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ABSTRACT

COMMUNITY COMPOSITION, DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE, AND THE IMPACT OF SPATIAL PROXIMITY TO DISADVANTAGE ON VIOLENCE AND GANG PRESENCE IN NEW JERSEY MUNICIPALITIES

by

Brian Engelmann

Neighborhood composition, change, and disadvantage have been shown to influence crime and gang presence in communities. There is a dearth of research, however, that explores whether spatial proximity to disadvantaged areas affects crime and gang presence in nearby locations. Through maps and spatial analysis, this study investigates how neighborhood demographics may vary and may have changed by community type in New Jersey municipalities. Through quantitative analysis and interviews with school and law enforcement officials, the study then analyzes how such community-based phenomena, coupled with proximity to disadvantaged areas, may affect crime, violence, and gang presence in towns and schools.

Findings indicate that: (1) From 2000 to 2010, suburban and rural municipalities in New Jersey have experienced significant demographic changes, while urban areas remained relatively static; (2) neighborhood- and school-based characteristics are stronger predictors of crime, school violence, and gang presence than proximity to disadvantage; and (3) school administrators and law enforcement officials in four municipalities have noticed that community change and proximity to disadvantage tend to encourage the presence of gangs, gang wannabes, and urban culture there. The study points to the need for: (1) a clear set of strategies at federal, regional, and local levels to alleviate the deep concentration of poverty in urban neighborhoods; (2) the expansion of

aid programs and specialized school services for increasing poor populations in suburban areas; (3) more extensive gang awareness training for educators and gang prevention programs for at-risk youth in suburban communities; and 4) the implementation of intensive, mixed-methods investigations into how demographic change, proximity to disadvantaged areas, school size, and transfer students affect gang-related behavior, urban culture, and violence among youth.

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by
Brian Engelmann

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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APPROVAL PAGE

**COMMUNITY COMPOSITION, DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE, AND THE
IMPACT OF SPATIAL PROXIMITY TO DISADVANTAGE ON VIOLENCE
AND GANG PRESENCE IN NEW JERSEY MUNICIPALITIES**

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Dedicated to members of school administration, law enforcement personnel, parents,
community stakeholders, and troubled youth.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Violence and street gangs have become common experiences in the lives of American youth (Klein, 2002). From bullying to gang-related activity, many students across the U.S. experience or fear violence every school day. Parents often believe that a suburban location promises safety and wellbeing for their children, but many discover that this is a false assumption. Associated with this commonly held belief is a perception that places close to urban areas with high crime and gang presence also suffer, albeit in lesser intensity, from similar problems. While such a perception may be accurate for some areas, it probably does not hold true everywhere. Suburban and rural communities are also prone to gangs and violence. In fact, suburban communities throughout the U.S. face the problems of violence and gang presence in neighborhoods and schools on a daily basis (Robers, et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Justice, 2010). While it is easy to blame inner cities for crime and gang activity in suburban communities, in-depth, mixed methods studies are needed to adequately investigate this relationship.

In the 21st century the traditional American suburb is undergoing change. Poverty and minority populations – once quintessentially inner city characteristics in the U.S. – have been increasing in suburban communities (Kneebone and Berube, 2013; Kneebone and Garr, 2010; Murphy, 2007). By the late 2000s, poverty-stricken populations in suburbs eclipsed that of cities and between 2000 and 2008, poor populations in the nation’s largest metropolitan area suburbs grew 5 times faster than those populations in cities (Kneebone and Garr, 2010). Although the majority of black populations (55.78

percent) and Hispanic or Latino populations (50.35 percent) residing in Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in 2011 still lived in cities, both of these numbers shrank by about one percentage point from 2007 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003-2007; 2007-2011). Soon the majority of minority populations in the U.S. may live outside the principal cities of MSAs.

Suburban neighborhoods are not only experiencing demographic and socioeconomic shifts, but must also grapple with potential increases in criminal and gang activity. Although crime, school violence, and gangs are well known problems in urban areas (Casella, 2001; Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993; Fagan et al., 1986; Farmer, 2010; Hellman, 1986; Miller, 2001; Moses, 1999; Ruble and Turner, 2000; Sampson, 1987; Schubiner et al., 1993; Scheidow and Gorman-Smith, 2001; Sheley, 1994; Venkatesh, 1997; Wilson, 1987) and cities continue to experience higher levels of crime than suburban communities, the gap between urban and suburban crime rates shrank from 1990 to 2010 (Kneebone and Raphael, 2011). Suburbs are also home to gangs on the streets and in schools (Garland, 2009; Korem, 1994; McKenzie, 1996; Moriarty and Fleming, 1990; Robers et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Justice, 2010). Gang presence in suburbs is said to have started in the 1970s (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2008).

Community composition and population change in suburban communities may be tied to crime, which has been found to be closely associated with community demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Reiss, 1986; Sampson, 1987; Sampson, 2012; Sampson and Groves, 1989) as well as with changes in these characteristics (Bursik, 1986; Bursik and Webb, 1982; Skogan, 1986). However, because most processes operate within larger systems, neither low crime suburban areas

nor high crime urban communities exist within a vacuum. Social, criminal, environmental, or demographic changes in one community are likely to affect such factors in another jurisdiction, particularly nearby (Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012). High rates of crime in a neighborhood, especially violent crime, have been found to positively influence crime rates in adjacent areas with a diminishing effect at increased distances (Morenoff and Sampson, 1999; Morenoff et al., 2001; Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012; Sampson and Lauritsen, 1990). High crime neighborhoods have also been shown to stimulate community change in surrounding neighborhoods (Morenoff and Sampson, 1997; Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

The concentration of disadvantage in neighborhoods tends to cause a breakdown of informal social controls, thus leading to increased criminal activity and gang presence (DeCoster, et al. 2006; Hannon, 2005; Krivo and Peterson, 1996; MacDonald and Gover, 2005; Morenoff et al., 2001; Peterson and Krivo, 1999; Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997; Thornberry et al., 2006). Locations with high neighborhood disadvantage have been found to cause increased crime rates in nearby communities (Block, 1979; Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Morenoff et al., 2001; Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012). Thus, the possibility that crime, school violence, and gang presence in suburban communities are related to spatial proximity to disadvantage comes to the forefront.

There is limited research that addresses how spatial proximity to disadvantage influences crime in surrounding areas while also taking into account the potential influences of community composition and change on neighborhood crime (Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012). Studies need to tackle the complex relationships between

physical environment, neighborhood composition, population change, and spatial proximity with mixed methods approaches. Such approaches can begin to examine the large number of environmental, demographic, and spatial effects on crime and gang presence from various angles and sources of data.

Based on the early ecological studies of the urban environment by the Chicago School of Sociology as well as later studies by Ruth Peterson, Lauren Krivo, and Robert Sampson and his colleagues, this dissertation is a geographic, quantitative, and qualitative investigation of the interplays between crime, gang presence, school violence, community composition, demographic change, and proximity to disadvantage in New Jersey municipalities. The intensely developed, diverse, metropolitan characteristics of New Jersey's population and built landscape offer an appropriate setting for the study of complex relationships between various population groups, community types, and criminogenic processes.

The dissertation is also based on the researcher's background and a small pilot study conducted in 2009. The researcher is a life-long New Jersey resident and is familiar with the cultural, demographic, socioeconomic, and built landscape of the state. The researcher grew up and attended high school in a suburban township in Northern New Jersey. In school his peers were involved in numerous physical altercations, drug activity, and urban culture. In high school, the researcher was violently assaulted by five younger peers who had no reason to do so. The researcher assumed that his peers might have craved a boost in "hallway cred" or perceived toughness, but to this day he is still unsure why he was jumped.

After studying environmental planning, sociology, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) during his undergraduate years at Rutgers University and through Ph.D.-level courses in urban sociology and a graduate course in crime geography, the researcher developed the topic of this dissertation in his early years in the Urban Systems Ph.D. program. In 2009, he conducted a pilot study for a Ph.D.-level research methods course. His interviews with principals in four high schools located near a high crime urban center suggested that the schools closest to the urban center seemed better able to prevent and intervene in gang activity and violence because of their smaller size, the staff's keen knowledge about gangs, and strict disciplinary measures. The school furthest away from the urban center was larger, seemed to have more disorder, and less overall awareness about gang activity. These findings inspired the researcher to conduct a larger, more thorough study using geographic, quantitative, and qualitative methods.

The research for this dissertation was conducted during a time of dramatic social change. As a result of the economic recession of the late 2000s, those living in communities of extreme poverty rose by one-third from 2000 to 2009 just after a decade of improvements for the same population groups in the 1990s (Kneebone et al., 2011). Due to the changing distribution of poverty and demographics across the landscape, increasing demands for free and reduced lunches in schools, and the narrowing gap between crime rates in cities and suburbs, schools and communities that are unaccustomed to such phenomena will need to adjust municipal, public safety, and school services to meet the needs of changing populations (Dillon, 2011; Evens, 2007; Freeman, 2010; Kneebone and Garr, 2010; Kneebone and Raphael, 2011; Murphy, 2007). And because the location of communities affects exposure to criminal activity, proximity to

disadvantage and high crime neighborhoods becomes a critical factor that could influence school-age youth and the most delinquency-prone age groups (Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Regoli et al., 2010; Sampson, 2012). It is the hope of the researcher that this dissertation sheds light upon an otherwise under-researched subject and that the methods and findings pave the way toward future research in the areas of crime geography, youth behavior, and street gangs in suburban communities.

The dissertation addresses the following research questions:

1. How did demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, crime rates, and gang presence in New Jersey vary across:
 - a. The state's municipalities in 2010?
 - b. The state's municipalities by community type in 2010?
2. How have demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, crime rates, and gang presence in New Jersey changed across:
 - a. The state's municipalities from 2000 to 2010?
 - b. The state's municipalities by community type from 2000 to 2010?
3. In what ways are 1) Crime rates and gang presence in New Jersey municipalities and 2) Violence and gang presence in New Jersey school districts, affected by:
 - a. Spatial proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods?
 - b. Neighborhood demographic and socioeconomic characteristics?
 - c. Changes in neighborhood demographic and socioeconomic characteristics?
4. What other community- and school-based factors influence crime, violence, and gang presence in New Jersey municipalities and school districts?

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL ORIENTATION

2.1 An Ecological Approach

This research takes an ecological approach to the study of community composition, neighborhood change, and how spatial proximity to disadvantage influences crime and gang presence. Extensive studies conducted at the Chicago School of Sociology investigated the relationships between place characteristics and human conditions (Shinn 1996). The influences of physical and social milieux, from microsystems to large, even untraveled areas, were thought to have significant influences on human behavior (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Robert Park was the founder of social ecology and applied the concepts behind the relationships of organisms in their natural habitats to the built environment in the mid 1920s in what became more widely known as human ecology (Lersch, 2007).

Park was a functionalist and believed that all neighborhoods in a city comprise a single interconnected web, or organism. Thus, what happens in one neighborhood affects one or more other areas as well. Park (1925) and Zorbaugh (1926) described neighborhoods of concentrated race or ethnicity as “natural areas,” a term adopted from the forest model of competition and mutualism. In the natural environment, some locations are more fitting for the survival of organisms than others and thus other areas are less suitable for living. Similar to “survival of the fittest,” some groups of people are less powerful than others and are pushed to live in less productive locations. In forest ecology, the terms invasion, dominance, and succession indicate the interactions between plant species: one species overtakes another and begins to dominate an area; when

species die off, new forest growth at the ground-level emerges, or; foreign species invade and mixing of species types occurs (Lersch, 2007). One can begin to perceive the same types of interactions occurring between populations across neighborhoods in today's metropolitan areas.

Park's research partner Ernest Burgess looked at Chicago's built environment at the macro-level. Burgess (1925) observed that the city grew outward in zones and, based on changes in real estate values, he formulated a concentric zone model that split the entire city into five semi-circles radiating outward from the central business district (CBD) (Lersch, 2007; Weisburd, Bruinsma, and Bernasco, 2009). Each zone contained similar building densities and land use activities. Burgess hypothesized that crime rates would vary by zone due to their physical and social differences (Weisburd, Bruinsma, and Bernasco, 2009). Researchers Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay at the University of Chicago took great interest in the ecological mapping work completed by Park and Burgess. Shaw and McKay (1943) began to plot the addresses of almost 25,000 juvenile offenders throughout the city of Chicago and sought to compare offender locations with neighborhood demographics, socioeconomics, and the concentric zones (Lersch, 2007).

Shaw and McKay "viewed juvenile delinquents not as evolutionary throwbacks or inherently inferior beings, but as 'normal' kids whose behavior was somehow tied to the environment in which they lived" (Lersch, 2007, p.42). Shaw and McKay's (1943) study divided Chicago into census tracts and then square-mile-sized areas to create rate maps, the results of which revealed an uneven distribution of juvenile delinquents across the city's neighborhoods. With juvenile delinquency rates overlaid on Burgess's (1925) concentric zones on a map, it became evident that juvenile delinquency increased in

closer proximity to the CBD. Some of the highest rates of delinquency occurred in the zone of transition, just outside the city center. The inner zones of the city were said to be characterized by diversity, not only racially and ethnically, but also in moral values, residential stability, and collective efficacy. These neighborhoods were prone to social disorganization, which is defined as the inability of residents to maintain social control due to lack of common community values and social heterogeneity (Lersch, 2007; Weisburd, Bruinsma, and Bernasco, 2009). Shaw and McKay's (1943) assessment of youth behavior in relation to the built environment set a precedent for the approach adopted in this dissertation, which involves the investigation of crime and gang presence in the context of neighborhood and spatial effects.

The Chicago School researchers adopted the terms invasion and succession to characterize changes in the innermost zones. Such processes are gradual and occur when new immigrant groups, new businesses, or new industries move into a neighborhood and long-time residents and businesses move out. Community heterogeneity and population transience make it difficult for residents, families, and other groups to informally regulate the behavior of youth and deviant individuals. Transience also destabilizes local institutions and their hold on community stability, which results in social disorganization (Reiss, 1986).

Lack of informal control allows for the formation of youth gangs, whose behavior is even more challenging to control by the community. When crime and youth gangs go unchecked for a period of time in a given neighborhood, it becomes more likely that a subculture of delinquency will emerge. In the worst case, pervasive and entrenched delinquent subcultures may spill over to younger generations and new residents in a

process called “cultural transmission” (Lersch, 2007). Shaw and McKay (1943) found that residential instability, low socioeconomic status, and ethnic diversity are strong predictors of social disorganization in neighborhoods, which is associated with increased delinquency rates.

Techniques such as mapping land use and population characteristics, separating the city into zones of like characteristics, and determining how rates of delinquency vary across neighborhoods are key approaches that this dissertation applies to the investigation of relationships between community composition, neighborhood change, crime, gang presence, and proximity to disadvantage. The dissertation is “ecological” and loosely modeled off of the early Chicago school studies because the assessment of community characteristics in relation to crime is an environmental and sociological investigation rooted in human ecology. Additionally, the study produces maps and analyzes data at the population group level – municipalities and census tracts – which are ecological units of analysis. Factors that Shaw and McKay (1943) discovered to be contributors to social disorganization, such as residential transiency, are included in the study’s definitions of disadvantaged neighborhoods.

The way in which this research is modeled on Burgess’s (1925) concentric zone model relates to the measurement of road network distance of municipalities to disadvantaged neighborhoods. The major difference is this study’s measurement of distance to disadvantage instead of to the Central Business District (CBD). In the case of New Jersey, there are many “CBD’s” scattered throughout the state, but in this study CBD’s are replaced with census tracts of high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage. Thus, as Shaw and McKay (1943) investigated rates of delinquency at

varied distances from one CBD, this study investigates crime, school violence, and gang presence at varied distances from disadvantaged neighborhoods across an entire state. In this dissertation, a functionalist approach is employed - which assumes that all towns are interconnected in some way – and the ecological concepts of natural areas, succession, invasion, and species diversity are used to conceptualize population composition and change.

Chicago School-style ecological studies that investigate community-level effects on crime and delinquency did not return until the 1980s with the work of Bursik and Webb (1982), Heitgerd and Bursik (1987), Reiss (1986), Roncek et al. (1981), Sampson and Groves (1989), and Skogan (1986). Such studies investigated the impacts of community change, proximity to crime, community structure, and fear of crime on neighborhood crime. Through the 1990s and into the 2000s, research focused on the influence of neighborhood disadvantage on crime, much of this work by Robert Sampson and his colleagues. Sampson (2012) and Peterson and Krivo (2010) largely influenced this dissertation with their studies of how community composition, proximity to crime and neighborhood disadvantage, and racial residential segregation effect crime in communities. Using maps, customized datasets, and statistical analyses, these researchers paved the way for this dissertation’s methods and framed its overarching research goals.

2.2 The Urban-Suburban Divide

The built landscape of America in the pre-World War II days of the early Chicago School researchers is fundamentally different from the built landscape of the U.S. in the 21st century. A key difference between the Chicago School studies and this study is applying the ecological approach to a landscape that has experienced roughly 75 years of new

development and technological progress. Means of transportation, lifestyles, the economic structure, and patterns of development have all changed since the early 20th century. However, researchers at the Chicago School were in the midst of change themselves. The built landscape in America began to shift during the Industrial Revolution in the mid 19th century and continued to change throughout the 20th century as a result of economic shifts, transportation alterations, and technological evolution. To best understand the potential interplay between the built realm and social and criminogenic processes at any point in time, it is imperative to outline how the landscape being studied was shaped.

2.2.1 Community, Urbanism, and Subcultures

The population shift from city to country in the 19th century caused changes in social relationships conceptualized by Ferdinand Tönnies and Émile Durkheim in the 1880s. Tönnies (1887) categorized the urbanizing environment into two societal types, *Gemeinschaft*, or community, and *Gesellschaft*, or urban society. These categories manifested themselves in population shifts from village to city and exhibit different societal worlds: *Gemeinschaft* as one of strong social ties, economic independence, continuation of ritual, community values and *Gesellschaft* as one of capitalism, urbanization, laws, politics, division of labor, and economic dependence. In other words, as the population expanded outward from town centers, the social, economic, physical, and political conditions of society moved from simple to complex, localized to widespread, personal to impersonal, and organized to disjointed. Both Tönnies and Durkheim saw the changing society similarly and Durkheim (1893) coined the

decomposition of community values as a shift from “mechanical solidarity” to “organic solidarity” (Lin and Mele, 2005).

“Community” was also conceptualized by the work of German sociologist Georg Simmel. Simmel, like Tönnies and Durkheim, observed significant changes in society as modernity took hold of the traditional urban form. Simmel (1903) depicted psychological and social effects of urbanization, stating that a materialistic, money-centered, individualistic society led to loss of spirituality, lower quality of goods, loneliness, and anxiety (Lin and Mele, 2005). Additionally, early work by Douglass (1925) indicated that the most concerning drawback of suburban expansion was the loss of community character and the anomie that ensued. As a result of the middle-class desire to run from the disorder and crowdedness of the central city, more atypical, non-grassroots community organizations began to emerge, specifically tailored to suburban residents. Such organizations did not discourage the community aspect of suburbia, but demonstrated the forced manner by which such organizations formed in order to fill the void of a more organic sense of community (Singleton, 1973)

In the 1940s, Karl Polanyi, an Austro-hungarian political economist, wrote the book *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Polanyi’s work explored how the modernization of the state and development of the market economy were tied together in the evolution of a “market society.” Polanyi argued that this societal change led to the disintegration of the traditional social and economic order and was destructive to both social relations and the environment. Polanyi used the term “great transformation” to capture the breadth of change and the consequences that resulted from a shift from self-sufficiency, trade, and mutualism to a free market

economy of competition and individual wealth. This transformation roused intellectual interest in the division of labor, class struggle, bureaucracy, and urbanization.

