likelihood of experiencing a robbery.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring Italian-American ethnic concentration is significantly and negatively related to robbery ($b = -.037$, $p < .000$). The logs of the expected homicide count decrease by .002 when the percentage of Italian American ethnic concentration increases by 1. A 1 percent increase in Italian-Americans would be expected to decrease the rate of robbery by .96. This indicates that the more people with Italian ancestry in a census tract in Chicago, the lower the likelihood of robbery occurring. This result supports the hypothesis that Italian presence may have a dampening effect on robbery in urban communities. This result will be discussed further in the next chapter. See *Table 4* for a detailed summary of Model 1.

Table 4: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Robbery Incidents in Chicago Census Tracts, 2010-2011, N=786

Variables	Model 1	IRR
Percent Italian	-.037***	.96***
Percent Transit	.001	1.00
LowSES	.088***	1.09***
Percent Mobility	.022***	1.02***
Percent Under18	-.021***	.97***
Density	-.000***	.99***
Percent Black	.011***	1.01***
Percent Owner Occupied	-.000	.99
Percent foreign-born	.002	1.00
Chi ²	667.64***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Model 2

Table 5 shows the results for model 2 which looks at Chicago census tracts and homicide is the dependent variable. The variable of interest in this model is the percent

of Italian-American ethnic concentration. Several results came back significant. Low socioeconomic status shares the expected positive relationship with homicide ($b=.092$, $p < .000$). This indicates that if the low socioeconomic indicators increase, the difference in the logs of the expected homicide counts would increase by .092. The estimated ratio for a one unit increase in low SES, when all other variables are held constant, the rate for homicide would be expected to increase by a factor of 1.1. This model provides evidence that low socioeconomic status increases the likelihood that a homicide will occur.

Percent black also shares a positive relationship with homicide ($b=.016$, $p < .000$). Similar to low SES, the difference in the logs of the expected homicide count increase by a factor of .016 if the black population increases by 1%. When all other variables are held constant, a 1% increase in the black population of a community district will increase the homicide count by 1. This supports existing research that asserts areas with dense black populations experience more homicide. Population density shares an interesting negative relationship with homicide in Chicago census tracts ($b=-.000$, $p < .05$). With each increase in individuals per square mile, the logs of the expected homicide count decrease by .000. A one unit increase in population density would be expected to yield a decrease in the homicide rate of .99. This suggests that the higher population density that a community has, the lower the likelihood of a high rate of homicide.

Most notably in this model, the percent of residents that identify themselves as having Italian ancestry is significantly and negatively related to homicide, ($b= -.11$, $p < .002$). The logs of the expected homicide count decrease by .002 when the percentage of Italian American ethnic concentration increases by 1. A 1 percent increase in Italian-

Americans would be expected to decrease the rate of homicide by .89. This indicates that the more people with Italian ancestry in a census tract in Chicago, the lower the likelihood of homicide occurring. This result supports the hypothesis that Italian presence may have a dampening effect on homicides in urban communities. This result will be discussed further in the next chapter. See *Table 5* for details for Model 2.

Table 5: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Homicide Incidents in Chicago Census Tracts, 2010-2011, N=786

Variables	Model 2	IRR
Percent Italian	-.106**	.99**
Percent Transit	.004	1.00
LowSES	.092***	1.09***
Percent Mobility	-.001	.99
Percent Under18	.010	1.01
Density	-.000*	.99*
Percent Black	.016***	1.01***
Percent Owner Occupied	-.002	.99
Percent foreign-born	.008	1.01
Chi ²	451.73***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Model 3

Table 6 shows the results for model 3 which looks at Chicago neighborhoods (N=220) and uses robbery as the dependent variable. The variable of interest in this model is the percent of Italian-American ethnic concentration. Percent black has a positive relationship with robbery ($b=.014$, $p < .000$). The logs of the expected robbery count will increase by .014 with every increase in the percent black in the population. For each additional 1% increase in the black population of a community district, the robbery rate will increase by 1. The census tracts with more people identifying themselves as black have a higher likelihood of robbery occurring. Percent owner occupied shares a positive relationship with homicide in Chicago neighborhoods ($b=.004$, $p < .001$). The logs of the expected robbery counts will increase by a factor of .004 with each percent increase in owner occupied housing in Chicago neighborhoods. The robbery rate will increase by a factor of 1 with each percentage increase in owner occupied housing. Robberies will be less prevalent in communities that have lower levels of owner occupied dwellings.

Percent mobility and percent under 18 also have significant relationships with robbery. Mobility is positively related to robbery ($b=.047$, $p < .001$). The logs of the expected robbery count will increase by a factor of .047 with each percentage increase in the mobility of the population in Chicago neighborhoods. The robbery rate will increase by a factor of 1.1, with a 1 percent increase in population mobility. This shows that the higher percentages of people moving out of a community, the more likely robbery is present at high levels. Percent under 18 is negatively related to robbery ($b= -.023$, $p <$

.001). The logs of the expected robbery counts will decrease by a factor of .023 for every 1 percent increase in the population under 18. The rate of robbery will decrease by a factor of .999 for every percentage increase in people under the age of 18. Neighborhoods in Chicago with large percentages of individuals under the age of 18 have a decreased likelihood of experiencing a robbery.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring Italian-American ethnic concentration is significantly and negatively related to robbery ($b = -.035$, $p < .008$). The logs of the expected robbery counts decrease by a factor of .035 for each percentage increase in the Italian-American population in Chicago neighborhoods. The robbery rate will decrease by a factor of .96 for every 1 % increase in the Italian-American population. This result supports the hypothesis that Italian presence may have a dampening effect on robbery in urban communities. See *Table 6* for Model 3.