Around the same time, Louis Wirth of the University of Chicago developed the concept of “urbanism.” Urbanism and its supporting theories emphasized how the “great transformation” had sweeping, large-scale effects on social relations and deviancy. According to Wirth (1938), urbanism is “that complex of traits which makes up the characteristic mode of life in cities” (p.7). Furthermore, the city is more than just a grouping of people, it is “a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals” (Wirth, 1938, p. 8). This definition of the city indicated three key elements of urbanism: size, density, and heterogeneity of the population at a particular location (Wirth, 1938).

Wirth’s depiction of the urban landscape as a large, populated environment of secondary contacts, weak kinship ties, declining familial significance, and lack of social solidarity led him to describe the subsequent formation of groups and the growth of delinquency. He believed that such deviant behavior stemmed from the anonymity and transient character of city dwellers in the modern era; while the individual has freedom from the personal relationships of intimate groups in the city, the person also loses the morale and sense of contribution to intensely settled populations. Within the densely settled urban setting, Wirth asserted, inhabitants of the city are exposed to all ends of the social strata in close spatial proximity (Wirth, 1938).

In cities, large populations, density, and heterogeneity often result in a tight agglomeration of people who have varying interests, beliefs, and values. As a result, social ties are loosened and anomie ensues. Anomie refers to the breakdown of rules and

regulations of acceptable behavior. Due to the large populations in cities, people cannot come to a consensus on acceptable behavioral norms and the maintenance of order is transferred from informal social control to formal control, called formal integration. Formal integration includes such actions as calling on the police to control a civil disturbance, whereas informal control constitutes the regulation of behavior by the residents themselves (Fischer, 1976).

Although large cities may dissolve social aspects of community, urbanization also caused people to associate with other individuals who share similar interests, desires and needs. Such associations materialized in the form of community groups, organizations, religious gatherings, cultural groups, or recreational activities. However, with inherent differences, conflicts, and power struggles between groups in close proximity came crime, disorder, delinquency, and corruption (Wirth, 1938). Park (1925) identified the city as a montage of social worlds where larger populations make for the proliferation of subcultural communities (Lin and Mele, 2009). The core principles of subcultural theory resided in the work of Park (1925), but Claude Fischer (1976) later expanded the theory. He described the major motivator behind subcultural theory as the “critical mass” of people who spur the evolution of a considerable number of diverse subcultures in one location. As a result of the proliferation of varying subcultures, deviance is more likely.

Urbanization intensifies the propagation of subcultures and increases the likelihood that different subcultures, such as modern-day street gangs, overlap and come into conflict with each other (Fischer, 1976). Since some subcultures become threatening to others, further intensification of other subcultures ensues as a natural defense mechanism. Also, subcultures may mutually influence each other as one subculture takes

on attributes of another, albeit different, subculture. Subcultural theory merges the compositional approach of urban sociability with urbanism theory's position that cities affect individuals' social habits (Fischer, 1976). After the early post-industrial studies of community and the later introduction of social concepts such as urbanism, anomie, and subcultural theory, the built landscape began to change dramatically once again with the proliferation of the automobile.

2.2.2 Suburbanization

In the early 19th century Andrew Jackson Downing designed a suburban house and called it the ideal representation of American culture. The designs of his suburban homes were meant to offset city life by providing a quiet, calm, and aesthetically pleasing retreat (Jackson, 1985). During much of the 19th century, writers romanticized the thought of living a pastoral lifestyle in touch with nature and emphasized the greater moral and healthful influences of the countryside over the city's crowded, dirty, and chaotic atmosphere (Hadden and Barton, 1973; Schuyler, 1986). The affects of industrialization on cities was feared: "the rise of the industrial city threatened to bring the worst aspects of the British Factory system to American shores, and the presence of the urban mobs Jefferson had warned against in 1785 seemed to portend the failure of America's republican experiment" (Schuyler, 1986, p. 24). Such conditions "brought on" by industrialization signaled the beginning of an anti-urban ideology that led to the failure of citizens, planners, developers, and governments alike to find equilibrium between the city and the countryside. As the pace and extent of industrialization increased, suburban living offered escape from the city, yet was close enough to the urban core for visitation and employment.

Suburban development extended the impersonality of the urban environment that Wirth (1938) described and instead put people in a place that appeared as though everyone was alike, yet reinforced anonymity (Clark, 1966). Members of the middle- and upper-class fled the central city seeking a less chaotic environment and a more uniform social class structure (Muller, 1976). Even the well-respected landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted was moved to provide his own blessing of suburban development: “no great town can long exist without great suburbs” (Jackson, 1985, p. 79).

Media, advertisements, real estate agents, and government policy peddled suburbia as the ideal, healthy living environment. Families not only chose to live in suburbs because of perceived deterioration of the central city, but because of the lifestyle that such a community promised; uniformity, easy commuting, good education, sense of community, safety, and home ownership. Early suburbs were often extensions of the city grid except at lower densities. In fact, there are many different kinds of suburbs distinguishable not only by building type or density, but by socioeconomic class. The suburban society that quickly emerged out of the rapid suburbanization in the years following the World War II, however, had little structure and no distinguishable boundaries (Clark, 1966).

Widespread suburbanization that followed World War II became the antithesis of the traditional urban core, or the “walking city” of the early 19th century. The five distinguishable characteristics of the walking city were congestion, a clear boundary between city and country, nearness to work, a mixture of land uses, and concentrations of the wealthy near the urban core. Except for congestion, these characteristics of the

walking city are opposite to that of modern day U.S. suburbs. In fact, in Europe and elsewhere, the suburbs have traditionally been, and in many cases still are, inferior to the central city (Jackson, 1985).

One of the main contributors to the urban paradox of U.S. suburbanization was the revolution in road building. After 1911 at the completion of the world's first expressway for the automobile in Long Island, highways dedicated to the automobile began traversing through cities and their surrounding areas. After World War I the impact of the automobile was visible in increased suburban development. Between 1922 and 1929, 883,000 new homes were constructed per year, a rate more than double that of previous periods (Jackson, 1985). There were new suburban neighborhoods cropping up on the outskirts of nearly every major U.S. city, but many of these still followed networks of mass transit such as streetcar lines (Warner, 1962). New networks of highways coupled along with a surging number of automobile owners, however, allowed for the construction of homes outside the confines of public transit lines. Soon to follow was the relocation of many central city industrial and business activities to suburban locations. The U.S. suburb soon had lower building densities and larger average lot sizes than any development in the history of the built environment (Jackson, 1985).

In the 1930s, the U.S. government began to encourage two major modes of residential development: home ownership in suburbs through low-interest, extended mortgages, and the construction of housing for the underprivileged in central cities through public tax dollars. Later, as masses of soldiers returned home from World War II, housing was in great demand. The U.S. federal government approved billions of dollars of mortgage insurance for the Federal Housing Administration and also endorsed the

Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, which solidified the notion that every one of the 16 million returning soldiers and their families deserved to own a home. The construction of single-family housing commenced in waves and rose from just 114,000 in 1944 to 1,692,000 in 1950 (Jackson, 1985).

Modern suburbanization in the U.S. changed both cities and the land outside them. The city was a different place after post-World War II suburbanization. The loss of urban manufacturing jobs, the explosion of the service economy, and white flight from city to suburbs left low-income minorities in the central cities where neighborhoods subsequently deteriorated, became segregated, and experienced overall economic and social decline. Between the years of 1947 and 1958, cities in the New York metropolitan area lost 6 percent of their manufacturing jobs, while the suburban areas gained 37.2 percent more manufacturing jobs (Berry and Cohen, 1973). The fringes of cities were pushed to over 100 miles from their central urban cores. Suburban economic development and expansion altered the developed landscape from a place that exhibited dependence on the central urban core to that of multimodal centers within a sprawling metropolis surrounding the CBD. Suburbs were no longer solely dependent on the CBD for work, entertainment, or services. This phenomenon, called decentralization, resulted in social differentiation and economic and racial/ethnic segregation in U.S. cities (Berry and Cohen, 1973).

From 1950 to 1970, the percentage of nonwhite populations in urbanized areas rose from 13.1 percent to 22.5 percent and the number of central city nonwhites increased by more than 8 million (Glenn, 1973). Since the majority of middle- and upper-class populations in cities were white, when these groups fled from the city to the suburbs

during 1950s to the 1970s, poor, lower class minority populations and ethnic groups increasingly dominated the central city (Jackson, 1985; Masotti and Hadden, 1973; Shihadeh and Ousey, 1996). Cities continued to experience population loss into the 1990s, but subsequently began to experience a reversal when middle- and upper-class whites began moving back to the city (Grogan and Proscio, 2000).

As reported by Marshall (1973), findings from other studies have indicated that people moved from city to suburb to provide a better overall setting for their families and to make room for increased consumption. The desire for a friendlier environment, smaller populations, and involvement with accessible local government and political life were at the forefront of the suburban lifestyle choice (Bell, 1958; Riesman, 1958; Wood 1958). The ideal American suburb that was advertised and advocated by developers and the government attempted to define a new style of living, soon to become a distinctly American lifestyle. Family-oriented, middle to high social status, and housing white migrants from cities were some of the ideal attributes of suburban America (Greer, 1973).

This process of suburbanization is still ongoing although to a lesser extent than in previous decades. In 1970, more U.S. residents resided in suburbs than in central cities or rural areas. By the year 2000 there were more residents in suburban areas than there were in central cities and rural areas combined (Hayden, 2003). Jackson (1985) called suburbia “both a planning type and a state of mind based on imagery and symbolism” (pp. 4-5). A strong opposition to the city has permeated the history of America’s built environment since the Industrial Revolution, which also helped to move certain population groups from the urban core to the fringes.

2.2.3 Residential Segregation and Concentrated Poverty

Moving to the suburbs was less of a choice for certain populations than others. Agencies of the federal government discriminately delineated neighborhoods for certain social strata of the population, including income and race/ethnicity, in a process called “red lining” (Jackson, 1985). Though to a much lesser degree, this process still occurs, but more discreetly through subprime mortgage manipulation. In the decades following the Great Depression, however, a clever combination of home pricing, along with social and political schemes, effectively shut out certain racial, ethnic, and income groups to most suburban neighborhoods (Greer, 1973).

The intensification of disadvantage among inner city minority populations through the 1970s was due in large part to racially discriminatory housing policies in the U.S. following World War I. In 1933 the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) was signed into law and was responsible for refinancing tens of thousands of endangered mortgages and introduced flexible long-term mortgages. The corporation divided cities into sections and created detailed surveys for appraisers regarding income, occupation, age, market demand, physical state of housing, race and ethnicity, as well as other neighborhood characteristics. The process of categorizing neighborhood characteristics is called “red lining.” The resulting “Residential Security Maps” created by the HOLC were used by private banking institutions. The HOLC’s appraisal process was then adopted by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) (Jackson, 1985).

The FHA’s housing efforts were complemented by the GI Bill, which generated the Veterans Administration (VA) to aid in the housing of millions of returning military personnel from World War II. Their joint efforts resulted in a housing market scenario

that made purchasing a single-family home in a new suburban development more affordable than renting in an urban area (Jackson, 1985). Homebuyers looking for a dwelling in a red lined neighborhood, regardless of their financial credentials, were almost always denied mortgages (Wilson, 2009). To ensure that white populations moved to the suburbs, real estate agents implemented “blockbusting” methods: false information was disseminated to white homeowners about an infiltration of black residents, imminent decreases of housing value, and the possibility that blacks would ultimately become the majority population. White populations were pressured to sell at low prices and in turn the realtors sold the same units to blacks at higher prices (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

Discriminatory real estate and financial procedures such as red lining and blockbusting were continued by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board into the 1970s (Jackson, 1985). In 1937 the United States Housing Act created the U.S. Housing Authority, which established local housing agencies. Due to flexibilities in the act, however, most suburban communities did not establish housing agencies and ones that did had the options of when and where to build it. Housing authorities were usually headed by prominent individuals whose primary interests were to clear “slum neighborhoods” and increase real estate values (Jackson, 1985). The “slums” that were cleared for public housing were often older yet intact neighborhoods comprised of shops, apartment buildings, and dense working-class residential buildings.

Public housing was meant to provide better, affordable housing opportunities for lower-class working families but in the 1960s policies changed and welfare recipients were granted residency into the complexes. Soon enough, public housing developments became catchment areas for the poor and desperate, which lead to the stigmatization of

such developments. As early as the late 1950s, sociologists began to criticize multiple aspects of public housing developments. Funding cuts to housing authorities strained the maintenance of public housing developments and the architectural design and spatial layout of these developments condoned social isolation and encouraged criminal activity (Jackson, 1985).

Around 1970 the economy began to shift from manufacturing to service, and from urban to suburban. The economic shift pulled industries to suburbs because of lower production costs, larger building size, and cheaper land. Manufacturing was the chief economic driver of many urban areas in the Midwest and Northeast and its decline drew more middle- and upper-class blacks to suburbs where opportunity was (Wilson, 2009). Additionally, the Reagan administration's deep funding cuts to urban areas in 1980 had a profound impact on public services, job training, economic development aid, mass transit, social services, and education systems. Federal funding cuts left urban public services struggling to maintain safety, sanitation, and health in urban areas, contributing to physical decline as well as a sharp rise in crime. Rises in crime, health problems, and homeless populations furthered already widespread perceptions that cities were risky and unhealthy places to live or visit. The economic shift resulted in many abandoned city buildings, which became magnets to vandalism, homelessness, and overall decay (Wilson, 2009).

In their analysis of income equality in the U.S. from 1970 to 2000, Reardon and Bischoff (2011) demonstrate that income inequality has been strongly associated with income segregation, especially for black families. The segregation of poverty most likely resulted from the implementation of large-scale public housing developments by

metropolitan and housing policies through the 1980s. The researchers determined that income inequality has amplified income segregation because wealthier families have progressively located further and further away from low-income neighborhoods. Over time the separation of wealth and resources has funneled wealthier populations into areas far from disadvantaged neighborhoods, thus draining social capital, quality public services, and access to good jobs. Reardon and Bischoff (2011) suggest that the effects of the concentration of affluence on underprivileged residents are as just as potent, if not more powerful, than the effects of concentrated disadvantage on underprivileged populations.

As the middle-class continued to leave inner cities in the 1980s, lower-class blacks were left behind in extreme social isolation. Such a phenomenon was termed “hyperghettoization” by Wacquant and Wilson (1989), which exemplified the severe job loss and resulting struggles in poor black, urban areas. The nearly total loss of social capital in these areas caused a chain reaction that furthered the decline of schools, local business, and community stability. Caught up in a constant social spiral of reoccurring poverty, an urban “underclass” materialized and was characterized by persistent unemployment, dependency on welfare, families of single mothers, criminality and drug use, as well as inadequate access to education, health care, and housing (Lin and Mele, 2009).

Suburban populations and municipalities only reinforced the grim conditions of the ghetto, chiefly by generalizing the perception of the inner city as a social apartheid infested with poverty, crime, and conflict. Disinvestment in urban municipalities and reinvestment in suburban areas furthered the gap in job access, good education, adequate

health care, and decent housing between the city and the suburbs (Lin and Mele, 2009). Similar to Wacquant and Wilson's (1989) concept of the hyperghettoization is the spatial and stigmatized segregation of the lower-class. Blacks are continuously besieged by spatial isolation, even as other ethnic groups have seen increases in residential integration. The results of spatial isolation are the stubborn continuance of barriers to social mobility, spatial mobility, and decline in the local economy. The marginalization of these communities result in concentrated geographies of underprivileged, stigmatized populations that suffer from crime and poverty, as exhibited in Chicago's Southside, Detroit's 8 mile, South-Central Los Angeles, and in the peripheral areas of Paris, France (Massey and Denton, 1993; Wacquant, 1993).

The research of William Julius Wilson was critical to the advancement of understanding social and economic characteristics of disadvantaged populations. In *The Declining Significance of Race*, Wilson (1976) argued that socioeconomic factors were overriding the racial obstructions that faced black, urban communities in the U.S. In *The Truly Disadvantaged*, Wilson (1987) brought these socioeconomic forces to another level, citing the rise of an urban "underclass" that was forming because of the movement of the black middle-class into suburban areas, thus taking away the stable working families and community leaders from the inner city (Lin and Mele, 2009). As Wilson (1987) described, "The social problems of urban life in the United States are, in large measure, the problems of racial inequality" (p. 20).

Processes that have encouraged segregation throughout the 20th century have, in turn, fostered the concentration of poverty and other forms of disadvantage, chiefly among minority populations in urban areas (Sampson, 2012). Similar to Reardon and

Bischoff's (2011) research, Peterson and Krivo (2010) illustrated that segregation not only concentrated white populations in white communities, but also concentrated white advantages such as tremendous social and economic investments, into white communities. Nonwhite areas were often ignored altogether and become homes for undesirable institutions, services, and other land uses. Racial segregation benefited white populations in the form of decreasing poverty and female-headed families. Jobless males and female-headed families increased and concentrated in poor minority communities. A "racial-spatial divide" still permeates U.S. metropolitan areas in the 21st century. Power, economic advantages, and social benefits are spread unequally among races and ethnicities, which is greatly compounded by the residential segregation of these groups. Levels of poverty, neighborhood disorder, crime, and racial composition of communities ultimately delegate where businesses and institutions locate or invest (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

2.3 The City Comes to the Suburb

As early as the 1970s, researchers described how the traditional image of the suburban middle-class commuter was changing as the suburbs began "urbanizing" (Masotti, 1973). Muller (1976) pointed out that the 1970 census showed increased heterogeneity of the latest suburban migrants. *Urbanization of the Suburbs*, a compilation of works by Louis Massotti and Jeffrey Hadden (1973), is an example of early research on suburban change. Over 20 chapters by various researchers and scholars described the origins, ideologies, lifestyles, racial/ethnic composition, government structures, planning strategies, and modern changes associated with suburban communities in the U.S.

In the prologue to the book, Masotti points out how traditional aspects of the suburbs are outdated and suburbs are “urbanizing.” He explains how inner city characteristics were present in suburban areas in the 1970s:

The ‘outer city’ has been considered by many as a refuge from the problems and tribulations of the central city. There one could escape the negative aspects of the urban condition – crime, grime, congestion, poverty, high taxes, and bad services, inadequate schools, pollution, deterioration, and so on. But migrants to suburbia have begun to realize that crossing the city line does not guarantee immunity from the problems they thought they had left behind; and long-time residents are beginning to associate the emergent problems of suburbia with new migrants, especially the lower class and minority groups... All things considered, the situation is much better in suburbia than in the city, and in some suburbs it is vastly better than others. But leaving the city is clearly less a solution to the urban condition than it is a temporary respite; the handwriting is on the suburban wall. (Masotti and Hadden, 1973, p. 20).

Masotti’s description of how suburbs no longer consist of “distinctly suburban” characteristics such as homogeneity, conformity, middle-class, and safety is salient in the second decade of the 21st century. In the early 1970s as a dramatic economic shift was underway, researchers such as Masotti and others discovered changes in census data that indicated shifts in suburban demographics. Decades later, based on some of the most recent demographic and crime data, suburbs are still experiencing increases in characteristics typically associated with urban settings.

Such early indications of changes in suburban communities are now more amplified. The number of suburban residents living in poverty recently overtook the number of central city residents living in poverty (Kneebone and Garr, 2010). In 2005, 53 percent of the nation’s poor were living in suburbs. This contrasts to 20.5 percent in 1970, 35.9 percent in 1990, and 49 percent in 2000. Also, countless central cities throughout America are undergoing gentrification and redevelopment; the upper and middle-classes are taking up residence in downtown areas and gradually pushing poverty-

stricken and working class residents to the outer limits of the city. Inner-ring suburbs have already experienced the migration of poor city residents to their communities, but more recently the outward push has moved beyond dense residential neighborhoods adjacent to the city (Freeman, 2010; Press, 2007).

The traditional image of the suburbs is also changing; the stereotypical middle-class suburb is no longer uniformly middle and upper-class. Local suburban governments and organizations are slowly responding to the shifting demographics and incorporating new policies that reflect this change (Dreier, 2004). Certainly, part of the reason why suburbs were built was to separate the middle and upper-classes from the poor, which is also the reason why suburban housing developments continue to rise on more rural, exurban landscapes outside traditional suburbs (Press, 2007). As best stated by Freeman (2010): “The schools in these [suburban] communities are no longer reliably insulated from the tumultuous issues confronting the urban core” (p. 678). While suburban lower class residents are less visible in communities their visibility increases when their children attend schools that serve a majority of the middle and upper-class community. *The State of the Cities*, a 1999 report by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, reported that conditions and characteristics commonly associated with inner city neighborhoods existed in almost 400 suburbs (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999). In fact, concentrated poverty in suburban neighborhoods almost doubled between 1980 and 2000 (Knox, 2008).

Drier (2004) explained how although poverty and minorities have an increasing presence in suburbia, suburbs are still segregated by race. Many of the suburbs experiencing turnovers in demographic and socioeconomic attributes are located closer to

central cities and do not have the quality of services and education systems that many middle- and upper-class suburbs continue to retain. Kneebone et al. (2011) found that, after a decline in the 1990s, those concentrated in high poverty neighborhoods rose by one third from 2000 to 2005-2009 and that high poverty neighborhoods increased more than twice as quickly in suburbs than in cities during that period. Compared to 2000, residents in highly disadvantaged neighborhoods were increasingly likely to be white, native, homeowners, and not receiving public assistance in 2005-2009. Poor populations in cities, however, are still 4 times more likely to live in areas of concentrated disadvantage than suburban populations. The report also emphasized how the recession of the late 2000's further concentrated poor populations into communities of extreme poverty (Kneebone et al, 2011).

Kneebone and Berube (2013) cited how a downtrodden economy, the geographic spread of jobs, immigration and population patterns, along with fluctuations in affordable housing are key influences on increased poverty in suburban areas (Kneebone and Berube, 2013). Cooke (2010) explained how a substantial part of the migration of central city residents to inner-ring suburbs resulted from the actions of government housing programs in the 1990s. Such actions included the demolition of many public housing developments in urban areas, decreases in the availability of public housing, and increases in housing choices for the lower-class. Residential mobility among the poor generally takes place in short distances to communities that closely resemble that of their former central city locations. Inner-ring suburbs have been popular catchment areas for displaced inner city residents because of their aging infrastructure, aging housing stock,

declining incomes, lower land values, and of course closer proximity to central cities than their more suburban counterparts (Cooke, 2010).

The gap between suburban and city crime is also becoming smaller. Kneebone and Raphael (2011) showed that the difference between rates of violent crime in cities and suburbs decreased by almost two-thirds in metropolitan areas from 1990 to 2008. Violent and property crimes declined considerably in the 100 largest metropolitan areas from 1990 to 2008, the most significant declines in cities. The report concluded that the traditional connections between crime and neighborhood demographics, such as percent of the population that are minorities or foreign-born, has substantially decreased. For instance the link between black populations and property crime diminished by half and the connection between Hispanic or Latino populations and violent crime fell to near nonexistent levels between 1990 and 2008 (Kneebone and Raphael, 2011).

The once idealized attributes of the traditional American suburb are disappearing from many suburban communities. Drier (2004) explained: “The latest Census data remind us that stereotypes about the ‘inner-city poor’ and the ‘suburban middle-class’ no longer reflect how we live. As we revise our old images of suburbia, America must change its public policies to acknowledge suburban poverty...” (p. 3). Suburban poverty, however, is not as noticeable as the highly visible, often concentrated poverty of the central city. Rather, suburban poverty is mixed into a more spacious and aesthetically pleasing environment where the presence of middle-class residents seemingly conceals the visible plight of communities experiencing increased poverty levels (Freeman, 2010; Press, 2007).

To complicate matters further, blacks continue to reside in heavily disadvantaged, segregated neighborhoods. A study by Lichter et al. (2012) found that a quarter of places in the U.S had poverty rates of more than 20 percent in 2005-2009, which was a 31 percent increase since 2000. And although concentrated poverty continues to be exceedingly high among black populations, Hispanic or Latino populations experienced a decline in being located in places of concentrated poverty because of increased spatial diffusion. Between 1990 and 2005-2009, poor and non-poor segregation rose from 12.6 to 18.4 percent and segregation among poor black and Hispanic populations remains stubbornly high (Lichter et al., 2012).

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Neighborhood Disadvantage and Crime

Studies since the late 1980s have assessed the effects of concentrated poverty on urban populations. Starting in childhood and adolescence, the effects of concentrated poverty negatively impact a broad array of an individual's chances in life. This is because the concentration of poverty increases the probability of lower educational achievement, unemployment, criminal activity, social isolation, youth delinquency, out-of-wedlock births, broken families, and abnormal behavioral development among adolescents (Wilson, 2009). Concentrated disadvantage "is a scale that represents economic disadvantage in racially segregated urban neighborhoods" (Sampson and Graif, 2009, p. 1590).

Characteristics such as poverty, unemployment, population under age 18, population on public assistance, black population, female-headed households with children, and residential instability have been found to be key indicators of neighborhood disadvantage (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997; Sampson and Graif, 2009). Studies have also demonstrated that highly disadvantaged neighborhoods have higher levels of crime than neighborhoods with lower disadvantage, largely due to the forces of disadvantage that destabilize informal social controls and collective efficacy (Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997). The presence of vacant housing has also been associated with higher levels of crime because such housing attracts undesirable individuals and vandals, and contributes to an overall appearance of disorder and decay in

a neighborhood (Skogan, 1990). Vacant housing units in communities also elevate fear of crime among residents (Skogan, 1986).

The presence of disadvantage is one of the most reliable and potent predictors of collective criminal activity. Disadvantage is also a localized neighborhood phenomenon that is overwhelmingly identified by race and ethnicity of residents (Peterson and Krivo, 2010). According to Peterson and Krivo (2010), a “racial-spatial divide” has effectively funneled certain populations into particular locations where crime is not adequately controlled and is often encouraged. Sampson (2012) argued that areas of concentrated disadvantage are distinct “neighborhood types,” which means such neighborhoods can be defined based on the presence of particular conditions. Conditions such as unemployment, poverty, broken families, and segregation are more often than not clustered together in space. In fact, according to Sampson’s (2012) findings, “the data thus confirm that neighborhoods that are both black and poor, and that are characterized by high unemployment and female-headed families, are ecologically distinct, a characteristic that is not simply the same thing as low economic status” (p. 101). In other words, a highly disadvantaged area could be considered a type of neighborhood due to particular demographic and socioeconomic characteristics that strongly differentiates it from other neighborhoods.

In many low-crime communities, order is maintained informally through diligent parenting, the watchful eye of neighbors, club activities, religious organizations, and positive role models. Such elements are characteristics of informal social control. Disadvantaged neighborhoods lack aspects of informal social control because residents lack the resources to organize and reach common goals. This in turn, takes away the

abilities of residents and business owners to adequately control criminal activities (Peterson and Krivo, 2010). Concentrated disadvantage in neighborhoods has been demonstrated to lead to low levels of collective efficacy and high levels of social disorganization, and in turn increased crime and disorder (Sampson, 2012; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997). Thus, higher levels of crime are associated with variables that contribute to low collective efficacy and social disorganization

As a result of disadvantage and economic deprivation, residents may turn to crime as a means of attaining what they need or want. Illegal income from prostitution, theft, or selling drugs becomes an attractive means of financial support in communities with a scarcity of legitimate opportunities. Violence often goes hand-in-hand with criminal activity because physical force is sometimes the only way of obtaining what is otherwise unattainable. In neighborhoods where the majority of male “role models” consist of criminals or gang members, younger residents oftentimes look up to them (Peterson and Krivo, 2010). Parker and Reckdenwald (2008) found that the presence of traditional male role models decreases violence among black youth and that the absence of traditional male role models among youth is strongly associated with location in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Many residents in disadvantaged communities have friends, family members, neighbors, or peers who are engaged in criminal activity. Such neighborhoods are also more likely to lack adequate formal modes of social control, which consist of police and emergency response. In urban communities where minorities predominate, police protection tends to be inefficient; sometimes police calls from residents are ignored, there

are inconsistent responses to calls or crimes, and there may be a shortage of law enforcement personnel (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

Peterson and Krivo (2010) collected and analyzed crime data for over 9,500 neighborhoods in 91 large U.S. cities to measure relationships between segregation, disadvantage, and crime. Aside from demonstrating that African American neighborhoods have significantly higher rates of crime compared to white neighborhoods, the study supported conclusions by other scholars that disadvantage is a strong predictor of neighborhood violence. The researchers found that increases in disadvantage were associated with increases in violence, but increases in violence began to level off at the highest levels of neighborhood disadvantage (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

Several studies in criminology have investigated the links between neighborhood disadvantage and violent crime. Krivo and Peterson (1996) analyzed 1990 census data for Columbus, Ohio and found considerable support for the influence of disadvantage on violent crime in communities. Some years later Peterson and Krivo (1999) assessed how segregation and disadvantage play a role in black and white homicide in large U.S. cities. Analysis of census data from 1980 and 1990 indicated that concentrated disadvantage amplified residential segregation, which had a strong relationship to African American homicides (Peterson and Krivo, 1999). Other studies after 2000 have also demonstrated strong connections between neighborhood disadvantage and homicides (Hannon, 2005; Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003; MacDonald and Gover, 2005; Morenoff et al. (2001). The unfortunate, redundant aspect of high crime minority neighborhoods are that majority black, economically disadvantaged neighborhoods are prone to violent crime and black

populations are more likely to live in high crime areas than other racial and ethnic groups (Wilson, 1987; Hipp, 2011).

Additional studies have demonstrated connections between neighborhood disadvantage and other crime types. De Coster et al. (2006) found that family and individual status characteristics such as poverty, race, and female-headed families are linked to increased incidents of violence among youth. They also found that “street context” phenomena such as criminogenic influences on youth begin to explain how disadvantaged communities influence violence. Akins (2009) examined the link between crime at the neighborhood level and residential segregation and found a positive relationship between neighborhood segregation and aggravated assault. Segregation facilitates neighborhood economic disadvantage, which influences assault rates (2009). Zimmerman and Messner (2011) used data from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) to investigate exposure to violent peers and neighborhood disadvantage. They found that as neighborhood disadvantage rises, so does exposure to violent peers (Zimmerman and Messner, 2011).

In a sample of 506 urban public school youth, Peebles and Loeber (1994) found that residence in an underclass neighborhood was highly linked to delinquency. While delinquency rates did not differ greatly by ethnicity, black youth were found to have higher delinquency rates and more serious delinquent acts than white youth. However, when black youth lived in areas not classified as underclass, their rates of delinquency were closer to that of white youth (Peebles and Loeber 1994). These studies suggest the importance of socioeconomic status, race, and community characteristics when exploring juvenile delinquency. In a study of youth case files Rodriguez (2011) demonstrated that

youth in disadvantaged neighborhoods were more likely to be incarcerated than youth from wealthier areas. Other results of the study indicated that since court officials perceive disadvantaged neighborhoods as dangerous they are more likely to incarcerate youth from such areas (Rodriguez, 2011). Concentrated disadvantage has also been linked to higher rates of intimate violence against women and lower high school graduation rates (Benson and Fox, 2004; Wodtke et al., 2011).

Research has also demonstrated more direct associations between poverty and crime. In an assessment of 840 U.S. cities, Flango and Sherbenou (1976) found that, of six factors comprising 59 demographic characteristics, poverty and urbanization were most strongly related to crime rates. Decades later, in a study of communities in Missouri, Florida, and New York, Patterson (1991) found that absolute poverty was strongly connected with neighborhood crime rates. In a study of nearly 1,000 U.S. cities, Neapolitan (1992) demonstrated that percentage in poverty and percentage black residents were strongly associated with violent crime rates. Likewise, research has also found that moving poverty-stricken families to neighborhoods with lower rates of poverty decreases violent crime among teenage youth (Ludwig et al., 2001). Not only is neighborhood disadvantage, a grouping of demographic and socioeconomic variables, associated with violent crime, but characteristics such as poverty and black population are also individually connected to crime and violent crime.

Indicators of neighborhood disadvantage have also been linked to gang activity. Similar to Peterson and Krivo's (2010) perspective, Vigil (2006) explained that street gangs exist because of the marginalization of particular population groups to geographic areas of inferior social and economic circumstances. Broken families, failing schools, and

ineffective policing lead youth to socialize in a place where they are accepted, which is often the streets. Research has demonstrated that black and Hispanic or Latino individuals are more likely to be gang members than whites (Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993; Hill et al., 1999; Schwartz, 1989; Winfree et al., 1994), and poverty, income status, and limited opportunities have also been connected to gang involvement (Bowker and Klein, 1983; 1993; Hagedorn, 1988; Hill et al., 1999; Klein, 1995; Moore, 1991; Schwartz, 1989; Vigil, 1988; Winfree et al., 1994). Some studies have linked residential transiency with gang involvement (Fagan, 1996; Miller, 2001; Thrasher, 1927). Additionally, neighborhoods with high levels of crime and social disorganization are predictors of gang presence (Fagan, 1996; Short and Strodbeck, 1965; Thrasher, 1927; Vigil, 1988). Similar to predictors of crime and violent crime, a number of neighborhood demographic and socioeconomic characteristics have been tied to gang presence and involvement.

Although a few studies in social science and criminology do not support the connection between neighborhood disadvantage and violent crime, most studies indicate indirect, mediating relationships between the two phenomena. In most cases, neighborhood disadvantage was found to weaken collective efficacy and informal social controls, which in turn increases violent crime rate and likelihood of gang formation. The likelihood of gang presence is also increased in a neighborhood when particular elements of disadvantage are present and when crime rises. Such relationships between neighborhood disadvantage, collective efficacy, crime, and gang presence lead to chain reactions, or feedback loops that lead to overall neighborhood decline (Skogan, 1986). In

addition to neighborhood disadvantage, community change plays a part in neighborhood safety, even in spatially proximate areas.

3.2 Community Change, Neighborhood Decline, and Feelings of Safety

Similar to “survival of the fittest,” competition and mutualism play a part in determining which organisms or plants survive and the types of environments they are relinquished to. Particular geographic locations are more suitable for wellbeing and upward mobility based largely on the composition of their populations and the environments in which they are located (Lersch, 2007). In terms of the built environment, the concept of natural areas proposed by Park (1925) and Zorbaugh (1926) could be applied to today’s metropolitan areas. Highly disadvantaged neighborhoods, for example, would be on the low end of the ecological scale. The least powerful and underprivileged populations reside in poor physical environments that are not conducive for optimal survival or existence. Such a description could be applied to “hyperdisadvantaged” neighborhoods in cities throughout the U.S.

Shaw and McKay’s (1943) study of the geographic distribution of juvenile delinquents demonstrated how the “zone of transition” near the CBD was socially disorganized and lacked the informal social controls needed to suppress criminal activity. The researchers found that the high frequency of population invasion and succession led to higher crime rates, which remained stubbornly high over time. Shaw and McKay (1943) suggested that a subculture of delinquency likely developed in these neighborhoods where criminal behavior becomes a community value and is passed down to new generations and native residents alike. Such a hereditary process is called “cultural transmission” (Lersch, 2007).

In a partial reassessment of Shaw and McKay's (1943) study, Bursik and Webb (1982) found that after 1950, changing characteristics of neighborhoods were associated with changing levels of delinquency. Residential instability is a key indicator of collective efficacy, which mediates crime and neighborhood safety. Neighborhoods in transition and with higher residential turnover have higher levels of crime (Morenoff and Sampson, 1997; Morenoff et al., 2001; Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Reiss, 1986; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997). The entire process can be characterized as a vicious cycle.

Skogan (1986) explored how neighborhood change and fear of crime impact community safety. Once a neighborhood begins to experience the first signs of decline, "feedback processes" are likely to begin. The initiation of one social process is likely to initiate another social process in an environmental system that consists of interconnected physical and social characteristics. In a feedback process, initial signs of physical deterioration may lead to the initiation of another process such as social disorder, which may lead to yet another process such as fear of crime. Thus, the cycle continues in a "downward spiral" that is often difficult to reverse. Skogan (1986) emphasized the importance of neighborhood stability in preventing decline. In the context of a neighborhood, the term "stability" indicates how "the neighborhood as a social system reproduces itself" (p. 206). When a piece of the social system changes and fails to replenish itself, neighborhood social cohesion may be threatened, leading to feelings of uncertainty and fear (Skogan, 1986).

Sources of fear are manifold and include victimization, secondhand information from others or the media, physical signs of deterioration and disorderly activity, high-rise

buildings, as well as group conflict. The alteration of a community's demographic composition, especially in a neighborhood that has remained stable for an extended period of time, can lead to distrust among residents and sometimes conflict. Skogen (1986) termed this phenomenon "group conflict." Skogen (1986) described in ecological terms the complicated nature of neighborhood change:

As various racial and ethnic groups grow or shrink in size, their demand for living space follows. This threatens change, which can be translated into concern about crime when contending groups differ in class, family organization, and life-style. To a large extent, neighborhood succession takes the form of spillover or invasion from one area to the next. When the encroaching community is a crime-exporting area, residents of nearby crime-importing areas are more fearful. Often the newcomers are younger and have more children than do the old-timers, so intergenerational conflicts about public department overlay other differences between them... Outsiders who are in the process of violating a community's space can threaten a broad range of values and conjure up many stereotypes about their behavior. Market forces battle discrimination, politics, and even collective violence in determining how rapidly the demand for housing by expanding groups is translated into shifting residential patterns. They usually win out in the conflict over living space in American cities, although sometimes local skirmishes can delay that victory, so change of this sort seems inevitable. (pp. 214-15)

According to Skogen (1986) the pressures of residents moving from nearby neighborhoods can initiate neighborhood change. Such residents may be of different racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic makeup and may spur feelings of distrust, uncertainty, and stereotypes among native residents. When new residents' place of origin is a high crime, and perhaps stigmatized area, native residents may become more fearful of their behavior, which leads to a break down of social cohesion. Unless more radically challenged by residents or market and political forces, incoming populations (invasion in ecological terms) most often prevail over the native populations (Skogan, 1986).