Table 6: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Robbery Incidents in Chicago Neighborhoods, 2010-2011, N=220

Variables	Model 3	IRR
Percent Italian	-.035**	.96**
Percent Transit	-.003	.99
LowSES	.086***	1.03
Percent Mobility	.047***	1.05***
Percent Under18	-.023**	.99**
Density	-3.68	.99
Percent Black	.014***	1.01***
Percent Owner Occupied	.004***	1.00
Percent foreign-born	.002	1.00
Chi ²	176.6***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Model 4

Table 7 reviews the results for model 4 which looks at Chicago neighborhoods (N=220) and uses homicide as the dependent variable. The variable of interest in this model is the percent of Italian-American ethnic concentration. This model has several significant results. Percent black shares a significant and positive relationship with

homicide ($b=.020$, $p < .000$). The logs of the expected homicide count increase by a factor of .020 for each percentage increase in the black population. The homicide rate increases by a factor of 1 for every 1 percent increase in the black population.

Neighborhoods that have more people identifying themselves as black have an increased likelihood of homicide. Percent foreign-born also shares a positive relationship with homicide in Chicago neighborhoods ($b=.014$, $p < .05$). The logs of the expected homicide count increase by a factor of .014 for every percentage increase in foreign-born. The homicide rate increases by a factor of 1 for every 1 percent increase in foreign-born. Homicides will be more prevalent in communities that have higher levels of foreign-born residents.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring Italian-American concentration is negatively and significantly related to homicide in Chicago neighborhoods ($b=-.17$, $p < .003$). The logs of the expected homicide count decrease by a factor of .17 for each percentage increase in the Italian-American population. The homicide rate decreases by a factor of .87 for each percent increase of Italian-Americans. Neighborhoods with more residents of Italian ancestry experience lower incidents of homicide. This result supports the hypothesis that Italian presence may have a dampening effect on homicides in urban communities. Model 4 is overviewed in *Table 7*.

Table 7: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Homicide Incidents in Chicago Neighborhoods, 2010-2011, N=220

Variables	Model 4	IRR
Percent Italian	-.166**	.87**
Percent Transit	-.014	.99
LowSES	.031	1.04
Percent Mobility	.017**	1.01**
Percent Under18	.014**	1.00**
Density	-.000*	.99*
Percent Black	.020***	1.02***
Percent Owner Occupied	.000	1.00
Percent foreign-born	.011	1.01
Chi ²	176.6***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Model 5

Table 8 reviews model 5 which looks at New York City Community Districts (N=59) and uses robbery as the dependent variable. The independent variable of interest in this model is the percent of Italian-American ethnic concentration. The first of two significant predictors in this model is the percent foreign-born which shares a negative

relationship with robbery ($b=.02$, $p<.001$). The log of the expected robbery counts decrease by a factor of .02 for each percent increase in the foreign-born population. For every additional percent of foreign-born, the robbery rate will decrease by a factor of .98.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring Italian-American ethnic concentration is significantly and negatively related to robbery in New York City community districts ($b=-.06$, $p<.001$). The difference in the logs of expected robbery counts is expected to decrease by .024 for each percent increase in the Italian-American population, while holding everything else constant. If a community's Italian-American population were to increase by 1, the rate for robbery would be expected to decrease by a factor of .94. This result supports the hypothesis that Italian presence may have a dampening effect on robbery in urban communities. See *Table 8* for a summary of Model 5.

Table 8: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Robbery Incidents in New York City
Community Districts, 2010-2011, N=59

Variables	Model 5	IRR
Percent Italian	-.063***	.94***
LowSES	.029	1.02
Percent Mobility	.002	1.00
Density	-7.39	1.00
Percent Black	.003	1.00
Percent foreign-born	-.020***	.98***
Chi ²	45.04***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Model 6

Table 9 shows the results for model 6 which looks at New York City Community Districts (N=59) and uses homicide as the dependent variable. The independent variable of interest in this model is the percent of Italian-American ethnic concentration. The results of the negative binomial regression support some main tenets of social disorganization theory. Population density shares a significant and negative relationship with the homicide count in New York City community districts (b=-000, p < .001); the difference in the logs of expected homicide counts is expected to be lower in community districts with denser concentrations of individuals. If we were to increase the population

density by 1 unit, the rate for homicide would be expected to decrease by a factor of 1. Additional individuals per square mile within a community yield a lower likelihood of homicide. Low socioeconomic status ($b=.14$, $p < .001$) and percent black ($b=.009$, $p < .001$) share significant and positive relationships with the homicide count. The difference in the logs of expected homicide counts will be expected to be higher by a factor of .144 in community districts with high levels of low socioeconomic status and large populations of black individuals by a factor of .009. If the measures for low socioeconomic status increase by 1, the rate for homicides would be expected to increase by a factor of 1.2. If the black population in a community district increases by 1, the rate for homicides would be expected to increase by 1. These results support a long line of research linking socioeconomic status and black populations to the crime of homicide.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring Italian-American ethnic concentration is significantly and negatively related to homicide in New York City community districts ($b=-.022$, $p < .01$). The difference in the logs of expected homicide counts is expected to decrease by .022 while holding everything else constant. If a community's Italian population were to increase by 1, the rate for homicides would be expected to decrease by a factor of .98. This result supports the hypothesis that Italian presence may have a dampening effect on homicides in urban communities. This result will be discussed further in the next chapter. *Table 9* highlights the details of Model 6.