Fear of crime and distrust of others can lead to "ordered segmentation" in a neighborhood, where diverse populations of individuals occupy spaces but avoid coming

into contact with each other. Fear of crime reduces residents' willingness to call law enforcement when problems arise and decreases the amount of space that residents feel "responsible" for protecting, notably around places of residence. When neighborhood spaces with strong informal social controls shrink to a scale that only encompasses the home, activity on the streets may become a "free-for-all" (Skogan, 1986). According to Skogan (1986), incoming populations are not attached to the community economically or emotionally and in many cases their residency in town is short-lived because they are actively looking for more upward mobility.

Skogan also explained that a community might eventually collapse and particular parts of town may transform into majority renter-occupied housing units as middle- and upper-class residents rent out their homes or vacate altogether. As disorder and crime continue to grow in a neighborhood, remaining residents may not consider such behavior as problematic because a new set of "community values" has been established. Characteristics typically associated with disadvantaged urban neighborhoods may then predominate in the community undergoing change and reversal of the decline process becomes more challenging, thus deterring any prospective community investment (Skogan, 1986).

Places that have experienced neighborhood decline due to fear of crime and the spread of negative stigma often house populations associated with that stigma (Keene and Padilla, 2010). The effects of a particular place may be positive or negative, deeply rooted in the area's social, economic, and cultural history. Places become known for certain attributes and traditions, some of which broadcast desirable feelings and others of which may discourage visitors (Gieryn, 2000; Molotch et al., 2000). Sampson and

Raudenbush (2004) found that while physical signs of disorder lead to perceptions of disorder, economic context and race were more strongly correlated with such perceptions. Residents of all races were found to perceive greater levels of disorder as the population of minorities and rate of poverty increased in neighborhoods. Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) argued that phenomena such as perceived disorder are closely tied to social meaning and inner city segregation of blacks.

At the macro-environmental level, people garner perceptions of crime across geographies, associating broad feelings of safety with entire cities, towns, or suburbs. At the micro-environmental level, an individual's cognitive map, or personal perceptions based on experiences and interactions with social and environmental milieux, can reveal feelings of safety on the street level (Harries 1974). The idea of place in criminology overlaps with cognitive mapping. The intersection of experiences and perceptions guide an individual's value judgment of a place. Familiarity, privacy, dangerousness, symbolism, and territoriality encompass some criminological properties of a place that one considers when evaluating locations. In terms of crime, place can have an effect at the micro-, meso-, and macro-scale. At the micro-scale is the scene of the crime or event, at the meso-scale is the neighborhood or housing complex that may have a bad reputation or create crime spillover into adjacent areas, and at the macro-scale lies the region or state (Davidson, 1993).

Schuerman and Kobrin (1986) adopted a developmental model to study Los Angeles County's highest crime neighborhoods over a 20-year period. Investigating how neighborhoods become high crime areas, the researchers came up with a classification of stages that a community goes through during its transition to a high crime neighborhood.

These stages are “emerging,” “transitional,” and “enduring.” Specifically, they found that physical neighborhood decline occurs just prior to the initial rise in crime. After a community goes through the transitional stage and enters the enduring stage, rising crimes rates begin to precede further neighborhood decline. The researchers documented particular changes in a community that signaled physical deterioration and rising crime. Such predictors were shifts from single- to multi-family residential buildings as well as increases in the proportions of broken families and minority populations, residential mobility, and the ratio of youth to adults (Schuerman and Kobrin, 1986).

Schuerman and Kobrin’s (1986) findings suggest that neighborhood change such as housing unit changes, demographic shifts, and socioeconomic change take place at a fast pace in the emerging stage of a high crime area. After rapid changes occur in a neighborhood, crime noticeably increases. Once crime rises, the neighborhood enters the transitional stage, where crime rates continue on an upward trend and neighborhood change begins to slow down. As crime continues to rise to alarming levels, the neighborhood begins to react and a second wave of physical, socioeconomic, and demographic change begins. Buildings become abandoned as populations and business leave, both formal and informal social control bottom out, and most areas become controlled by criminal activity. At this point a community enters the enduring stage and is characterized by high crime over a long period of time. Neighborhoods that experience long-lasting and chronically high levels of crime have what Schuerman and Kobrin (1986) call “community careers” in crime.

In Skogan’s (1986) words, communities that have remained “stable” for long periods of time often fight to maintain physical and social order, especially if such

communities are geographically proximate to disadvantaged areas. Kefalas (2003) documented a working- and middle-class, majority white community of single-family bungalows in Chicago called the “Beltway” that was caught in an ongoing struggle to maintain order within close proximity to neighborhoods of high crime and disorder. The Beltway is a dense suburban area of Chicago surrounded by largely urban setting where residents strongly value the upkeep and cleanliness of property. According to Kefalas (2003), residents of the Beltway placed great value on achievement through hard work and took pride in their small homes and properties. Maintaining this kind of aesthetic order was also found to be a defense mechanism against residents’ fears of spillover crime from nearby ghetto neighborhoods (Kefalas, 2003).

As one of the only areas in the general vicinity that has not yet fallen victim to crime, gangs, and deterioration, Kefalas (2003) identified Beltway residents’ particular care for their properties as sustaining the “last garden.” The residents of the neighborhood “inscribe their class-bound moral values into their physical surroundings as they fortify moral and symbolic boundaries against the social forces that threaten their way of life” (Kefalas, 2003, p.5). The constant threat of neighborhood change further influenced residents to maintain aesthetic order as a means to uphold social order. Parents enforced middle-class morals such as family ideals, hard work, patriotism, safety, traditional neighborhoods, religious faith, and education. Despite residents’ efforts, gangs crept into the Beltway, and police confirmed the presence of at least four different gangs in the community at any given time. After a homegrown gang was responsible for the murders of two female Beltway youth in front of a school, the community fell into shock and disbelief (Kefalas, 2003).

While the community mourned the loss of the two teenagers, residents received a wake-up call and were perhaps even more disturbed by the fact that their neighborhood was not immune from inner city phenomena such as gangs. Despite the troubling event, some residents were still reluctant to believe that the murders were committed by Beltway youth (Kefalas, 2003). One key overarching finding that Kefalas (2003) demonstrated was how residents of the Beltway largely lived in denial and greatly strove to mask their shortcomings, troubles, or signs of middle-class decay.

The localized effects of community change, especially with regard to increasing poverty and minority populations, lead to perceptions and fear, which lead to a breakdown of community values, which leads to an increase in crime, which leads to more population loss, which leads to physical decay, which leads to more crime, and, as one may have already guessed, the process is a vicious cycle. With respect to the structure of community as it relates to crime, “the basic causal argument is that certain kinds of community structure either weaken forms of social control that induce conformity to law-abiding norms or generate controls that inhibit conformity” (Reiss, 1986, p. 15). Particular demographic, social, and housing variables coalesce in certain ways that either discourage or encourage criminal activity, as demonstrated in research on the links between disadvantage and crime. Since what happens in one neighborhood is likely to affect another in a world of interconnected social processes, however, one must consider the possibility that disadvantage or crime in one location is likely to affect nearby populations.

3.3 Spatial Proximity, Crime, and Gangs

Spatial proximity is yet another influence on crime in neighborhoods. In a research project based on the National Neighborhood Crime Study (NNCS), Peterson and Krivo (2010) measured the effects of segregation and disadvantage on violence at the neighborhood level but acknowledged that such analysis fails to take into account the “ways in which neighborhood conditions are linked with one another... Nor does the evidence take into account the relevant criminogenic characteristics of the cities where our sample neighborhoods are located” (p. 66). The scholars acknowledged that neighborhoods are interconnected and social relations and activities are not bound by administrative boundaries. Neighborhoods do not operate in bubbles (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

Because neighborhoods do not operate in a vacuum, disadvantaged neighborhoods are likely to have some influence on nearby areas. Peterson and Krivo (2010) described the influence that proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods may have on nearby communities:

If areas adjacent to a given neighborhood have high levels of disadvantage (joblessness, poverty, single-parent households, and the like), crime in that neighborhood may be increased as the permeability of borders allows for a broader span of exposure to unconventional role models, situations of company that are conducive to violence, and perceived criminal opportunities. (p. 94)

Such phenomena are some of the ways in which proximity to disadvantaged areas may influence crime in a neighborhood. In the case of more widespread disadvantage, however, control of crime over a larger geographic area may be compromised due to the weakening of informal and formal mechanisms of social control produced by residents, institutions, agencies, and political players alike (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

Peterson and Krivo (2010) measured the effects of proximity to segregated areas, disadvantage, and violent crime using data from NNCS. They demonstrated that white neighborhoods are usually located near other white neighborhoods and black neighborhoods tend to be located near other black neighborhoods. Since white neighborhoods experience fewer disadvantages, residential instability, and violent crime compared to black neighborhoods, and because white neighborhoods are usually close to other white neighborhoods, white communities are usually not adversely affected by their surroundings. Similarly, since black neighborhoods experience more disadvantage, residential instability, and violent crime compared to white neighborhoods, and because black neighborhoods are likely to share borders with other black neighborhoods, black communities are more likely to be negatively affected by their surroundings (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

Overall, Peterson and Krivo (2010) found that adjacency to disadvantage and white populations are critical to understanding why violent crime is more prevalent in nonwhite neighborhoods. Specifically, location near to the “structural privileges” of white communities, which consist of powerful institutional, economic, and political resources to keep crime at low rates, has dampening effects on crime. Percentage of white residents, disadvantage, and residential transiency all have significant influences on rates of violent crime in nearby neighborhoods. Additionally, concentration of violence in one location has a spatially reverberating effect on nearby communities, usually increasing rates of violence there (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

In another large research project Robert Sampson’s (2012) cumulative results of many years of research demonstrates the influence of spatial proximity to disadvantage

and violence on nearby communities. In the project, multi-dimensional data on neighborhoods was collected and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively over 8 years and the dataset and related project was named the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN). Since the late 1980s Sampson's work has illuminated the importance of concentrated disadvantage, collective efficacy, segregation, neighborhood stigma, residential instability, social disorganization, and other "neighborhood effects" on crime.

In Sampson and Lauritsen's (1990) earlier work, two national surveys of crime victimization in England and Wales were used to study the effects of offense involvement and proximity to offending in relation to victimization. In addition to finding that involvement in offenses increases the likelihood of personal victimization, the authors also found that ecological proximity to violence positively influences personal victimization. Proximity to crime was shown to influence victimization in ways that are not mediated by individual characteristics or lifestyles. In their analysis of over 800 census tracts across Chicago, Morenoff and Sampson (1997) found that high homicide rates in neighborhoods, as well as spatial proximity to high homicide rates, has a considerable effect on increase in black populations and loss of white populations in Chicago neighborhoods between the years 1970 and 1990. Proximity to crime was also found to influence demographic shifts.

Shortly thereafter, a study by Morenoff et al. (2001) combined data from a survey of nearly 9,000 residents in 343 Chicago neighborhoods in 1995 with 1990 census data to explore differences in homicide rates across the neighborhoods. They found that, while controlling for prior homicide and neighborhood characteristics, spatial proximity to

areas with high homicide rates was substantially related to increased homicide rates in nearby communities. They also found that low collective efficacy and concentrated disadvantage independently and negatively affected rates of homicide (Morenoff et al., 2001). Sampson and his colleagues have found in multiple studies that spatial proximity to crime and to demographic change raised crime in nearby locations. The researchers also have demonstrated that residents tend to move out of neighborhoods that are near communities experiencing increases in crime (Sampson, 2012).

In a large cumulative description of his research, Sampson (2012) summarized his findings of the far-reaching effects of violence across neighborhoods:

These findings suggest a diffusion or exposure process, whereby violence is influenced by the characteristics of spatially proximate neighborhoods, which are influenced in turn by adjoining neighborhoods in a spatially linked process that ultimately reaches throughout the entire city. For example, if neighborhood A's risk is dependent on neighbor B's characteristics, and B's characteristics are in turn dependent on C's, then in effect A is spatially linked to C even if they are not contiguous or if they are possibly miles apart. This process continues in a steplike fashion, incorporating the neighborhood characteristics of successively higher-order neighbors and thus (indirectly) all neighborhoods in Chicago. (pp.246-47)

Using Chicago police data and vital statistics, Sampson (2012) concluded that, while controlling for a large number of neighborhood characteristics, an increase in the mean level of concentrated disadvantage in nearby neighborhoods was associated with an increase in the homicide rate of the focal neighborhood (the neighborhood being assessed). The effects of concentrated disadvantage exponentially lessen with each successive distance (neighbors of neighbors, neighbors of neighbors of neighbors, and so on) (Sampson, 2012).

Sampson (2012) also found that as concentrated disadvantage rose in a focal community and its neighboring communities, the homicide rate in the focal neighborhood

increased. Similarly, an increase in collective efficacy in a focal community and its neighboring communities predicted a decrease in homicide rate in the focal neighborhood. One of the most distressing findings, however, is that no matter how high on the socioeconomic ladder black neighborhoods climb, PHDCN data showed that such neighborhoods are still more economically disadvantaged than comparable white neighborhoods due to their proximity to highly disadvantaged black communities (Sampson, 2012).

Nearly all white neighborhoods in Chicago are ecologically located near neighborhoods of high collective efficacy, while less than half of black neighborhoods are located next to neighborhoods of high collective efficacy. Collective efficacy lessens violence and crime through informal social controls. Sampson's (2012) research indicated that a neighborhoods' location near to areas with high levels of collective efficacy has a dampening effect on crime there. Regardless of socioeconomic status, black neighborhoods often experience negative spillover effects from disadvantaged, high crime communities that they are so often located near (Sampson, 2012).

Studies that have explored the influence of spatial proximity to various places on crime have mainly analyzed proximity to high-crime areas at the neighborhood level, which is considered a large unit of analysis in criminology. For example, research has been conducted on the influence of liquor stores, bars, and public housing on the amount of crime in nearby blocks and immediate neighborhoods, with both positive results and marginal effects (Felson, 1987; 1984; Roncek et al., 1981). Through extensive research on national victimization surveys in England and Wales, Sampson and Lauritson (1990)

found that spatial proximity to violence increases the chances of personal victimization, regardless of offense patterns.

Research has also been conducted on the influence of gang presence in one location on gang activity in another. Hardman (1969), in *Small Town Gang*, found that juvenile gangs in a small city shared many similarities with big-city gangs. In fact, the organization, behavior, seriousness of delinquent acts, and size of the gangs in the small town were all akin to gangs in big cities. Similarly, Grant (1983) demonstrated that gangs in a Chicago suburb were structured in such a way to be capable of maintaining connections with inner city gangs.

A more recent study by Zevitz and Takata (1992), however, clearly showed that gangs in a small city called Kenosha were not the result of gangs expanding from a large city or gang members moving from the big city to the small one. Police and school officials from the small city blamed gang formation in their town on the ghetto and gang influences of nearby inner city neighborhoods. This assumption was squashed with investigations into police reports and interviews with gang members. In fact, results from the interviews revealed that:

The regional gangs in this study were products of local development even though they had a cultural affinity with their metropolitan counterparts. They were the human harvest of underlying conditions existing in the local community... Several Kenosha gang members claimed to maintain regular contacts with Chicago gang members. However, these links appeared to be motivated more by kinship or old neighborhood ties than by the efforts of Chicago gangs to expand into new territory (Zevitz and Takata, 1992, p. 102)

Zevitz and Takata (1992) did not find any metropolitan influence on gangs in a smaller town. The gangs in town formed out of local conditions specific to the neighborhoods in

which they lived. However, research is nearly absent with regard to the impact of gangs in one location on violence in other locations (Tita and Greenbaum, 2009).

Sampson et al. (2001) found that criminal behavior increases with neighborhood inequality. Oberwittler and Wikstrom (2009) proposed “Situational Action Theory,” which emphasizes how individuals make action choices based on “behavior settings.” A behavior setting includes the seen and unseen parts of an environment that a person’s senses are engaged with at any point in time. Traits of the individual and their experiences, as well as environmental characteristics that affect action alternatives, are directly related to crime causation (Oberwittler and Wikstrom, 2009).

Additionally, the behavior settings to which a person is actually exposed may influence victimization or criminal involvement. Such a possibility is encapsulated by Situational Action Theory (SAT). In SAT, not only do the areas surrounding place of residence act as a behavior setting, but exposure to communities outside the home neighborhood must also be considered. The agglomeration of behavior settings that a person is exposed to over a particular time period is called an “activity field” (Wikstrom et al., 2010). Also, crime in one place may influence crime in another. Studies since the early 1990s have confirmed such phenomenon at multiple levels of analysis: homicides are spatially correlated and therefore cluster together in space and populations that are at greatest risk of homicide victimization are young, urban males who are minorities. Concentrations of violent crime typically occur in urban areas that experience high levels of disadvantage (Tita and Greenbaum, 2009).

Socioeconomic characteristics of environments alone do not explain spatial patterns of crime. Criminological literature that addresses spatial patterns of crime

indicates that the clustering of crime is caused by particular social processes that guide the affects of crime in one location on crime in nearby locations. In spatial crime analysis, therefore, communities should not be analyzed individually. Criminal activity in one community is dependent upon social processes occurring elsewhere. For instance, “there is ample evidence from the routine activities and environmental criminology literatures to suggest that living in close proximity to the types of neighborhoods that produce offenders will increase the ambient crime risk in an area” (Tita and Greenbaum, 2009, p. 154). In addition to the effects of disadvantage, community change, and proximity to disadvantage on crime, inner city populations have developed cultural attributes that distinguish them from other population groups, largely in response to the detriments that the concentration of disadvantage cause.

3.4 Cultural Attributes of Lower-Class and Inner City Populations

Following research at the Chicago School of Sociology by Park (1925) and his colleagues, sociological research on the culture of inner cities intensified. Frederic M. Thrasher’s (1927) landmark study *The Gang*, investigated gang life in Chicago and described core characteristics of gang member behavior and gang formation. Feeding off of Burgess’s (1925) concentric zone model, Thrasher found that most of the 1,313 gangs that he identified were in the zone of transition, which comprises neighborhoods between the city’s core and working class residential communities. These neighborhoods exhibited characteristics such as unemployment, high crime, deterioration, single-parent families, multi-family housing, low education levels, and use of welfare. Thrasher (1927) added that in addition to delinquency being passed down to younger boys from older

boys in both jails and in neighborhoods, gangs became a status symbol and a source of identity for youth.

Similarly, the early research of Zorbaugh (1926), Zorbaugh (1929), and Cohen (1955) demonstrated that disorganization of slum neighborhoods generated unstable and dangerous individuals and in response to dismal social and economic outlooks, gangs formed a counter-culture to that of mainstream society. Walter Miller (1958) postulated that lower-class populations have a culture of their own. Such cultural attributes, he explained, consist of having street smarts, displaying signs of toughness, overriding the law, getting lucky, and seeking excitement. He found that youth gangs in lower-class areas sought to achieve status and respect of group peers, often through physical violence and theft. Miller (1958) revealed that the distinct motivations of lower-class youth were to meet cultural goals that are indigenous to their populations, such as achieving several forms of social status, including toughness or ability to outsmart the law.