Table 9: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Homicide Incidents in New York City Community

Districts, 2010-2011, N=59

Variables	Model 6	IRR
Percent Italian	-.022*	.98*
LowSES	.144***	1.16***
Percent Mobility	-.009	.99
Density	-.000***	.99***
Percent Black	.009***	1.00***
Percent foreign-born	-.005	1.00
Chi ²	101.27***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Hypotheses 7-12

Model 7

Table 10 summarizes the results for model 7 which looks at Chicago census tracts and uses robbery as the dependent variable. The variable of interest in this model is the percent of white ethnic concentration. Low socioeconomic status shares the expected positive relationship with robbery (b=.079, p < .000). The logs of the expected robbery count will increase with each unit increase in low socioeconomic status. The robbery rate will increase by 1.1 for each unit increase in low socioeconomic status. This indicates

that when more people have low socioeconomic status in the census tract, the likelihood that a robbery will occur increases. Percent black also shares a positive relationship with robbery ($b=.008$, $p < .000$). The logs of the expected robbery count will increase by .008 with every increase in the percent black in the population. For each additional 1% increase in the black population in a community district, the robbery rate will increase by 1. Similar to low SES, the census tracts with more people identifying themselves as black have a higher likelihood of robbery. Population density shares an interesting negative relationship with homicide in Chicago census tracts ($b=-.000$, $p < .001$). The logs of the expected robbery count will decrease with every 1 unit increase in population density. When all other variables are held constant, the robbery rate will decrease by a factor of .999 for every 1 unit increase in population density. Robberies will be less prevalent in communities that have higher population densities.

Percent mobility and the percent under 18 also have significant relationships with robbery. Mobility is positively related to robbery ($b=.021$, $p < .001$). The log of the expected robbery counts increases by .021 for each percentage increase in population mobility. The robbery rate will increase by 1 for each percentage increase in the population mobility. More generally, the higher percentages of people moving out of a community, the higher the likelihood of a robbery incident occurring. Percent under 18 is negatively related to robbery ($b=-.020$, $p < .000$). The logs of the expected robbery count will decrease with every 1 percent increase in the under 18 population. When all other variables are held constant, the robbery rate will decrease by a factor of .988 for every 1 percent increase in the under 18 population. Census tracts in Chicago with large

percentages of individuals under the age of 18 have a decreased likelihood of experiencing a robbery.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring ethnic concentration is significantly and negatively related to robbery, $b = -.031$, $p < .000$. The logs of the expected robbery count will decrease by .031 for each percentage increase in white ethnic concentration. The robbery rate will decrease by .96 for each percentage increase in white ethnic concentration. This indicates that communities with high percentages of a given white ethnic concentration (which could be Italian) in a census tract in Chicago have a lower likelihood of robbery occurring. This result is important to the hypothesis that there is a difference between the effects of white ethnic concentration on robbery versus an Italian-American concentration influence. This result will be discussed further in the next chapter. *Table 10* reviews Model 7.

Table 10: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Robbery Incidents in Chicago Census Tracts, 2010-2011, N=786

Variables	Model 7	IRR
Ethnic Concentration	-.057***	.97***
Percent Transit	.004	1.00
LowSES	.083***	1.08***
Percent Mobility	-.002***	1.02***
Percent Under18	.011***	.98***
Density	-.000***	.99***
Percent Black	.013***	1.00***
Percent Owner Occupied	-.003	1.00
Percent foreign-born	.004	.99
Chi ²	459.8***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Model 8

Table 11 shows the results for model 8 which looks at Chicago census tracts and uses homicide as the dependent variable. The variable of interest in this model is the percent of white ethnic concentration. Several results came back significant. Low socioeconomic status shares the expected positive relationship with homicide (b=.083, p

< .000). This indicates that when all other variables are held constant, a one unit increase in the composite for socioeconomic status will increase the log of the expected homicide count by .083. For each unit increase in socioeconomic status, the homicide rate will increase by 1.1. Percent black also shares a positive relationship with homicide ($b=.013$, $p < .000$). If there is a one percent increase in the black population in a community district, the logs of the expected homicide count will increase by .013. A 1 percent increase in the black population yields an increase in the rate of homicide by 1. Population density shares an interesting negative relationship with homicide in Chicago census tracts ($b=-.000$, $p < .04$). If there is a unit increase in population density, the logs of the expected homicide count will decrease by .00. For every unit increase in population density, the homicide rate will increase by .999. Homicides will be less prevalent in communities that have higher population density.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring ethnic concentration is not significantly related to homicide. This result is important to the hypothesis that Italian presence may have a dampening effect on homicides in urban communities, more so than a white ethnic presence per se. This result will be discussed further in the next chapter. See *Table 11* for a summary of Model 8.

Table 11: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Homicide Incidents in Chicago Census Tracts, 2010-2011, N=786

Variables	Model 8	IRR
Ethnic Concentration	-.057	.99
Percent Transit	.004	.99
LowSES	.083***	1.05***
Percent Mobility	-.002	1.01
Percent Under18	.011	1.00**
Density	-.000*	.99*
Percent Black	.013***	1.03***
Percent Owner Occupied	-.003	.99
Percent foreign-born	.004**	1.02**
Chi ²	459.8***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Model 9

Table 12 reviews the results for model 9 which looks at Chicago neighborhoods (N=220) and uses robbery as the dependent variable. The variable of interest in this model is the percent of white ethnic concentration. Percent black again shares a positive relationship with robbery (b=.009, p < .001). The logs of the expected counts for robbery

increase by a factor of .009 for every percentage increase in the black population. The robbery rate will increase by a factor of 1 for each 1 percent increase in the black population in Chicago neighborhoods. Percent owner occupied shares a positive relationship with homicide in Chicago neighborhoods ($b=.004$, $p < .001$). The logs of the expected robbery counts will increase by a factor of .004 with each percent increase in owner occupied housing. As owner occupied housing increases by 1 %, the robbery rate will increase by a factor of 1. Robberies will be less prevalent in communities that have lower levels of owner occupied dwellings.

Percent mobility and the percent under 18 also have significant relationships with robbery. Mobility is positively related to robbery ($b=.042$, $p<.000$). The logs of the expected robbery counts will increase by a factor of .042 for every percentage increase in population mobility. The robbery rate will increase by a factor of 1.1 for every 1 percent increase in population mobility.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring white ethnic concentration is significantly and negatively related to robbery ($b= -.037$, $p < .000$). The logs of the expected robbery count are expected to decrease by a factor of .037 for each percentage increase in the white ethnic concentration in the neighborhood. For every 1 percent increase in the white ethnic concentration, the robbery count will decrease by 1. This indicates that communities with high percentages of white ethnic concentration (which can include Italian) in Chicago neighborhoods have a lower likelihood of robbery occurring. *Table 12* reviews Model 9.

Table 12: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Robbery Incidents in Chicago Neighborhoods, 2010-2011, N=220

Variables	Model 9	IRR
Ethnic Concentration	-.037***	.99***
Percent Transit	-.002	.99
LowSES	.070**	1.04
Percent Mobility	.042***	1.05***
Percent Under18	-.019	.99
Density	-4.55	1.00
Percent Black	.009***	1.01***
Percent Owner Occupied	.004***	1.00***
Percent foreign-born	.003	.99
Chi ²	180.97***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Model 10

Table 13 summarizes model 10 which looks at Chicago neighborhoods (N=220) and uses homicide as the dependent variable. The variable of interest in this model is the percent of white ethnic concentration. Percent black shares a significant and positive relationship with homicide (b=.029, p<.000). The logs of the expected homicide counts

increase by a factor of .029 for each percentage increase in the black population in Chicago neighborhoods. The homicide count increases by a factor of 1 for every 1% increase in the black population. Percent foreign-born also shares a positive relationship with homicide in Chicago neighborhoods ($b=.023$, $p < .007$). The logs of the expected homicide count will increase with each percent increase in the foreign-born population. The homicide rate will increase by a factor of 1 for each percentage increase in the foreign-born population in Chicago neighborhoods. Homicides will be less prevalent in communities that have lower levels of foreign-born residents.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring white ethnic concentration is not significantly related to homicide in Chicago neighborhoods. This result is important to the hypothesis that Italian presence may have a dampening effect on homicides in urban communities. See *Table 13* for an overview of Model 10.

Table 13: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Homicide Incidents in Chicago Neighborhoods, 2010-2011, N=220

Variables	Model 10	IRR
Ethnic Concentration	-.008	1.00
Percent Transit	-.012	.99
LowSES	.050*	1.05*
Percent Mobility	.008	1.01
Percent Under18	.014**	1.00**
Density	-.000*	.99*
Percent Black	.028***	1.03***
Percent Owner Occupied	-.001	.99
Percent foreign-born	.023**	1.02**
Chi ²	176.6***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Model 11

Table 14 shows the results for model 11 which looks at New York City Community Districts (N=59) and uses robbery as the dependent variable. The independent variable of interest in this model is the percent of white ethnic concentration. Percent black has a positive and significant relationship with robbery in New York City

community districts ($b=.008$, $p < .05$). The log of the expected robbery counts will increase by a factor of .008 for each increase in the percent of the population that identifies as black. For each increase in the percentage of the black population, the robbery count will increase by 1.01. Percent foreign-born has a negative relationship with robbery ($b=-.02$, $p < .001$). The log of the expected robbery counts will decrease by a factor of .02 for each percent increase in the foreign-born population. For every additional percent of foreign-born, the robbery count will decrease by a factor of .98.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring white ethnic concentration is significantly and negatively related to robbery in New York City community districts ($b=-.03$, $p < .001$). The difference in the logs of expected robbery counts is expected to decrease by .03 for each percent increase in the Italian-American population, while holding everything else constant. If a community's Italian population were to increase by 1, the rate for robberies would be expected to decrease by a factor of .97. This result is important to the hypothesis that Italian presence may have a dampening effect on robberies in urban communities. *Table 14* highlights the coefficients in Model 11.

Table 14: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Robbery Incidents in New York City Community

Districts, 2010-2011, N=59

Variables	Model 11	IRR
Ethnic Concentration	-.034***	.97***
LowSES	.028	1.02
Percent Mobility	.005	1.01
Density	-2.91	1.00
Percent Black	.008*	1.01*
Percent foreign-born	-.017***	.98***
Chi ²	34.42***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

***p<.001

Model 12

Model 12 looks at New York City Community Districts (N=59) and uses homicide as the dependent variable. The independent variable of interest in this model is the percent of ethnic concentration. The results of the negative binomial regression support some main tenets of social disorganization theory. Population density shares a significant and negative relationship with the homicide count in New York City community districts (b=-.000, p < .001); the difference in the logs of expected homicide counts is expected to be lower in community districts with denser concentrations of individuals. If we were to increase the population density by 1 unit, the rate for homicide

would be expected to decrease by a factor of .99. Additional individuals within a community yield a lower likelihood of homicide. Low socioeconomic status ($b=.15$, $p < .001$) and percent black ($b=.01$, $p < .001$) share significant and positive relationships with the homicide count. The difference in the logs of expected homicide counts will be higher in community districts with high levels of low socioeconomic status by a factor of .15 and large populations of black individuals by a factor of .01. If the measure for low socioeconomic status increases by 1, the rate for homicides would be expected to increase by a factor of 1.2. If the black population in a community district increases by 1, the rate for homicides would be expected to increase by 1. These results support a long line of research linking socioeconomic status and black populations to the crime of homicide.

Most notably in this model, the variable measuring ethnic concentration is not significantly related to the homicide count in New York City. This result supports the hypothesis that Italian presence may have a dampening effect on homicides in urban communities. Finally *Table 15* summarizes Model 12.