Additional research by Liebow (1967) and Suttles (1968) contributed to the exploration of inner city culture, which became an anthropological and sociological research endeavor in the 1960s. Academic research on the inner city, however, remained dormant largely until the 1980s when such research returned with a focus on class segregation, racial discrimination, and unemployment among those in ghetto neighborhoods. According to Wilson (1987), the racial-spatial divide produced cultural distinctions between socioeconomic geographies such as behaviors among youth in poor inner cities compared to youth behaviors in middle- or upper-class suburban communities. Urban youth are often consumed with hip-hop music, recreational drug use, hanging out on the streets, and pursuing sexual aspirations (Wilson, 2009). The myriad

behaviors and disadvantages present in black, urban areas are a result of what Wilson (1987) called “social isolation,” which highlights how limited contact across class and racial boundaries has created concentrated disadvantages and their resulting effects on lifestyles and behavior of individuals in underclass neighborhoods (Wilson, 1993).

Wilson (1987) posed a macro-structural model of the underclass’s disadvantages, a theoretical framework that melded cultural, social-psychological, and structural viewpoints together in a web of pathologies that poor, urban, black individuals are affected by. The underclass is differentiated from other populations because the large amounts of social and economic disadvantages they encounter are compounded by detrimental social and neighborhood conditions that other lower-class populations do not experience (Wilson, 1993). Massey and Denton (1993) explained that residents of underclass neighborhoods tend to respond to the dangerous and poverty-stricken state of their communities by adopting certain behaviors and practices that further weaken their chances of upward mobility. They describe how underclass, or ghetto, residents often develop an “oppositional culture” to the mainstream, middle-class culture. Peer pressure to academically underachieve is one facet of such an oppositional culture, as well as violence, fear, Black English, masculinity, and toughness (Lin and Mele, 2009).

The effects of severe job loss on inner city populations led to what Wilson (1996) deemed “ghetto-related” behavior. Ghetto-related behavior emerges out of the dearth of social capital that would otherwise provide economic advancement and closeness with mainstream social traits. This type of social isolation fosters the emergence of ghetto-related culture, where individuals in inner cities share similar behavioral characteristics and outlooks in life (Wilson, 1996). Wilson (1996) acknowledged, however, that there

are bound to be variations within subcultures despite the common cultural threads that individuals may share in these groups. He recognized that, as other research has shown, mainstream cultural elements are intertwined in inner city culture and its resultant ghetto-related behaviors. It is difficult for residents of the inner city to avoid frequent experiences with the ghetto-related behaviors exhibited in most social interactions in their neighborhoods. Due to a lack of social organization in inner city neighborhoods, such ghetto-related behavior is allowed to transpire unchecked and unlimited without ramifications. Some residents condemn this sort of behavior, but these residents lack the social network and sense of community to quell it (Wilson, 1996).

In Elijah Anderson's (1999) *Code of the Street*, the behaviors that Wilson (1996) described are "codified" into "street" and "decent" cohorts. As a result of the maladies associated with inner city living, along with ample ghetto-related social expressions, individuals in the ghetto adopt a "code of the street" that helps them to survive in a tough and intimidating environment. Accordingly, Anderson (1999) called those families who hold onto and enforce middle-class morals "decent" families, while "street" families lack a sense of community and adhere to the ghetto lifestyle. While the majority of residents are decent and try their best to induce middle-class values on their children, negative aspects of the ghetto sometimes overwhelm youth and parents alike. Anderson (1999) acknowledged, however, that there is no fine line between acting "street" and acting "decent," eluding to the reality that individuals may also exhibit traits of both social realms, and are able to readily "code-switch." The ability to code-switch between street and decent is often a daily routine for those in the inner city (Anderson, 1999).

Similarly, in an ethnographic documentation of a middle-class black neighborhood in close proximity to inner city areas, Pattillo-McCoy (1999) described how black middle-class youth code-switch and were influenced by ghetto culture because of close proximity to inner city neighborhoods. Adults in this community strived to maintain middle-class values but youth were still greatly influenced by ghetto culture, sometimes to the point of gangbanging and becoming victim to murder. Pattillo-McCoy (1999) demonstrated that there are three levels of intensity by which youth are influenced by what Pattillo-McCoy (1999) called a “ghetto trance.” Those who are “consumed” are absorbed in both ghetto styles and behavior, thus dressing in baggy clothes, wearing gold chains, appearing tough, and becoming involved with gangs or other illegitimate behaviors. “Thrilled” youth are superficially involved in ghetto culture and tend to be excited by ghetto dress, styles, and language. These youth listen to hip-hop and rap, dress in ghetto-influenced styles, talk Black English, and are curious about the lives of gang members and criminals. Last, youth who are “marginal” to the ghetto culture try to separate themselves from gangsta culture and are critical of those who participate in it (Pattillo-McCoy, 1999).

In relative contrast to Massey and Denton’s (1993) “oppositional culture” and Wilson’s (1987) “social isolation,” David Harding (2010) compared youth living in poor neighborhoods and those living in working-class neighborhoods and found out that youth in poor, inner city areas exhibited traits of cultural heterogeneity. Harding (2010) rejected the “social isolation” model that defines cultural, social, and economic attributes of inner city residents, and argued that due to neighborhood social milieux such as survival, fear, protection, and intimidation, existing middle-class morals are mixed with peer pressures

to join gangs, underperform in school, practice casual sex, commit crimes, and act tough, among other things. Harding (2010) suggested that each inner city youth has a different way of navigating his or her world, dealing with violence, incorporating mainstream culture into their lives, and wrestling peer pressures.

Even in suburban settings blacks are associated with inner city lifestyles. For example, Obgu (2003) found that low achievement among blacks students in a diverse school was due to the inferiority blacks feel among whites, teachers' low expectations of black students, refusal of the students to do schoolwork, differences in social and language traits, as well as other traits of ghetto culture. Similarly, in another desegregated school, Harlan (1998) demonstrated that black students carried out behaviors associated with the inner city in school and exhibited characteristics of separatism. Criminogenic lifestyles, hip-hop music, violent video games, and attributes of ghetto culture impeded black youths' ability to change their social and economic outlooks on life, despite school integration (Harlan, 1998).

As illustrated in the work of Kefalas (2003) and Pattillo-McCoy (1999), the influence of ghetto culture, or the "ghetto trance," crosses both racial and socioeconomic boundaries. Daniels (2007) took the term "ghetto" to another level, and in her ethnographic study, demonstrated that the word refers to more than just a lifestyle; it refers to a mind-set. As best stated by Daniels (2007) herself:

Ghetto is not limited to a class or a race. Ghetto is found in the heart of the nation's inner cities as well as in the heart of the nation's most cherished suburbs; among those too young to understand (we hope) and those old enough to know better . . . Bottom line, ghetto is contagious, and no one is immune no matter how much we like to suck our teeth and shake our heads at what we think is happening only someplace else (p.8)

As a result of its far-reaching nature and its emergence as not only a culture but also a mindset, “ghetto” is difficult to define yet easily discerned (Daniels, 2008).

The spread of the “ghetto” mindset is perhaps most noticeable when suburban white youth listen to rap and hip-hop music. The emergence of a global economy, changes in the music scene, recent economic and cultural, along with the sharp growth and heavy influence of black popular culture, have given rise to the embrace of black culture by many white, suburban youth (Kitwana, 2005). Additionally, the influence that whites and other ethnic groups have had on hip-hop has also changed the way in which traditional racial/ethnic attachments to particular cultural elements are viewed (Fraley, 2009).

The irony in white youths’ obsession with black culture, called “Blackophilia” has also been demonstrated as intrinsically connected with white fear of black people, or “Blackophobia” (Yousman, 2003). Such a phenomenon, however, is not a common finding, as white youths’ fascination with elements of black culture is more likely due to their own resistance to middle-class values, feelings of alienation, and peer pressures. In fact, it has been observed that black youth are increasingly taking on white cultural attributes, especially with regard to dress, when at the same time, white youth continue to portray black styles of dress and culture (Kakutani, 1997). Ferrell (2004) explained how “styles” matter in subcultures and in the criminal world. He stated how style is “... A concrete element of personal and group identity... embedded in haircuts, posture, clothing, automobiles, music, and many other avenues... whose meaning is constructed through the nuances of social interaction.” (p. 61). He emphasized that when styles form out of criminal subcultures, both collective and personal style becomes a critical

connection between cultural meaning and criminal identity. To have a particular style is to communicate your subculture to the world (Ferrell, 2004).

3.5 Gangs, Gang Wannabes, and Gangs in Suburban Communities

The 2010 National Youth Gang Survey found that approximately 756,000 gang members and 29,400 gangs were operating in 3,500 jurisdictions in the United States. In 2010, 34 percent of local law enforcement agencies reported gang problems and 30,000 gangs were reported. According to the Survey, about 40.9 percent of gangs were present in larger cities, 23.1 percent in suburban counties, 32.6 percent in small cities, and 4.5 percent in rural counties (National Gang Center, 2010; US Department of Justice, 2010).

Despite these statistics, there is little consensus regarding what defines a gang or a gang member. As a result of research in the field two broad “benchmarks” for identifying gangs have been recommended: “(1) youth status, defined as an age classification ranging between 10 and the early 20s or even older, and (2) the engagement by group members in law-violating behavior or, at a minimum, ‘imprudent’ behavior” (Esbensen et al., 2001, p. 106). Akiyama (2011) suggested that gang membership ranges from hard core to wannabe. Gangs are generally comprised of between 40 to 50 percent active or regular members, 20 to 30 percent associate or affiliate members, 10 to 20 percent hard-core gang members (gang leadership), and less than 10 percent are wannabes. However, although gang members themselves should be considered dangerous, “wannabes are particularly dangerous because of their motivation to be part of the gang. The wannabes need to prove that they are ‘down” (committed) and have ‘heart’ (dedication) for the gang, because wannabes are at the bottom of the gang hierarchy” (Akiyama, 1). Akiyama (2011) suggested that some of the more common reasons that someone may want to join

a gang are for protection, sense of family, status or identity, and peer pressure. Perhaps the most influential reason for joining a gang, though, is to achieve a sense of belonging, support, and recognition (Akiyama, 2011).

Gang associates, gang-marginal, peripheral members, and wannabes are terms that have been used to communicate the indistinct middle ground between gang members and nonmembers (Alleyne and Wood, 2010; Curry et al., 2002; Egley, 2003; Monti, 1994). Research on gang associates or wannabes is very limited. This is also due to the general lack of consensus among researchers on the definition of “gang”. Although the Eurogang Project, developed by leading scholars, provides a detailed and structured framework for defining and researching gangs, the definition of a gang still remains hazy (University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2012). Spergel (1964) explained:

Identification as a member of a gang... was not a stable, permanent, once-and-for-all social fact... One youngster might, for a relatively short period of time, “hang around” a group and be recognized almost immediately as a member of that group. Another individual would be present a great deal of the time with the group and be regarded clearly as a non-member or as a member of another group (pp. 66-67, as quoted by Curry et al., 2002, p. 279).

Spergel’s (1964) words bring to light a problem still salient in gang research: the indistinct boundary between gang members and nonmembers. This dissertation, however, takes on a theoretical standpoint that gangs are loosely organized, as opposed to highly organized and that gang members tend to be in and out of membership and are oftentimes marginal (Curry et al., 2002).

Some research has endeavored to establish delineations between characteristics of gang and non-gang youth. For example, Maxson et al. (1985) demonstrated that gang homicides in Los Angeles tended to occur in public areas, involved guns, involved shooting from a vehicle, and included more suspects, younger suspects, and more

suspects who had no prior contact with the victim than non-gang homicides. Esbensen et al. (1993) found that, compared to gang members and juvenile delinquents, non-gang and non-offender youth have lower rates of criminal offending, lower tolerance for deviance, fewer associations with delinquent peers, as well as higher levels of normalcy in terms of school, family, and peer associations. Likewise, Curry's (2000) research indicated strong correlations between self-reported gang involvement and officially recorded delinquency, even when controlling for other variables. It has been suggested that the "self-nomination" technique of gang member identification is an accurate means of identifying gang and non-gang members (Esbensen et al., 2001).

There are also variations in stability of gang membership and level of gang involvement. In addition to gang and non-gang members, Egley (2003) used "gang-marginal" status to describe youth who do not claim official gang membership but show signs of gang associations and involvement in activities that enhance their probability of joining a gang at some point in the future. In a survey of over 500 middle school youth in gang-prone St. Louis neighborhoods, Egley (2003) demonstrated that rates of delinquency were higher among gang-marginal students than non-gang students. Gang members had the highest rates of delinquency. Furthermore, gang membership was strongly connected to family-level factors while gang-marginal status was more strongly linked to neighborhood factors (Egley, 2003). In a study by Decker and Curry (2000) where close to 100 middle school and alternative education students in St. Louis were interviewed, findings demonstrated that gangs had a weak hold on members and that overall gang membership was transient. Not many differences were found between current, prior, or associate gang members (Decker and Curry, 2000).

In a study involving 798 high school youth in the United Kingdom, 59 of which were gang members, 75 “peripheral members,” and the rest non-gang youth, Alleyne and Wood (2010) found that gang members and peripheral members had higher rates of delinquency, violent offending, and valued social status more than non-gang youth. The findings also indicated that across some measurements of violent offending, peripheral members had slightly higher rates than gang members, reflecting the possibility that because peripheral youth “aspire to gang membership they may feel a need to prove themselves to the gang by mimicking what they perceive as acceptable gang behavior. Gang members, on the other hand, do not need to engage in as much violence because they can delegate in the fashion that their status permits” (Alleyne and Wood, 2010, p. 432).

The lines between gang and non-gang activity are also fuzzy in suburban communities. In many instances, what is perceived to be a gang is likely a troublesome youth group whose actions and behaviors resemble gang activity. Studies of gangs in suburbs have revealed group characteristics of loose structure, informality, fuzzy territory, social cliques, questions of loyalty, short-lived membership, and petty crime (Monti, 1994; Muehlbauer and Dodder, 1983). Others found that more affluent, middle-class gangbangers are a widespread societal and national problem and even pose problems with weapon carrying (Hawkins et al., 2002; Korem, 1994; Wooden, 1995). Middle-class suburban youth are vulnerable to imitating mass-produced cultures broadcasted across the world to a generation that is captivated by the media (McKenzie, 1996). Groups of deviant youth in suburban locations are more likely to be loosely organized, short-lived, and may have formed as a result of captivation by gangsta culture.

Seng (1986) proposed a model for gang development in suburban communities that consists mostly of group development phases prior to official designation as a gang. In suburban areas the first stage of gang development is likely born out of a collection of “rejects” who group together because they are ridiculed, different, or are racial or ethnic minorities compared with the rest of the school population. When a collection of individuals becomes distinguishable as a group and exhibits deviant behavior, the group enters Stage II, or “the gang in embryo.” In this stage individuals in the group may begin wearing similar clothing styles that set them apart from other students, they may take on a “tough” identity, and could begin fighting or intimidating other students (Seng, 1986).

When the “gang in embryo” gains notoriety in the community, the group enters stage III, which is a “community nuisance.” In other words, the group is now recognized in the community and its members seek public attention by hanging out in public places, dressing alike, partaking in illegal activities, acting “tough,” and challenging authorities. The group may establish a name for themselves and create a group emblem or insignia. Graffiti of the group’s name is likely to appear on public property and such graffiti may resemble an already-established criminal gang that operates in town or someplace nearby, called “copy-cat” gang activity (Seng, 1986).

Seng (1986) emphasized that intervention is critical in Stage III of gang development. The group or its leadership should be confronted and warned of the potential punishments of their actions in a collaborative effort between community and school officials. The group may then continue its behavior or disperse. If the group continues on a deviant path the group enters Stage IV, which Seng (1986) called “the antagonists.” Entering Stage IV is contingent on recognizable and strong group

leadership. A group name, symbols, emblems, strong group cohesion, and a blatant public display of deviant activity now characterize the group. If the group maintains organization and is competitive with other deviant groups or gangs, leadership may decide to increase the group's presence and partake in deliberately illegal activities as a "means to an end." At this point the group enters the fifth and last stage of group development called "the gang." As the gang grows in power and capital, leaders become older and wiser and new members are juveniles, perhaps recruited from high schools. Sets, or subgroups, of the gang develop and infighting may occur, leading to violence or territorial disputes (Seng, 1986).

Seng (1986) explained that the possibilities of stage IV or V gang development in suburban communities "may increase the closer a suburb is to the city. If the suburb is geographically connected to the city and to a neighborhood already experiencing gang problems, then gang activity is quite possible. It simply crosses the street into the suburb" (p. 15). Here, he described how stages of gang development may vary depending on the location of the suburban community. Seng (1986) also suggested that a suburban community that has a racial or cultural composition similar to that of urban neighborhoods with a gang presence might experience expedited development of existing urban gang chapters. Despite possible variation in the developmental model, Seng's (1986) stages offer a framework for gang formation in suburban communities amid an otherwise under-researched phenomenon and in a setting that gangs are not typically associated with.

In another article on gangs in suburban communities, McKenzie (1996) explained that gang development in suburban communities is largely contingent upon the presence of particular social and demographic conditions. McKenzie (1996) explained:

Although the etiology of suburban youth gangs is not well understood, it has been suggested that aspects of suburbia conducive to gang proliferation include the social disorganization and instability that accompany rapid growth, demographic shifts that bring ethnic and racial groups into sudden contact and conflict, the appearance of experienced urban gang members in suburbs as their parents seek a changed environment, suburban law enforcement agencies with little experience dealing with gangs, and an imitative and media-driven youth culture in which “the defining ethos is urban.” To this list, one might add government fragmentation, ready availability of weapons, and significant opportunities for expanding the drug trade (McKenzie, 1996, p. 53).

McKenzie (1996) brought to light some possible reasons behind gang presence in suburban communities, which include population change, the presence of gang-affiliated youth whose family moved to seek a better life, and youth who mimic gang-related behavior communicated through music and other forms of media.

As indicated by prior research, gangs exist in every kind of community throughout the U.S. There has not always been such a widespread presence, however. Malcolm W. Klein (2006), a leading gang researcher and expert, notes that only since the mid 1980s have gangs begun to spread into more cities and suburban areas. Modern gangs do not follow traditional structures or forms, and crimes and violence committed by gang members are more lethal than in earlier decades. Economic disadvantage, culture conflicts, and density were thought to restrict gangs to central cities, which was true until cities expanded at high rates, suburbanization overran the landscape, and technology and communication vastly improved (Klein, 2006).

One reason for the spread of gangs not only nationally, but also globally, is the more frequent and intense experiences of poverty, lack of resources, dearth of jobs for

youth, and marginalization of minorities. The other main reason is the rapid spread of gangsta culture over the past decade. The general acceptance of street gang style, behaviors, language, and gang persona by youth of all races, ethnicities, and social status has fueled the spread of gangs at an alarming rate (Klein, 2006). Rap and hip-hop music, gangster movies, video games, and music videos glamorize gang affiliation. And although there are no American gangs in Europe, Klein (2006) divulged that: “Reports from Holland, Manchester, and Oslo do suggest that diffusion of American gang culture has had an effect. American gang movies and books are specifically cited” (p. 113). The worldwide spread of American gang culture only reemphasizes how deep into American society the culture has already seeped.

To complicate matters further, youth emulating urban culture through dress and behavior may also be mistaken for being involved in gang activity. Since street gangs are most prevalent in urban areas and many believe they are a quintessentially urban phenomenon, when suburban youth imitate aspects of urban culture these cultural attributes may resemble gang-related characteristics to the untrained eye. Crime, gang-related, and ghetto-related behaviors have been associated with the cultures of inner city neighborhoods for a long time (Cohen and Short, 1958; Miller, 1958; Thrasher, 1927; Whyte, 1943). A resurgence of studies since the early 1990s have reinforced the prevalence of oppositional cultures, ghetto-related behavior, violence, and gang-related behavior in inner cities and even among black populations removed from inner city neighborhoods (Anderson, 1999; Gladstein et al., 1992; Harlan, 1998; Massey and Denton, 1993; Ogbu, 2003; Pattillo-McCoy, 1999; Schubiner et al., 1993; Venkatesh, 1997, 2008; Wacquant, 1993; Wilson, 1996). In the current technology and media-driven

society that youth embrace, ghetto and gang culture has spread across racial, ethnic, and cultural boundaries (Daniels, 2008; Fraley, 2009; Kitwana, 2005; Kakutani, 1997).

3.6 Gangs in Schools

If there is a gang presence in the community there is likely to be a presence of gangs in the schools (McEvoy, 1990). Teachers and other school staff are not likely to be educated about gangs and therefore are also unlikely to know when students are gang-affiliated (Struyk, 2006). Struyk (2006) explained that although there are signs to identify gang-affiliated students in schools, the signs of involvement are becoming more difficult to identify because gang members are increasingly restrained in their display of gang-related characteristics. Clothing styles and tattoos are some of the most obvious signs of gang involvement among students but less obvious signs consist of reversible belts, earrings, and sports-affiliated clothing. In schools that require uniforms, students may turn up collars a certain way, leave a pocket turned inside out, or might button shirts in a particular pattern to communicate gang affiliation. Other indicators of gang affiliation include gang words or symbols drawn on school property, student notebooks, or class worksheets as well as flashing gang-related hand signs (Struyk, 2006).

Although a study of middle school students by Decker and Curry (2000) found gang membership to be weak and transient, surveys of over 500 students in three middle schools conducted by Curry et al. (2002) found that more males than females reported ever being a gang member and a greater percentage of black students reported ever being a gang member than white students. Overall, 15 percent of students indicated that they were gang members or had been gang members in the past. The researchers found strong connections between student delinquency and gang membership in the middle schools

(Curry et al., 2002). Based on analysis of gang data from the School Crime Supplement (SCS) of the 1998 National Crime Victim Survey, Howell (2000) found that of students aged 12 to 19 who reported gangs in school, most were Hispanic followed by black and then white students. Students most likely to report a gang presence in school were in middle to late adolescence, had been victimized, and lived in households with low incomes (Howell, 2000).

McConnell (1994) surveyed students in an urban high school and found that 20 percent of the respondents were gang members and over 70 percent knew at least one gang member personally. Females were found to partake in social activities with gang members more than males and over half of respondents knew gang members from more than one gang. Despite the wealth of research on gangs, there is still little research on gang presence in schools (Naber et al., 2006). There are also few studies that have obtained information on gangs in schools from students themselves (Howell, 2000; McConnell, 1994). As cited by Naber et al. (2006), Lawrence (1998) found that schools are ideal places for gang recruitment as well as for organizing gang-related activities. In fact, in 2009, 20 percent of students ages 12-18 in the U.S. reported the presence of gangs at their school. Additionally, 30.7 percent of students aged 12-18 in urban areas, 16.6 percent in suburban areas, and 16 percent in rural areas reported a gang presence in their school (Roberts et al., 2012).

Gang identity in urban areas both inside and outside of school, however, is a highly nuanced social phenomenon. Gang indicators as demonstrated through dress, tattoos, language, and so on, are subtle, yet convey great meaning to those in the inner city. Associating with a gang was found to be a coordinated performance that is

constantly changing, as youth are in and out of affiliations, posing, successfully achieving academic goals, and dropping out. Gang involvement is by no means a straightforward process (Garot, 2010). Garot's (2010) study illuminated the complexity and volatility of gang affiliation in schools, even in a distressed urban area. Gang involvement among youth has been linked with low school achievement and low school commitment (Dishion et al., 2005; LeBlanc and Lanctôt, 1998), prior delinquency or victimization (Gordon et al., 2004; Lahey et al., 1999; Peterson et al., 2004; Sharpe, 2003), antisocial characteristics (Dishion et al., 2005), as well as association with delinquent peers or peers involved with gangs (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1993; Bowker and Klein, 1983; Brownfield et al., 1997; Curry and Spergel, 1992; Esbensen et al., 1993; Gordon et al., 2004; Lahey et al., 1999; Nirdorf, 1988; Sharpe, 2003; Winfree et al., 1994).

3.7 Community Stakeholders' Perceptions of Gangs and School Safety

Some researchers have elicited perceptions, experiences, and opinions about gang presence and gang-related activity from residents and community officials. Takata and Zevitz (1987) surveyed over 500 adults in Racine, Wisconsin and over 80 percent of the respondents believed that Racine had a "gang problem," which was said to be moderate to large. The research also indicated that 24 percent of survey respondents had been approached by a gang member and most respondents reported that gang activity took place in the central city and that there was a low gang presence in the middle- and upper-class white neighborhoods. According to respondents, gang members in Racine were mostly male and resided in the central area of the city (Takata and Zevitz, 1987).

Researchers have also explored perceptions of gangs through surveys and interviews of law enforcement officials (Fox and Lane, 2010; Quinn and Downs, 1993).

Quinn and Downs (1993) administered questionnaires to nearly 90 police chiefs and gang task force leaders and found that the officials perceived black gangs as a more substantial gang problem than other racial and ethnic groups, likely because of the higher visibility of black gang activities. The researchers also found that more established and organized gangs tend to attract greater attention from police and the media and in turn attract more members (Quinn and Downs, 1993). Fox and Lane (2010) obtained valuable information on gangs in Gainesville, Florida through perceptions and experiences of law enforcement officials. Open-ended interviews revealed physical and social attributes, the organization, severity, and activities of gangs, reasons behind youth involvement in gangs, as well as gang prevention and intervention measures. The majority of officials reported that gangs in Gainesville were unorganized, neighborhood-based hybrid gangs (Fox and Lane, 2010).

Other studies of officials' perspectives on gangs and violence have had mixed results. In a study where over 250 law enforcement, youth services, and education officials were surveyed in North Carolina, officials reported that youth gangs were growing at a fast pace largely because of increased drug-related activities (Oehme, 1997). Questionnaires distributed to students, police, and teachers in a southern U.S. town drew similar perspectives on gangs; the respondents did not attribute gang involvement to any particular racial or ethnic group (Swetnam and Pope, 2001). Surveys of all public school principals in Oregon in 1995 and 2000 revealed that poverty, harassment, bullying, and transiency were the strongest risk factors that threatened school safety (Sprague et al., 2002). In each of these studies, valuable perspectives and experiences were obtained about the extent of gang problems, potential risk factors that contribute to an unsafe

school environment or youth gang involvement, as well as prevention and intervention measure implemented by individuals and community groups.

As a high school principal and a police officer in a Chicago suburb, Moriarty and Fleming (1990) made observations about gang presence among students in the town's schools. Through their experiences, they determined that:

...Gangs typically don't invade suburban schools from the outside, sending out gang members to recruit new members and extending their territory. Instead, gangs grow up almost spontaneously within schools, by default rather than by design. And the catalysts are most likely to be transfer students from the city, marginally acquainted with gang paraphernalia and desperately trying to impress their new peers (p.13)

The officials described how transfer students from urban areas are from families who are not only attracted to economic opportunity and better education systems of the suburbs but especially to the safer streets and schools. Many parents who live in inner city neighborhoods with chronic crime and gang presence, the officials said, will go to great lengths in order to remove their children from such negative influences. Transfer students, however, are often unprepared for the more challenging academic programs in many suburban high schools. When transfer students discover they do not mesh with the student body, they are likely to revert back to behavior associated with their origins, which may consist of gang-related activity (Moriarty and Fleming, 1990).

The officials explained, however, that students from the suburban district who are academically underperforming or behaviorally deviant might be attracted to a transfer student engaging in risky behavior such as gang activity. Having acquired attention, the transfer student may use the gang affiliation to raise his or her social status, something that would likely carry little weight in an urban school. Surrounded by native suburban students who are detached from the school and are intrigued by urban culture, the transfer

student has established acceptance among a small group, who may or may not acquire gang affiliations (Moriarty and Fleming, 1990). The officials suggested that in addition to the transfer student potentially bringing a gang presence into a suburban school district, that student might influence other native youth from the district to engage in gang-related activities

In a comprehensive study, Naber et al. (2006) determined the extent of gang presence in schools in the Midwest U.S. by triangulating mailed and phone survey responses from 1,200 school principals and law enforcement personnel. Through the surveys, the researchers demonstrated the value of communication between school administrators and law enforcement officials for discovering problem behavior and gang presence among students. They also showed that gang education training need to be provided to school administrators so they are able to identify indicators of gang affiliation. The study also revealed the importance of establishing a definition of a gang, as the type of definition used impacted the estimates of gang presence in schools. The survey responses were also used to triangulate not only the level of gang presence in a school but to obtain a comprehensive definition of a gang.

3.8 Influences on Student Misbehavior in School

Schools exist within regions and communities and often reflect larger ongoing processes within the entire community they serve and beyond (Gottfredson 2001). This broader physical, social, normative, and political context shapes the social environment and student behavior within the school, as well as academic performance and school bond (Bowen and Richman 2002). Moreover, middle and high school-age youth are more prone to delinquency than other age groups. In fact, research has established that rates of

crime among youth increase during the pre-adolescent years, reach a climax in late adolescence, and decline steadily in the following years. This phenomenon is called the “age-crime curve” (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983). When youth move into adolescence, their overall likelihood of engaging in delinquent behavior increases and adults begin to react differently to deviant behavior (Gottfredson, 2001).

Dryfoos (1990) identified multiple factors in students’ lives that influence involvement in delinquent behaviors, including low academic achievement, low socioeconomic status, low academic achievement expectations, and poor parenting. Association with delinquent peers, however, is cited as the strongest predictor of misbehavior among adolescents, and is also a notable influence on delinquency in pre-adolescent years. Relationships with peers, friends and classmates are critical relationships to youth both before and during adolescence and have considerable effects on behavior in the present and future (Gottfredson, 2001).

Schools provide a social environment conducive to either successful or unsuccessful social bonding. Those students who cannot establish successful social bonds, perhaps due to poor grades, lack of social skills, and so on, do not view school as a rewarding experience and are more prone to deviant behavior. Also, bonds can be established through academic programs, extracurricular activities, or trust in staff. The belief in school rules and disciplinary guidelines lessens as the school bond decreases. The relationship between school bonding and delinquency is known (Welsh, et al., 1999).

Research has demonstrated that school size is associated with higher rates of delinquency (Bakioglu, 2009; Chen, 2008; Ferris and West, 2004; Klonsky, 2002; Leung and Ferris, 2008). There are fewer studies that have not found an association between

school size and student victimization, delinquency, or misbehavior (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2004). In a review of education literature, Leung and Ferris (2008) found studies that link larger schools to students feeling more isolated and frustrated than those in smaller schools. Leung and Ferris (2008) went on to say that as school size and alienation intensifies, students gravitate into groups that exhibit similar social and physical attributes, which actually further intensifies isolation of those not in groups as well as new students. Nearly 9,000 (almost 11 percent) of public schools in the U.S. have a total enrollment of 1,000 students or more (Robers et al., 2012).

A student in U.S. public schools in the 2009-2010 school year was more than 4 times more likely to encounter gang activities in a school with a total enrollment of over 1,000 students than a school with between 300-499 students, and was just over 3 times as likely to encounter gang activities at a school of over 1,000 students than a school with between 500-999 students. Rate of violent incidents reported to police per 1,000 students was highest in schools with over 1,000 students (11.9) followed by rates of lower than 5.0 for the smaller school sizes. Furthermore, 4.3 percent of public schools with over 1,000 students reported widespread disorder in classrooms while 2.6 percent of schools with between 500-999 students reported the same phenomenon and 2.4 percent of schools with between 300-499 students reported disorder in classrooms (Robers et al., 2012). The relationships between school size and gang activity, violence, and disorder are clear.

In the 2003-2004 the Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools (2005) biennial report, a study of how school size affected school violence in New Jersey schools was conducted. The study explored how school size effects student achievement, violence, and expenditures in high schools throughout New Jersey. The study

demonstrated that schools with more than 1,000 students experience between 58 and 108 percent more violent incidents, while small schools were found to have considerably higher standardized test scores than large schools (Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools, 2005). Such findings are similar to scholarly research on how school size affects school violence.

The link between school enrollment size and school violence is consequential for youth attending large schools, as their bond to the school and its faculty may be lost through anonymity, violence, and exclusion. As best stated by Klonsky (2002):

Small schools create the opportunity for knowing students, for intervening as professionals before problems reach a crisis stage – before students resort to violence, suicide, or other forms of destructive behavior. In small schools, faculty can more readily share responsibility for recognizing and responding to troubled students and can designate the adults who will provide assistance. Simply stated, small schools obliterate anonymity – the handmaiden of many forms of youth violence – and create an environment where students are visible to those charged with their education and many aspects of their social and cultural development – their teachers. (pp. 68-69)

Smaller schools create a wealth of social resources for students and administration, faculty, and guidance counselors alike are likely to dedicate more time to them. Violence is more easily controlled because of the bond that faculty are likely to form with students in smaller schools, thus generating individual identity among students, and stronger connections to the school.

There are also community-level effects on crime and delinquency in schools. In some instances, community crime was found to affect school crime (Hoffmann and Johnson, 2000; Limbos and Casteel, 2008). While the relationships between characteristics of community and social organization, crime rates, and gang membership have been investigated (Blau, 1977; Blau and Golden, 1986; Block, 1979; Evans et al.,

1999; Maxson, 1993; Roncek, 1981; Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004), there is limited research on regional influences on school disorder and delinquency (Bowen and Van Dorn, 2002; Chen, 2008; Hellman, 1986; Menacker et al., 1990; Nash, 2002; Welsh et al., 2000). A critical element of the built and social environment is the school. Schools exist within communities and often reflect larger ongoing processes within the entire community they serve and beyond (Gottfredson 2001). This broader physical, social, normative, and political context shapes the social environment and student behavior within the school, as well as academic performance and school bond (Bowen and Richman 2002).

However, Welsh, Greene, and Jenkins (1999) found that high levels of community crime inside and outside the school's neighborhood does not significantly influence student behavior in school. They analyzed data from school districts, the US Census, police departments, and most importantly from survey questions about school climate that was administered to 7,583 students in 11 middle schools. Community poverty and characteristics of individual students such as race, age, gender, peer associations, belief in rules, etc. were found to be stronger predictors of student misbehavior (Welsh et al., 1999). Two other studies suggest urban middle and high school students of color fail to academically achieve in school and misbehave, or put on "tough fronts," because they are marginalized, culturally isolated from mainstream society, criminalized, and stereotyped. As a result, oppositional school cultures emerge that discourage minority achievement and encourages participation in violence and ghetto-related behavior (Dance, 2002; Dickar, 2008).

Poverty in neighborhoods has also been connected to school violence. Research has demonstrated that neighborhood characteristics such as poverty, population change, crime, and inner city residence are strongly associated with violence in schools (Anderson et al., 1998; Laub and Lauritsen, 1998). Carlson (2006) measured community poverty as percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunches and found that this measurement was substantially related to exposure to violence in school. Additionally, in a study of 212 middle schools in New York City, Chen and Weikart (2008) demonstrated that minority status and poverty of the student population were strongly related to school disorder.

Similarly, violence and school disorder have been found most consistently in urban schools (Gottfredson, 2001). The urban neighborhoods where these schools are located have higher crime rates and disorganization than suburban or rural communities (Robers et al., 2012). Students in urban schools are at a greater disadvantage due to the social disorganization and high crime rates that the neighborhoods where they are located experience (Fagan, et al., 1990; Farmer, 2010; Hellman, 1986; Kantor and Brenzel, 1992; Moses, 1999). Urban youth, more so than middle-class youth, are exposed to the harsh realities of ghetto life, especially crime and gangs, on a daily basis (Gladstein et al., 1992; Miller, 2001; Schubiner et al., 1993; Sullivan and Silverstein, 1995; Venkatesh, 2008).

CHAPTER 4

PHASE I: GEOGRAPHIC AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Like many studies involving demographic and socioeconomic data at large scales, this dissertation is rooted in ecological analysis. Stemming from the Chicago School of Sociology's early urban ecology studies (Burgess, 1925; McKenzie, 1922; Park, 1925; Shaw and McKay, 1943), the dissertation's primary unit of analysis is ecological: all municipalities in New Jersey, which range from about 100 to over 200,000 inhabitants. The analysis is ecological not only in the sense that data were collected at the municipal level but because conclusions were drawn about the populations there.

In addition to taking an ecological approach, this dissertation employed both quantitative and qualitative methods, often called "mixed-methods" research (Creswell, 2009). Mixed methods research has gained popularity in recent years in fields such as the human sciences, communications, social sciences, and medicine. There are various types of mixed methods strategies that a research project may utilize, and as many as 12 types of mixed methods research schemes have emerged in various fields (Creswell, 2009). This study used a rather straightforward quantitative and qualitative mixed methods approach that divides the study into two distinct parts: Phase I and Phase II.

In Phase I, demographic, socioeconomic, crime, school violence, and gang presence conditions in New Jersey were displayed in maps and by community type in order to obtain an understanding of the distribution of such phenomena across the state. Census tracts with both high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage were then defined and road network distance from the center point of each municipality to the

nearest disadvantaged census tract was measured using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software. Municipal, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics, school-based characteristics, and proximity of municipalities to disadvantage were then analyzed as predictors of crime, school violence, and gang presence in municipalities and municipality schools using regression analyses.

In Phase II, perspectives of school administrators and law enforcement officials were investigated qualitatively. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted in four school districts to explore respondents' perceptions of violence, gang presence, urban culture, and how proximity to disadvantage might play a role in the presence and frequency of such phenomena among youth. The districts are located in close proximity to neighborhoods with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage. Perceptions and experiences of officials were used as a proxy to obtain a rough sketch of social and behavioral processes that occur among school-age youth in the districts. The methods and findings of Phase II are discussed in the next chapter. The sections below present the methods and findings of Phase I.