Table 15: Negative Binomial Regression Reported Homicide Incidents in New York City Community

Districts, 2010-2011, N=59

Variables	Model 12	IRR
Ethnic Concentration	-.007	.99
LowSES	.15***	1.17***
Percent Mobility	-.009	.99
Density	-.000***	.99
Percent Black	.012***	1.01***
Percent foreign-born	-.003	1.00
Chi ²	97.92***	

* p<.05.

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Throughout these 12 models, a distinct pattern emerges highlighting the influence of both Italian-American and white ethnic concentrations on the crimes robbery and homicide. Italian-American concentration has a significant and negative relationship with both crimes in both New York City and Chicago, while white ethnic concentration is significant and negative in both cities for the crime of robbery. *Table 16* and *Table 17* summarize the patterns and findings for all 12 models.

Table 16: Summary of Results for Percent Italian and Ethnic Concentration for the 12 Models

		% Italian	Ethnic Concentration
Model 1	1 Chicago Tracts	-.037***	
Model 2	2 Chicago Tracts	-.106**	
Model 3	1 Chicago Neighborhoods	-.035**	
Model 4	2 Chicago Neighborhoods	-.166**	
Model 5	1 NYC Districts	-.063***	
Model 6	2 NYC Districts	-.022*	
Model 7	1 Chicago Tracts		-.057***
Model 8	2 Chicago Tracts		-.057
Model 9	1 Chicago Neighborhoods		-.037***
Model 10	2 Chicago Neighborhoods		-.008
Model 11	1 NYC Districts		-.034***
Model 12	2 NYC Districts		-.007

* p<.05.

1=Robbery 2=Homicide

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Table 17: Summary of the Control Variables for the 12 Models

		Low SES	%Black	Mobility	Density	Foreign	Owner
Model 1	Chicago Tracts	.088***	.011***	.000***	.022***	.002	-.000
Model 2	Chicago Tracts	.092***	.016***	-.000*	-.001	.008	-.002
Model 3	Chicago Neighborhoods	.086***	.014***	.000	.047***	.002	.004***
Model 4	Chicago Neighborhoods	.031	.020***	-.000*	.017**	.011	.000
Model 5	NYC Districts	.029	.003	.000	.002	-.020***	--
Model 6	NYC Districts	.144***	.009***	-.000***	-.009	-.005	--
Model 7	Chicago Tracts	.083***	.013***	-.000***	-.002***	.004	-.003
Model 8	Chicago Tracts	.083***	.013***	-.000*	-.002	.004**	-.003
Model 9	Chicago Neighborhoods	.070**	.009***	-.000	.042***	.003	.004**
Model 10	Chicago Neighborhoods	.050*	.028***	-.000	.0008	.023**	-.001
Model 11	NYC Districts	.028	.008*	-2.91	.005	-.017***	--
Model 12	NYC Districts	.15***	.012***	-.000***	-.009	-.003	--

* p<.05.

1=Robbery 2=Homicide

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Table 16 and *Table 17* highlight the support for the 12 hypotheses in the present study as well as many of the existing patterns and trends found in the literature on neighborhoods and crime. The following chapters will discuss these results and their implications for research on neighborhoods and crime.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Predicting Robbery in Chicago

The following sections will discuss the results for robbery and homicide in Chicago. Several of the significant results were similar between Chicago census tracts and Chicago neighborhoods; however, there were still differences in the probability levels of some of the predictors between both aggregate levels. There will be a discussion of the similarities and differences, followed by a dialogue about the appropriateness of choosing a level of aggregation for study³.

Race and Robbery

Percent black has a positive relationship with the violent crime robbery at both the census tract and neighborhood levels in Chicago. This finding supports much of the existing literature that suggests percent black to be a significant predictor of robbery (Massey, 1994; Park & Burgess, 1925; Shaw & McKay, [1942]1969; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1997). Policies supporting collective efficacy in these communities could greatly decrease the strength of the relationship between these variables (Patillo, 1998). Present day urban society provides a great deal of access to education and public programs; there is no reason that this result should continue as a steady expectation. However, based on the research that collective efficacy can potentially surpass public

³ The Chicago models were run identically to the NYC models but did not have significantly different results. Instead, as seen here, the models were run with slight differences to accommodate multicollinearity and other statistical issues.

programs in effectiveness for aiding in public safety, this should become the focus in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods. Policies focused around community organization should be implemented in these communities and surrounding neighborhoods; it is the least costly mechanism and its only repercussion (if it proves ineffective) is that neighbors will get to know each other.

Mobility and Robbery

The percent mobility is also significant at both aggregate levels in Chicago. This result is congruent with social disorganization theory and the assertion that communities with high mobility will experience more disorganization and subsequently more crime, in this case robbery.

Socioeconomics and Robbery

Low socioeconomic status has a positive relationship with robbery at the census tract level; this supports much of the existing research that proposes a positive relationship between low SES and violent crime (Blau & Blau, 1982; Browning & Erickson, 2009; Morenoff & Sampson, 1997; Speer, Gorman, Labouvie, & Ontush, 1998; Sundquist, Theobald, Yang, Li, Johansson, & Sundquist, 2006). This result is expected but does not have to stay the normative expectation based on the thesis of this study. Community organization and community participation are the only assets that all communities potentially have in common regardless of need, income, or education

(Black, 1976; Cooney, 1994; Patillo 1998; Suttles, 1972; Whyte, 1943). Capitalizing on this feature of communities could have a large impact on the reduction of street crime as well as a positive impact on the city as a whole. Efforts to promote awareness that community organization and collective efficacy can reduce crime in disadvantaged communities are necessary and important. If people become aware of this asset and its value, they can begin working to safeguard their communities without relying on formal social control from government agencies.