4.1 Research Sites and Data

The research site for Phase I is the entire state of New Jersey. New Jersey is in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States and is located between New York City and Philadelphia. New Jersey has a population of 8,834,773 people and is the 11th most populous state in the U.S. Although it is the fourth-smallest state, it is the most densely populated state in the country at 1,195.5 people per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011). The state has 21 counties and 566 municipalities. There are five types

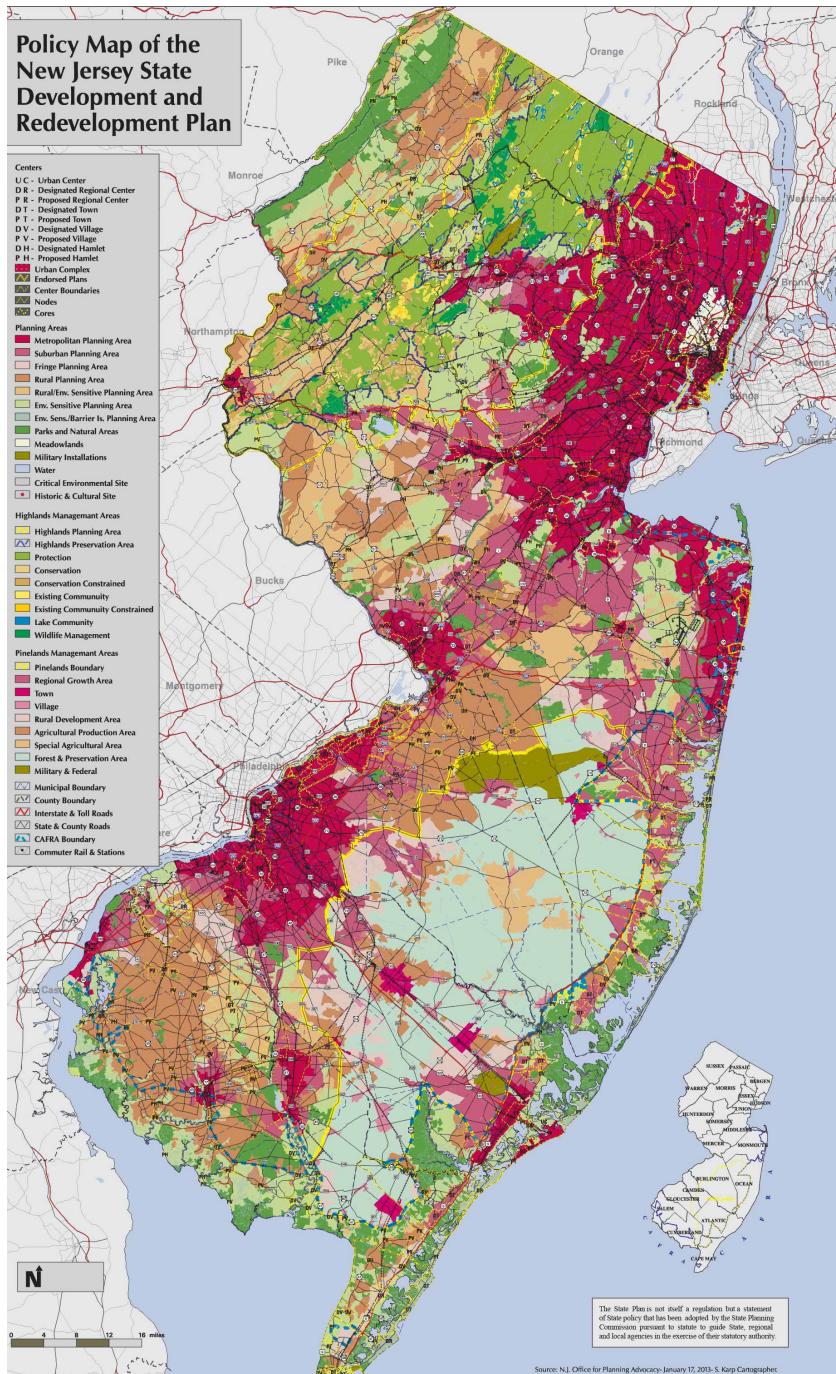


Figure 4.1 Policy map of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Red colors indicate metropolitan planning areas (highly populated), pink colors indicate suburban planning areas, green colors indicate natural areas, forests, wildlife areas, and protection areas, and brown colors indicate rural planning areas and conservation land.

Source: New Jersey State Planning Commission. (2001). New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Trenton, NJ: State of New Jersey: Department of the State.

of municipalities: Township, Borough, City, Town, and Village. New Jersey has an extensive network of highways as well as state and county roads.

New Jersey's population is made up of 74.1 percent white persons, 14.6 percent black persons, 8.7 percent Asian persons, and 18.1 percent Hispanic or Latino persons; 20.6 percent of the state's population consists of foreign-born persons. The state's median household income is \$71,180 and 9.4 percent of the population lives below the poverty level (U.S. Census, 2011). The most populated parts of the state lie along a southwest to northeast axis along the New Jersey Turnpike, chiefly between the cities of Philadelphia and New York. All of New Jersey's counties lie within seven Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) and are considered urban. However, the state's built environment varies greatly from one region to another.

The New Jersey Commerce, Economic Growth, and Tourism Commission has divided the state into six regions: The Gateway Region in the Northeast, the Skylands Region in the Northwest, the Shore Region along the eastern Atlantic coast, the Delaware River Region from Trenton to south of Philadelphia, the Greater Atlantic City Region in the Southeast, and the Southern Shore Region at the two southern-most counties of the state. The names of these regions illustrate the geographic variations between different areas of the state. A significant portion of New Jersey's southern half is sparsely populated due to the Pinelands National Reserve, a massive area of preserved pine forests, sandy soils, rivers, wildlife, and a large underground aquifer on the state's flat coastal plain.

New Jersey's environment spans wilderness, rural, suburban, and urban areas in a small land area. Some of the wealthiest towns in the country lie in close proximity to

some of the poorest inner cities in the nation. New Jersey also contains some of the most educated populations in the U.S. and has 605 school districts. The state boasts a lucrative economy due to its major seaports and proximity to two major cities. Newark is New Jersey's largest city at 277,140, making it the 67th most populous city in the country (US Census Bureau, 2010). Newark is the second largest city in the New York metropolitan area and is less than 10 miles west of Manhattan and houses one of the largest and busiest International Airports in the country. Other notable cities in New Jersey include Jersey City, Paterson, Trenton, Camden, Elizabeth, New Brunswick, Hoboken, and Atlantic City.

To explore the relationships between crime, school violence, gang presence, proximity to disadvantage, and municipality and school-based characteristics, a wide range of data were required. To define census tracts that have high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage, U.S. Census data at the census tract level was needed. At the municipality and school district level, demographic and socioeconomic data as well as crime, school violence, and gang presence data were needed. The municipal and school district data sets were then merged. Table 4.1 below shows the data sources used in Phase I.

Several data sets were combined for cross-analysis and each source of data contributed to the research goals of the study. School enrollment data by grade, race, and sex in New Jersey, provided on the website of the New Jersey Department of Education, contributed demographic and socioeconomic data about the student population in each school in the state. Data was obtained for the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 school years. For each school district the school-level data were totaled so that

Table 4.1 Sources of Data in Phase I

Data	Source	Scope/ Unit of Analysis	Year (s)
Total Enrollment by Grade, Race and Sex for Every School in New Jersey	New Jersey Department of Education	All School Districts in New Jersey	2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09
Commissioner's Annual Report to the Education Committees of the Senate and General Assembly on Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse in New Jersey Public Schools	New Jersey Department of Education	All School Districts in New Jersey	2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09
Uniform Crime Report: State of New Jersey	New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Unit	All Municipalities in New Jersey	2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010
2010 New Jersey State Police Gang Survey	New Jersey State Police	All Municipalities in New Jersey	2010
2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates	U.S. Census Bureau	All Municipalities in New Jersey	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010
2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates	U.S. Census Bureau	All Census Tracts in New Jersey	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010
2000 Summary File Data and 2010 Summary File Data	U.S. Census Bureau	All Municipalities in New Jersey	2000, 2010

Note: All data is available to the public on the Internet. Data sources shaded in gray were merged together into one dataset.

the data set represented the districts. This was done for all 4 school years of data. The data totals were then averaged to reflect 4-year averages that spanned 2005-2006 through 2008-2009. Data were collected for all public schools from Kindergarten to 12th grade and excluded vocational, technical, and charter schools.

School violence data, also available on the New Jersey Department of Education website, is listed by school district for each school year. This data provided the total number of incidents of violence, vandalism, substance abuse, and weapons for each district. To match the time period of the school enrollment data, school violence data were gathered for the same 4 school years (2005-2006 through 2008-2009). The 4-year data set was then averaged and again, vocational, technical, and charter schools were eliminated from the data set.

Crime data for each municipality in New Jersey by year was available from the New Jersey State Police website and was constructed by the New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Unit. This data includes violent crimes, nonviolent crimes, robberies, larcenies, incidents of domestic violence as well as rates of overall crime, violent crime, and nonviolent crime. Each municipal Uniform Crime Report contains data on each municipality's police force as well as estimated population, population density, and "character" of the municipality.

The "character" variable identifies a municipality as an urban center, urban suburb, suburb, rural area, or rural center. In this dissertation, the term "character" is replaced with "community type" to better reflect how the variable categorizes the built environment. The data on community types was calculated and compiled by the Department of Community Affairs, Division of State and Regional Planning, and the Bureau of Statewide Planning. Community type categorizes each municipality by taking into account characteristics of its built environment as well as the community types of surrounding municipalities. The list below gives the description of each community type from the 2010 Uniform Crime Report:

- **Urban Center:** Densely populated with extensive development
- **Urban Suburban:** Near an urban center but not as extremely developed and more residential areas.
- **Suburban:** Predominantly single family residential, within a short distance of an urban area.
- **Rural:** Scattered small communities and isolated single-family dwellings.
- **Rural Center:** High density core area with surrounding rural municipalities.

(New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Unit, 2010, p.5).

Every 3 years, the New Jersey State Police conducts a statewide survey on street gangs. The findings from these surveys are available on the New Jersey State Police website. Law enforcement officials in each of New Jersey's 566 municipalities respond to this survey. Questions in the survey ask about number of street gangs and street gang members in the municipality as well as about gang presence and gang-related incidences in each municipality's schools. The survey allows for the public dissemination of otherwise sensitive and difficult-to-obtain data about each municipality. In some cases, if no survey data was provided for a municipality, then data from the 2007 street gang survey was used to substitute for 2010 survey data. The survey data, however, is messy and does not include a cumulative number that would allow each municipality to be ranked based on severity of gang presence.

Using that survey data, two customized gang indices were constructed: one for the severity of gang presence in municipality schools (SGPMS) and one for severity of gang presence in municipalities (SGPM). Values needed to be recoded and summed to reflect total gang severity in municipalities and municipality schools. For the SGPM, the number of gangs, gang "sets," and gang members values were customized before coding. Gangs are groups such as the Bloods, and "sets" are subgroups within a gang such as "Rollin 20's Bloods" or "G-Shine Bloods." The larger gangs such as the Bloods and Crips have

many different sets. A town may have seven sets of the same gang operating in its neighborhoods. Sometimes sets have their own turf and cooperate with other sets in the same town and sometimes sets fight over turf or drug operations.

The New Jersey State Police Gang Survey labels each street gang “set” as “transient,” “both transient and resident,” or “resident.” Since “transient” gang sets do not reflect a gang presence in the municipality and instead represent gang presence in other municipalities, all transient gang sets and their associated members were removed from analysis. The number of resident and resident and transient gangs, gang members, and gang members per 100 people were then totaled for each municipality and the totals were classified into ranges and coded. The break points for the classification of total gangs, gang members, and gang members per 100 people were determined by estimating the most equal distribution of the data across the ranges. The total gang member and total gangs codes were then added together to derive a SGPM that ranged from one to 19. This index was then recoded, this time from 0 to 3; 0 remained 0, 1 through 5 was recoded to 1, 6 through 11 was recoded to 2, and 12 through 19 was recoded to 3. This represents the final SGPM and the coding scheme was implemented by assessing equal distribution of the data throughout the data ranges of the original SGPM.

SGPMS was derived from answers to questions in the street gang survey about gang presence in schools as well as gang-related incidents in schools. The questions about gang presence and gang-related incidents in schools referred to gang presence in the municipality’s schools, not to be confused with gang presence in school districts, which the survey did not address. Therefore, SGPMS reflects gang presence in the

schools within each municipality's borders (unless otherwise interpreted by the survey respondent).

Survey Variable/Values	Coded Value	Example 1: Keansburg	Example 2: Bergenfield
Gang Members			
0	0		
1-5	1		
6-19	2		✓
20-49	3		
50-99	4	✓	
100+	5		
Gang Members Per 100 Population			
0.00	0		
0.001-0.199	1		✓
0.200-0.299	2		
0.300-0.699	3	✓	
0.700-0.999	4		
1.00+	5		
Number of Gangs			
0	0		
1	1		✓
2-3	2		
4-6	3		
7-9	4		
10+	5	✓	
Gang Presence			
Yes	1	✓	✓
No	0		
Gangs IDK			
Don't Know	1		
Blank	0	✓	✓
Old Gang Index			
None	0		
Low	1		✓
Moderate	2		
High	3	✓	
SGPM	19	16	6

Figure 4.2 How the SGPM was created. Two municipalities in New Jersey are used as coding examples and their SGPM is provided. “Gangs IDK” means that “Don’t Know” was provided for the yes-no response. The “Old Gang Index” was a prior SGPM created by the researcher using different criteria.

Survey Variable/Values	Coded Value	Example 1: Pemberton	Example 2: Morristown
Gang Related Incidents			
0	0		
Don't Know	1		✓
1-3	2		
4-6	3		
7-9	4		
10-12	5	✓	
13-20	6		
21-50	7		
50+	8		
Gang Related Incidents			
Yes	1	✓	
No	0		
Other	0		✓
Gang Related IDK			
Don't Know	1		✓
Blank	0	✓	
Gangs in Schools			
Yes	1	✓	✓
No	0		
Gangs in Schools IDK			
Don't Know	1		
Blank	0	✓	✓
Old Gangs in Schools Index			
None	0		
Low	1		✓
Moderate	2		
High	3	✓	
SGPMS	15	10	4

Figure 4.3 How SGPMS was created. Two municipalities in New Jersey are used as coding examples and their SGPMS are provided. “Gang Related IDK” and “Gangs in Schools IDK” mean that if “Don’t Know” was provided for the yes-no responses, then a point was awarded. The “Old Gangs in Schools Index” was a prior SGPMS created by the researcher that measured gang presence using different criteria.

Since the vast majority of municipalities reported no gang presence at all in their schools, it was difficult to create an index for it and “Don’t Know” responses were

counted more heavily here than in SGPM. SGPMS was created by coding gang-related incidents and responses to questions about gang presence. The data on gang-related incidents were classified into ranges based on the answer choices to the corresponding question in the street gang survey. The final SGPMS was then recoded into a scale from 0 to 3 using a scheme similar to that of the SGPM and based on equal distribution of the data across the data ranges. See Figures 4.2 and 4.3 above for classification and coding methods used for the SGPM and SGPMS.

Census data were collected from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Summary File, 2006-2010 for all municipalities in New Jersey. Summary file data over 5 years is one of the most accurate data sets for demographic, socioeconomic, and housing attributes. Data on total population, race, ethnicity, socioeconomics, and housing characteristics were included. These were used to show geographic differences in wealth and racial makeup across New Jersey and were used in the regression analyses as neighborhood characteristics.

In order to display data in the form of maps and to perform statistical analyses across multiple data types and sources, much of the data were merged. Census, crime, gang presence, school violence, and school demographic variables were merged into one data set. Census, crime, and gang presence variables are at the municipality level while school violence and school demographics are at the school district level. Since there are more school districts than municipalities in New Jersey, the school district variables were aggregated to the municipality level.

Merging municipality and school district data for New Jersey was a complicated endeavor because there are several types of school districts in the state. Many K-12

school districts serve the entire population of a municipality, but others do not. Various types of districts are: consolidated districts, different forms of regional districts, K-8 districts, districts that have a sending-receiving relationship with one or more other districts, regional high school districts that serve several municipalities, and so on. So, matching municipalities to school district data was a difficult process: Some municipalities were assigned no school district data because they send all or the majority of their school-age youth to other districts; in some instances multiple municipalities were assigned the same school district data because they share the same school services; other municipalities were assigned averaged data of two or more school districts because of partial-regional district sharing. The researcher established the following criteria to guide the assignment of school district data to municipalities:

- If the regional school district serves grades 9-12 or 7-12 and serves more than two districts, then its data was not averaged in to its constituent municipalities.
- If the regional school district serves grades k-12, each of its constituent municipalities was assigned the same data as the regional school district, depending on the population of those municipalities.
- If the school district is a non-operating or an entirely "sending" school district and therefore sends all of its children to another district or districts, and had no data, it remained without data.
- If the regional school district serves grades k-12 and one of its constituent municipalities is a non-operating school district with no data, then no data was assigned to this municipality. The municipality, however, retained census demographic data as well as uniform crime report and gang data.
- For school-based variables used in regression analyses, those municipalities with no data were assigned values that represented the average of the specified variable for all municipalities with data.

When a municipality was assigned school district data, it was assigned both the enrollment and the violence values of the school district. The resulting dataset allowed

for the completion of statistical analysis across school districts and municipalities. The data were checked multiple times for accuracy; of course it may still contain errors.

Census data from the American Community Survey 5-Year Summary File, 2006-2010 were extracted for all census tracts in New Jersey. Demographic, socioeconomic, and housing variables were used at the census tract level to define census tracts with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantaged for proximity analysis in the dissertation. Finally, census data from 2000 and 2010 summary file data were used for all municipalities across New Jersey not only to compare current demographic, socioeconomic, and housing data by community type (“character”), but to explore changes in these variables by community type from 2000 to 2010. For example, suburban municipalities may have experienced a 5.8 percent increase in poverty between 2000 and 2010; urban suburbs may have experienced a 4.5 percent increase in poverty; and urban centers may have experienced a 2.2 percent increase in poverty. Such a finding is notable because it reveals that poverty has increased more in suburban areas than urban areas across the entire state over a decade. Current crime, school violence, and gang presence data were also compared by community type.

4.2 Defining Disadvantage and Conducting Network Analysis

The idea of neighborhood disadvantage is currently being enriched with studies not only in the social sciences but also in public health, medicine, and education. Based on research that has delved into concentrated disadvantage and factors associated with crime and gang presence, eight variables were chosen to represent concentrated disadvantage of high and moderate levels in New Jersey. “Concentrated disadvantage” in this dissertation refers to neighborhoods of distressed economic conditions with high levels of poverty,

unemployment, and young, black populations. Vacant housing units are included as an environmental factor that is associated with crime and neighborhood disorder (Skogan, 1986). The following variables construct the overall measure of concentrated disadvantage in this study:

- Percent black population
- Percent of population under 18
- Percent whose income is below poverty level
- Percent receiving cash public assistance
- Percent unemployed
- Percent female householders with children
- Percent who moved into residence in 2000 or later
- Percent vacant housing units

After the data for these variables were downloaded for all census tracts in New Jersey the values were converted to percentages of total population, households, housing units, or which ever universe the measure referred to. The dataset was then joined to a map of New Jersey census tracts in ArcMap software (GIS). Map files in ArcMap are called “shapefiles.” The data for each characteristic that represented disadvantage was classified into four ranges using ArcMap’s automated data classification scheme “natural breaks.” “Natural breaks” classifies data into ranges based on the largest gaps between values. Each of the four data ranges were then coded 0 to 3, from least to most.

The data were coded from 0 to 3 in newly created fields in their “field calculators” using an “IF” statement in the VB script window. For example, percent black population was divided into four ranges based on the “natural breaks” classification scheme and in its new corresponding field, each data range was relabeled with a 0, 1, 2,

or 3, from lowest range to highest range, using the “IF” statement. See Figure 4.3 below for a classification and recoding example using the percent black population variable.