Population and Robbery

Population density was expected to be significant in the models, but is only significant at the census tract level. Typically the more individuals a community has, the greater opportunity there is for crime, specifically violent crime (Shaw & McKay, 1925). This is reflected in most criminological research but not supported here, as the relationship between density and robbery at the census tract level in Chicago is negative, suggesting that the more people within the census tract, the lower the robbery count will be. The results of this study indicate patterns that are specific to census tracts in Chicago that have high population density and might actually benefit from sheer numbers alone; perhaps because of a larger probability of capable guardians (Cohen & Felson, 1979). There are equal opportunities to exert social control as there are to commit crimes in these areas.

Owner Occupied Housing and Robbery

The percent owner occupied was significant only at the neighborhood level in Chicago. This again supports the idea of mobility in social disorganization theory (Shaw & McKay, [1942]1969). If the majority of neighborhood residents occupy the homes that they own, it is far less likely there will be large populations moving in and out. This is a representation of community stability which enables more community organization and possibly informal social control (Suttles, 1972).

Italian-American, White Ethnic Concentration, and Robbery

The significance of percent Italian and white ethnic concentration are important to the initial hypotheses. In both Chicago census tracts and Chicago neighborhoods, an increase in the percentage of Italians is significantly related to a lowered count of robbery and homicide. While it is unscientific to speculate that this is due to Mafia presence, it can rather be thought of as an influence of public reputation as a result of Mafia presence having been a more prominent issue in the past. Urban areas are much like elephants who do not forget, once a neighborhood achieves a particular reputation (be it for gangs, mafias, or families), it carries this reputation long after many of the residents move out or on. This would make sense if a neighborhood has a high concentration of Italians, for them to still carry the reputation of the 50s and 60s of having ties to the underworld or

other political influences. These assumed behaviors are what aid in the reduction of overt criminal activity in their neighborhoods. Because many urban residents are always uncertain as to the explicit connections of the Italians, they air on the side of caution and try not to disrupt the peace; no one wants to accidentally anger a Mafia boss.

However, the significance of white ethnic concentration at both aggregate levels for robbery suggest that also having large percentages of white ethnic concentrations within a community (which could be Italian) provide similar and stronger reductions in the robbery count. This does not support the idea that there would be a stronger relationship between Italian communities and robbery than between ethnic concentration and robbery. Both results support the idea of population homogeneity as a mechanism for social control and defended neighborhoods. Communities with common interests and common goals have greater success at protecting their neighborhoods; it stands to reason that communities with more people of similar ethnic backgrounds would share some common interests and common goals as well as maintain a community reputation.

Predicting Homicide in Chicago

Population, Race, Socioeconomics, and Homicide

The similarities in results for homicide support much of the existing literature. Population density, percent black, and low socioeconomic status share significant relationships with the homicide count in both Chicago census tracts and neighborhoods. Density shares the same negative relationship with homicide as it does with robbery.

This reifies the assumption that the larger the population, the more opportunity for guardianship of the community. Percent black and low socioeconomic status share the same positive relationship with homicide as they did with robbery. When a community has large percentages of black population and/or low socioeconomic status, it is likely they will experience more homicide than the rest of the city. This finding sustains the existing literature and is furthered here (Blau & Blau 1982; Browning & Erickson, 2009; Morenoff & Sampson, 1997; Speer, Gorman, Labouvie, & Ontush, 1998; Sundquist, Theobald, Yang, Li, Johansson & Sundquist, 2006). This again lends support for the argument that communities should take a stake in their own public safety because collective efficacy is a tool that is available to any community no matter how disadvantaged or marginalized.

Youth, Foreign-born and Homicide

At the neighborhood level in Chicago, percent under 18 and percent foreign-born were statistically significant predictors of homicide. Communities with large percentages of the population under 18 are experiencing fewer homicide incidents in Chicago neighborhoods. This finding is not significant at the census tract level. There are several arguments in the literature that support this result, and it can be argued here that family composition is an important part of neighborhood public safety (Sampson, 1999). The percent foreign-born is also significant at the neighborhood level in the ethnic concentration model. This finding suggests areas with larger percentages of foreign-born populations in Chicago neighborhoods will also experience increased homicide counts

compared to the rest of the city (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Hirschi, 1969; Hunter, 1985; Shaw & McKay, [1942]1969). This finding supports the idea that it is not just population homogeneity (be it culturally or experientially) that can create more organized communities (Alba et al., 1996; Green et al., 1998). This also suggests that perhaps communities with high percentages of foreign-born are experiencing higher rates of mobility due to the impermanence of a first home in the United States.

Italian–American Concentration and Homicide

The percent Italian shares a significant negative relationship with the homicide counts in Chicago census tracts and neighborhoods. This finding supports the hypothesis that communities with large Italian populations will experience fewer incidents of homicide. While it cannot be argued that this is definitively because of the reputation of the Mafia, it again creates interest that this phenomenon is occurring across aggregate levels in a city with a long reputation of Mafia presence. Ethnic concentration was not significant at the neighborhood level, leaving percent Italian to predict lower levels of homicide even though, on average, neighborhoods have higher percentages of white ethnic concentration than specifically Italian groups. This definitely lends more support to the idea that perhaps the reputation of being linked to the Italian-American Mafia might be affecting the behavior of outsiders within these Chicago neighborhoods, particularly with relationship to homicide.

White Ethnic Concentration and Homicide

At the Chicago census tract level, ethnic concentration shares a negative relationship with homicide, but it is not statistically significant. This supports the hypothesis that Italian-American concentration would have a stronger affect on reducing homicide than white ethnic concentration. Ethnic concentration is insignificant at the neighborhood level in Chicago as well. Because this pattern is occurring at both aggregate levels, this suggests that in Chicago, dense ethnic concentrations that are specifically Italian are experiencing fewer incidents of homicide than other white ethnic concentrations. Again, determining the cause of this interesting phenomenon is difficult, but the assumption that neighborhood reputation and collective efficacy play a role in the relationship between Italian-American communities and homicide in Chicago is plausible.

Levels of Aggregation

The results of this study highlight the effects of different levels of aggregation. While this can be argued because a change was seen in the predictors for each model, the majority of the results remained the same, and it is on this basis that perhaps we should be a little less critical of using larger aggregate levels for analysis. Many argue that you miss individual characteristics when larger aggregate levels are used for analysis (Bryk &

Raudenbush 1992; Dogan & Rokkan, 1969; Schwartz, 1994). In this case, the larger aggregate levels included more significant predictors. Had the analysis remained at the census tract level, it would have been inferred that some variables (like owner occupied housing and mobility) were not related to the robbery and homicide counts. Many are proponents of using the smallest aggregate level possible in order to get as close to individual characteristics as the aggregate crime data will allow (Cherry & List, 2001; Lee, Pearsan & Pierse, 1990; Ouimet, 2000). However, in this context that recommendation would have failed, as there are certain city characteristics significantly predicting the violent crimes robbery and homicide at the neighborhood level that do not occur at the census tract level. However, issues of variance are the main reason that many argue for smaller aggregate levels; with a smaller N at the neighborhood level, the potential variance between cases decreases. Wooldredge (2002) and Anselin (2002) argue that there really is not that much bias introduced at larger aggregate levels and that, scientifically, we can still learn and infer important facts from the larger levels. This study supports the argument that there are some benefits to conducting research at larger aggregate levels; there is a different understanding of the effects of social characteristics, which may have been unnoticed if the smaller units of analysis were the only ones employed. Agreeing with Greenberg, Kessler, and Logan (1981), Hipp (2007), Smith (2001), and Steel and Holt (1996), among others, the level of aggregation chosen should

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION, THE CITY OF NEW YORK

The findings for New York City were similar to the Chicago models in many of the significant results.

Predicting Robbery in New York City

Population and Robbery

For both models measuring percent Italian and ethnic concentration, population density is statistically significant with a negative relationship with robbery. This supports existing literature that suggests density is a significant predictor of various crimes. However, the idea that robbery is reduced by an increase in population density is counterintuitive to the suggestions of social disorganization theory and other empirical evidence (Park & Burgess, 1925; Shaw & Mckay, [1942]1969). This does support the idea that as there are more people in an area to maintain safety, there are more people to act as capable guardians in a community district and reduce overt street crime like robbery (Cohen & Felson, 1972).

Foreign-Born and Robbery

Percent foreign-born has a significant and negative relationship with robbery in New York City in both of the models measuring percent Italian and white ethnic concentration. The coefficient for foreign-born in the Italian model is not as large as percent Italian suggesting that the negative relationship is weaker for percent foreign-born than percent Italian. In any case, the larger percentages of population foreign-born are related to a reduction in the crime count which gives more credibility to the idea that population homogeneity can create enhanced social organization and perhaps be a mechanism for better defended neighborhoods (Alba et al., 1996; Green et al., 1998; Shaw & McKay, [1942]1969; Suttles, 1972; Whyte, 1943). This is inferred under the assumption that most populations of foreign-born group together by nationality after immigration in order to be surrounded by those who are familiar with their language and customs as they attempt to assimilate into U.S. society.

Race and Robbery

In the ethnic concentration model, percent black is statistically significant in a positive direction. This supports the existing literature that communities with larger percentages of black residents will experience higher levels of robbery (Blau & Blau 1982; Browning & Erickson, 2009; Massey, 1994; Morenoff & Sampson, 1997; Speer, Gorman, Labouvie, & Ontush, 1998; Sundquist, Theobald, Yang, Li, Johansson & Sundquist, 2006). Again, it is unnecessary for this to continue on as a predictor of violent crime. These communities should focus on their assets of communication and organization in order to better defend against these crimes.

Percent Italian-American, Percent White Ethnic Concentration, and Robbery

For both models, percent white ethnic concentration and percent Italian were statistically significant. The coefficient for percent Italian is larger and therefore suggests a stronger negative relationship with robbery. While ethnic concentration does predict a reduction in the robbery count, the weaker relationship suggests that perhaps, in New York City community districts, larger percentages of Italian populations influence a reduction of robbery incidents more often than just any community with a white ethnic concentration. There could be a uniqueness to the control of percent Italian on the robbery count in New York City community districts.

Predicting Homicide in New York City

Population and Homicide

Again we see a significant and negative relationship between homicide and population density. This result was not initially anticipated but makes sense due to the naturally dense urban areas like New York City. More people are available to aid in overt crime deterrence.

Race, Socioeconomics and Homicide

For both models measuring percent Italian and white ethnic concentration, percent black and low socioeconomic status were statistically significant with positive relationships to homicide. This supports the existing literature that communities that have a larger percentage of black population and a higher percentage of those with low socioeconomic status will experience higher counts of homicide (Blau & Blau 1982; Browning & Erickson, 2009; Morenoff & Sampson, 1997; Speer, Gorman, Labouvie, & Ontush, 1998; Sundquist, Theobald, Yang, Li, Johansson & Sundquist, 2006). These results are always expected and add to the breadth of literature discussing these topics. However, it is important to note that these characteristics would matter less, if communities were more socially organized and able to defend themselves against outsiders (Patillo, 1998; Suttles, 1972).

Percent Italian and Homicide

In the models looking at homicide, percent Italian was the only measure of ethnicity that is a significant predictor of homicide, instead of white ethnic concentration and percent foreign-born that were important in the models looking at robbery counts. This suggests support for the initial hypothesis that percent Italian would have a dampening effect on the homicide count and also a stronger effect than other communities that have dense white ethnic concentrations or foreign-born residents. This is also interesting because the same pattern held true for homicides in Chicago. This suggests that perhaps not only is there something about Italian reputation, but something

that is specific to the crime of homicide. The evidence for Italians being significant depressors of violent crimes in New York City is growing with this project.

CHAPTER 8: LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Quantitatively testing the concept of defended neighborhoods and the theories of social control can overlook some neighborhood contextual effects such as community dynamics and other social factors that can influence neighborhood crime. For the purposes of this study, it is important to keep in mind the possible contextual effects cited in prior ethnographic research (i.e., the development of gangs, community solidarity, and other such neighborhood influences) when considering the implications of the present study.

Not only are assumptions made about neighborhood cohesiveness based on Italian-American and white ethnic concentrations, these variables are not necessarily measuring the reputation or the cultural aspects of each type of ethnic concentration. These models do not include a direct measurement of Mafia influence in Chicago and New York City, and Italian ancestry is admittedly a proxy variable. As an important admonition, if Italian neighborhoods have a reputation for applying informal sanctions and street justice to outsiders and/or infractions of their community norms, again this seems likely tied to the longstanding reputation of the Mafia in U.S. society. The Mafia does not maintain membership lists on organization web sites or report end of the year financial records listing property and other assets. For research to advance under these circumstances, it is necessary to use a proxy variable. Despite this measure serving as

purely an approximation of the Mafia, it is still measuring the influence of Italian groups on the violent crimes of robbery and homicide, similar to the ethnographic observations of Suttles (1972) and Whyte (1943). The pattern of Italian-American concentrations significantly predicting both violent crimes is empirically proven; the reasons as to why this might be can only be speculated. Considering this fact is of utmost importance when interpreting these results.

Special attention should be paid to the size of the coefficients. Many of them are very small and indicate that perhaps the models are not as complete as they could be. This suggests that future models should include additional measures to add validity and reliability to the results. Consideration should also be given to the fact that even though most of the coefficients are not large, they could still be inflated by some bias that is introduced through the aggregation of the crime data and the social characteristics. The current results are not necessarily inaccurate, but more inclusive models could better explain the variance as well as create validity for the estimation.

Finally, all of the results must be interpreted with caution because of the levels at which the data were collected and measured. Coefficients and probabilities could be inaccurate due to the grouping of the incidents and characteristics, and also there may be spatial autocorrelation that is undetected based on the type of data available for analysis. Rare events data, especially that which can have a value of zero, needs to be analyzed by some type of Poisson regression, and unfortunately, this creates problems for both residual and spatial autocorrelation analyses. Using rates, if there were not going to be a large number of zeros, might be a better option in the future.

Conclusion

Although it has not been quantitatively tested before, there is a seemingly distinct pattern across both Chicago and New York City that communities that have large populations with Italian ancestry also have lower counts of robbery and homicide. The reason for this pattern can only be speculated at this point and, of course, the ideas of reputation and Mafia presence are at the top of the list of explanations. This study suggests that there must be some reason why the Italian-American dominated neighborhoods significantly predict the homicide counts and, further, why both Italian-American and white ethnic dominated neighborhoods significantly predict the violent crime counts of robbery in both New York City and Chicago. Otherwise (regardless of aggregate differences) why would this pattern be occurring in both cities? The quest for the correct explanation for these phenomena should be on future research agendas.

The immense history of Italian-American Mafia presence within these cities is the longest in the country and is most easily argued as the persistence of reputation in the present day. However, it must be considered that this study looks at three different levels of aggregation and a proper comparison and generalization cannot be made in this instance. Only a platform for future examination with appropriate level data can be assessed at this time. In any case, regardless of scientific accuracy, it still remains quite suspect that percent Italian would carry so much significance in urban areas that are

KNOWN for the illicit dealings of the Italian-American Mafia. Perhaps the Mafia presence is as influential as we think, but there is a lack of quantitative proof.

More accurate measures of the Italian-American Mafia should be obtained and data from similar aggregate levels should also be used in order to draw better conclusions. Hidden populations are a common problem in social research; it is not unheard of to approximate in order to scientifically advance our knowledge. So while this is a limitation for drawing solid conclusions, it is a step in the direction of understanding the influence of the hidden population, the Italian-American Mafia. For now, moving forward with the knowledge that there is a distinct pattern for the significant and negative relationship between Italian-American concentration and the counts of robbery and homicide will suffice. This pattern should be critically thought about and discussed in future scholarly endeavors.

Further, this study has disaggregated the white ethnic groups in two of the most densely populated cities in the United States, which has not been attempted to this point. Rather than operating under the assumptions that a neighborhood is safe because it is white, we should instead be questioning which characteristics of the white-dominated neighborhood are making it safe. Not all white neighborhoods are experiencing the same levels of crime or lack of crime. Now it becomes clear that it may just be the concentration of specific white ethnic groups that potentially dampen the counts of robbery and homicide, and this is a much different effect than the heterogeneous concentration of foreign-born populations.

In any case, this research brings to the foreground the importance of collective efficacy and community ties as a means of social control in the prevention of violent crime. Urban violent crime is consistently problematic, and public policies should be focused around individual efforts to prevent crime rather than delegating the responsibility to government officials only.

Social organization and networking, reputation, and social control surround the concept of a defended neighborhood, and there is now some empirical evidence to support the expectation that a low incidence of street crime will be seen in the areas that have a high concentration of Italian-Americans. Offering more insight on the concepts of ethnic concentration and defended neighborhoods, this particular research serves as a platform to future studies of neighborhoods and crime. Understanding the complexities of urban life and neighborhood public safety by examining the characteristics of these neighborhoods can only further ecological research in criminology.

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