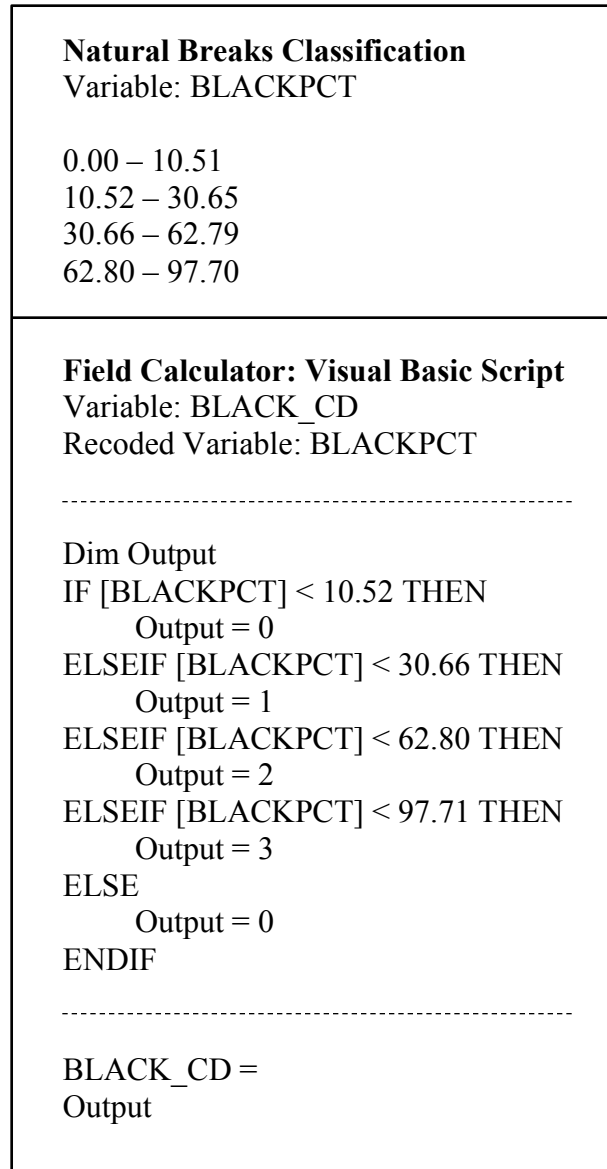


Figure 4.4 Classifying and coding the percent black population variable using VB script. The top box displays the percent black population (BLACKPCT) variable divided into four ranges using the “natural breaks” classification scheme in ArcMap. The bottom box shows the field calculator window for the newly recoded percent black population variable (BLACK_CD). Shown is the Visual Basic code language used to assign a 0, 1, 2, or 3 to the new variable based on the classified ranges of the percent black population variable.

The operations shown in Figure 4.4 were completed for each of the eight variables of concentrated disadvantage. The eight coded variables were then added together in a new field where the total concentrated disadvantage score for each census tract ranged from 1 to 22. Those tracts with scores from 1 to 9 were recoded to 1, scores from 10 to 15 recoded to 2, and scores from 16 to 22 recoded to 3. These break points were chosen for recoding based on optimal distribution of the data. Out of 1,987 census tracts in the state of New Jersey, 279 were coded with a 2, which represents moderate concentrated disadvantage, and 94 were coded with a 3, which represents high concentrated disadvantage. Therefore, according to this analysis, 1,614 census tracts in New Jersey have no substantial levels of concentrated disadvantage. All census tracts with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage were selected and exported to make their own respective “shapefiles” in ArcMap. A census tract was excluded from the analysis if the majority of its population drew from a correctional facility, development center, rehabilitation center, military base, special hospital, or lack of sufficient data. Figure 4.5 below illustrates the geographic distribution of concentrated disadvantage in the cities of Newark, Jersey City, and Elizabeth.

Spatial proximity is at the root of this study. Does the proximity of New Jersey municipalities to highly disadvantaged census tracts influence levels of crime, school violence, and gang presence in those municipalities? In order to answer this key question, the distance (in miles) from each municipality to the nearest disadvantaged census tract was measured. Since straight-line distance is not representative of paths that people traverse, road network distance was measured using the Network Analyst tool in ArcMap.

The Network Analyst tool in ArcMap allows for complex spatial analyses using distance measurements of various types. With this tool, a map of roads and highways is turned into a “network dataset,” which makes lines in the map ready for network measurement. The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) created a statewide road network shapefile available through the New Jersey Geographic Information Network (NJGIN). Once the map is converted into a network dataset, distance analyses can be performed.

To measure road network distance from municipalities to census tracts, polygons were converted into points to create “origin” and “destination” points. Each municipality was transformed from a polygon into a point that denoted its representative center. The same process was done for census tracts with both high and moderate levels of disadvantage. Road network distance was measured from all municipality center points to the nearest census tract with high or moderate levels of disadvantage (see Figure 4.6 below).

Once this analysis was complete, a distance value was created for each origin, or municipality. These values represent the distance of the origin (municipality center point), in miles to the nearest census tract center point with high levels of concentrated disadvantage. Distance was also measured from each municipality to the nearest census tract with moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage. Two new distance attributes were then created for each municipality. See Figure 4.7 below for another example of a Network Analyst tool called “Service Area Analysis,” which draws zones that represent travel distance around points or polygons (this is a better illustration of how ArcMap can be used to measure travel distance on roadways).

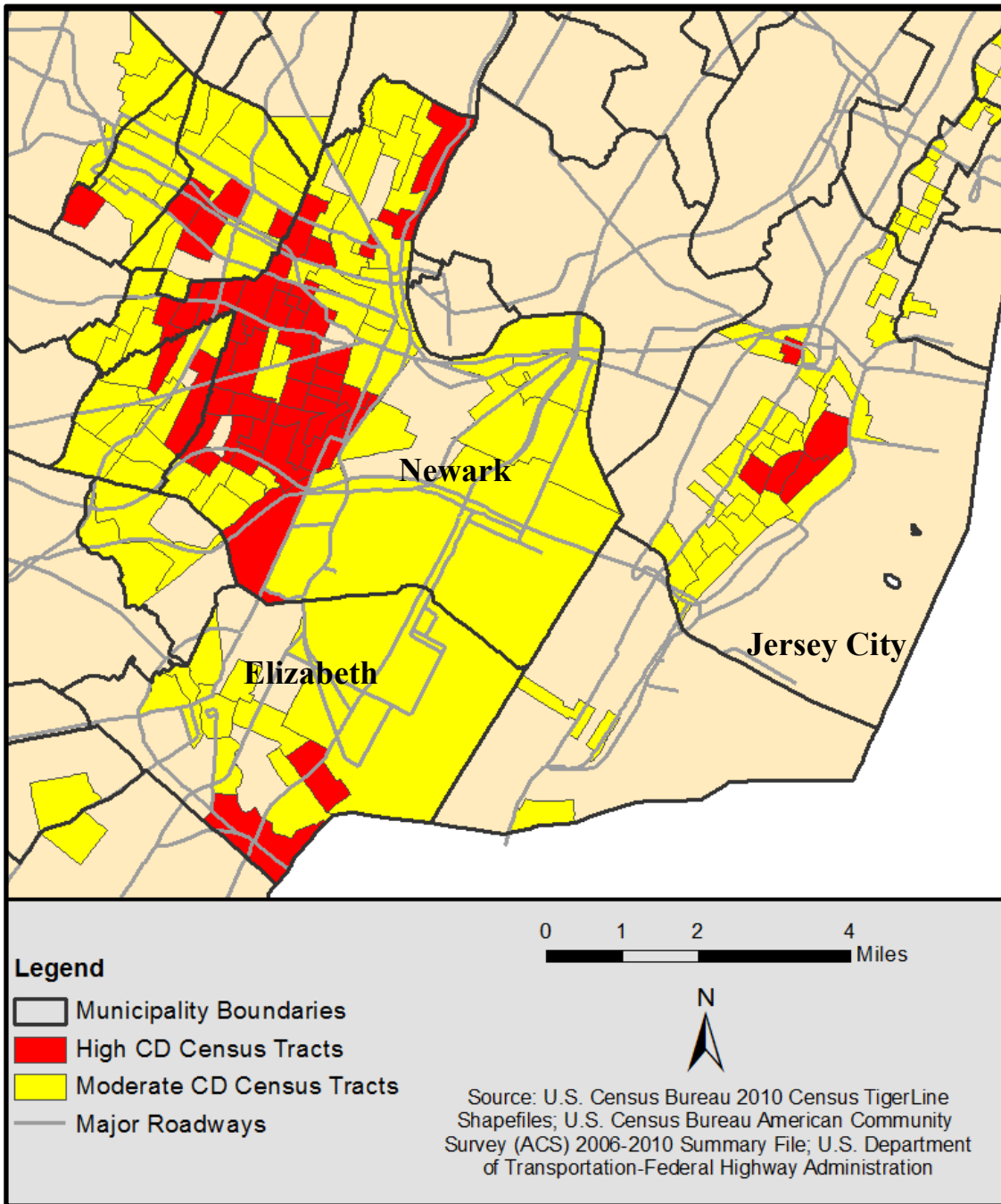


Figure 4.5 Census tracts with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage (CD) in the cities of Newark (left-center), Elizabeth (lower left), and Jersey City (right-center). Newark has the most census tracts with high levels of concentrated disadvantage of any municipality in New Jersey and Northeastern New Jersey is where most disadvantaged census tracts are located.

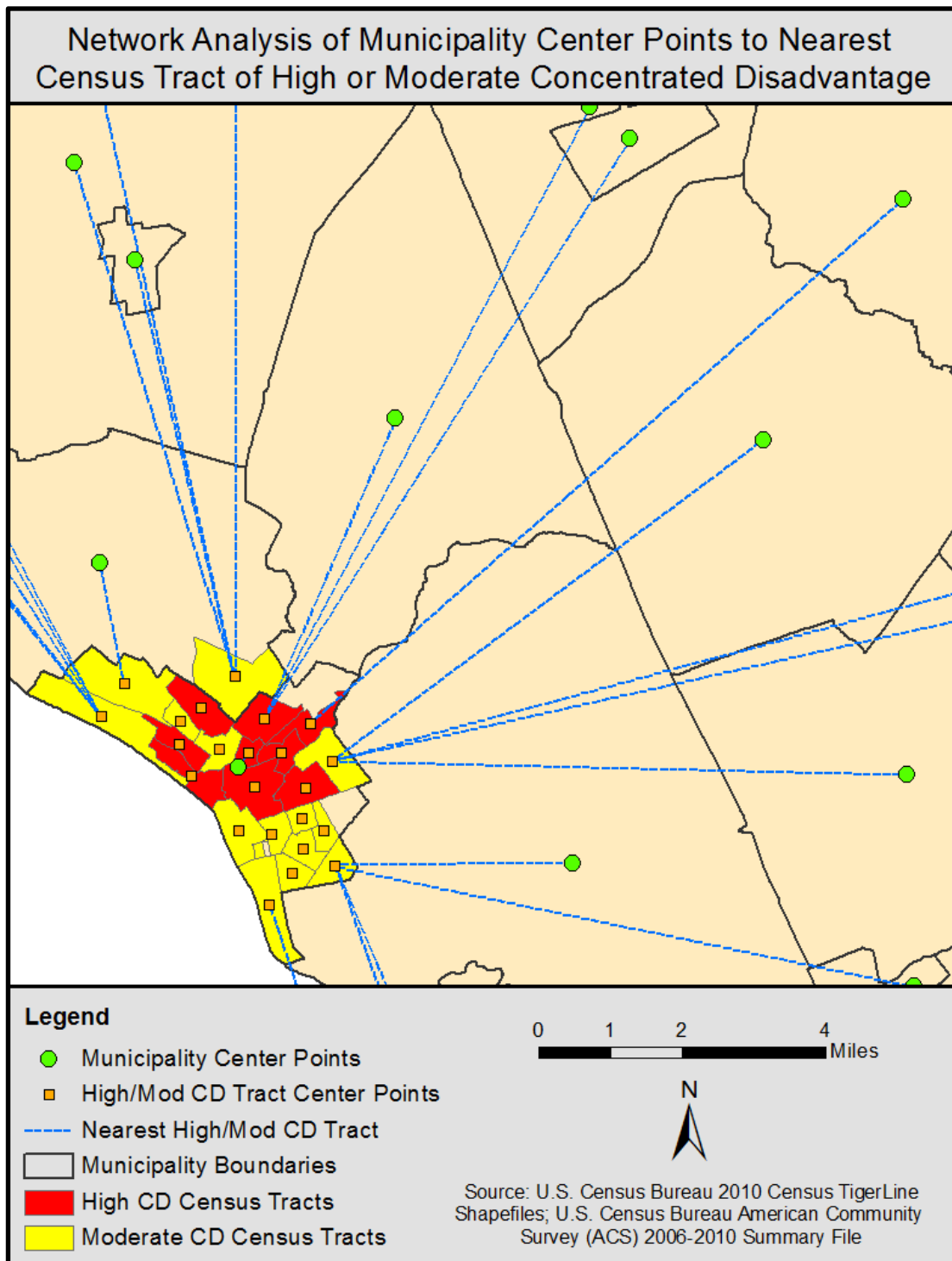


Figure 4.6 The output of the “OD Cost Matrix Analysis” using the Network Analyst tool in the Trenton, New Jersey area. Trenton is located where most of the red and yellow census tracts are, which represent high concentrated disadvantage (CD) and moderate concentrated disadvantage, respectively. Blue dotted lines indicate the nearest census tract with high or moderate disadvantage from each municipality center point (green dots). These lines do not indicate the measured distance along the road network, but the closest disadvantaged census tract from each municipality center point as measured on the road network

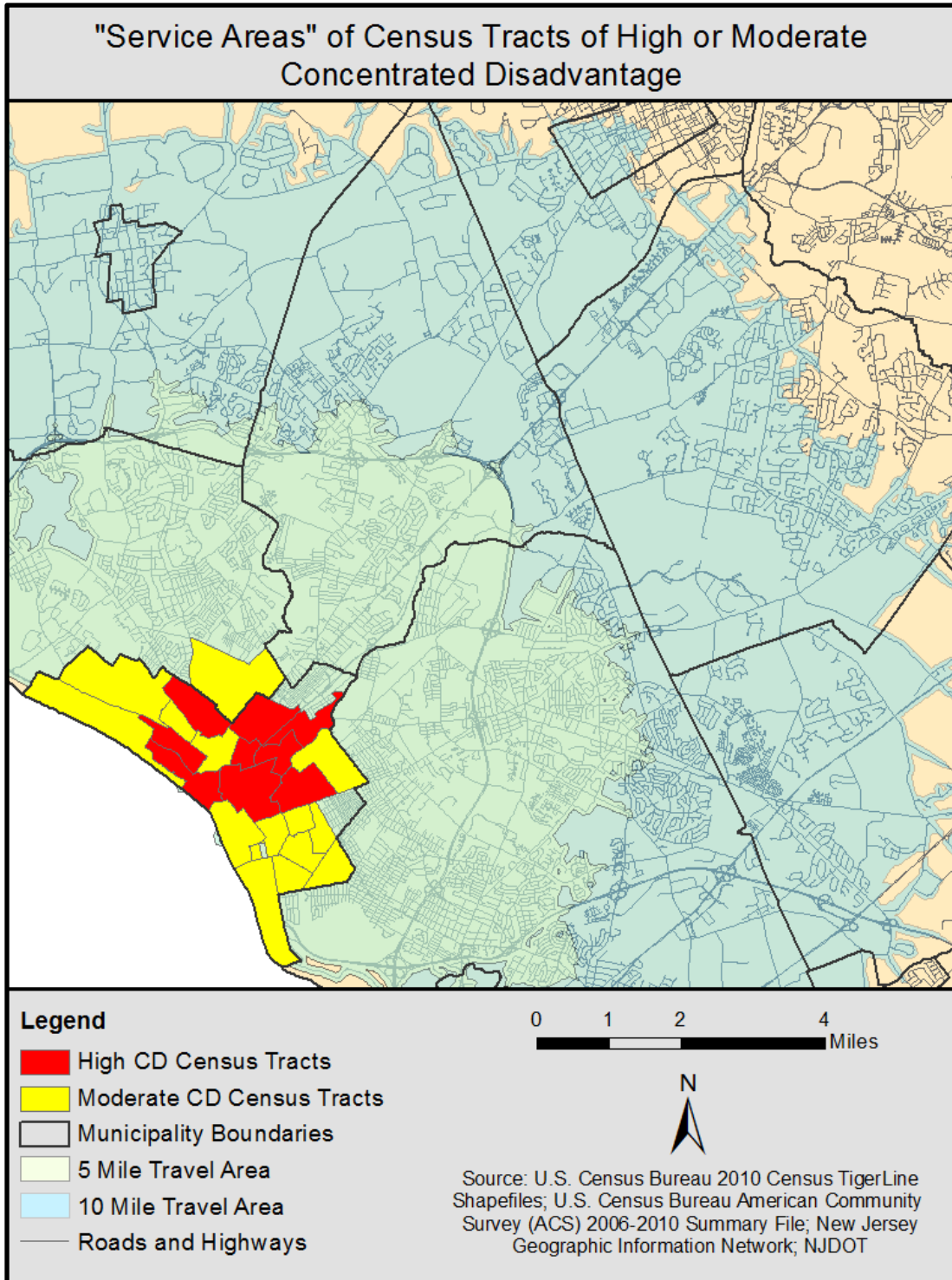


Figure 4.7 The output of a “Service Area Analysis” around census tracts of high and moderate concentrated disadvantage in the Trenton, New Jersey area using the Network Analyst tool. Just like in Figure 4.6, Trenton is the area of red and yellow census tracts, which represent high and moderate concentrated disadvantage, respectively. The green area indicates a 5-mile travel zone along the road network from the edge of census tracts with high or moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage. The blue area indicates a 5 to 10-mile travel zone along the road network from the edge of census tracts with high or moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage.

4.3 Maps, Charts, and Regression Analyses

Maps, the groundwork of this dissertation's research, were created to illustrate the distribution of demographic, socioeconomic, crime, school violence, and gang presence conditions across New Jersey. Constructed in ArcMap, these maps help to visually communicate the diversity of race, ethnicity, wealth, crime rates, and gang presence throughout the state. They also bring to light the locations of disadvantaged census tracts and the proximity of municipalities to disadvantaged areas. A second set of maps was then produced to reveal geographic changes in demographic and socioeconomic characteristics in municipalities across the state from 2000 to 2010. Percent change in these characteristics was calculated for the period from 2000 to 2010.

The same demographic, socioeconomic, crime, and gang presence characteristics displayed in maps were broken down by community type using bar charts. Community types consist of urban center, urban suburban, suburban, rural, and rural center. The municipality/school district dataset was separated by community type using cross tabulations in Statistical Analysis Software (SAS). Bar charts of the cross tabulations were then constructed using Microsoft Excel. The resulting bar charts were built to show how demographic, socioeconomic, crime, and gang presence characteristics vary from rural to suburban to urban environments. Bar charts were also created to display percent changes in demographic and socioeconomic data for municipalities by community type between 2000 and 2010. Changes in crime and school enrollment were also broken down by community type.

The core question is whether proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods influences crime, school violence, and gang presence in municipalities and schools in

New Jersey. The mapping of violence and gang presence in both municipalities and schools overlaid with disadvantaged neighborhoods can visually communicate spatial relationships between variables, but conclusions are difficult to draw from visual analysis alone. Regression analysis offered the opportunity to more efficiently determine the influence that distance may have on the dependent variables, which are municipality crime and gang presence, and school violence and gang presence.

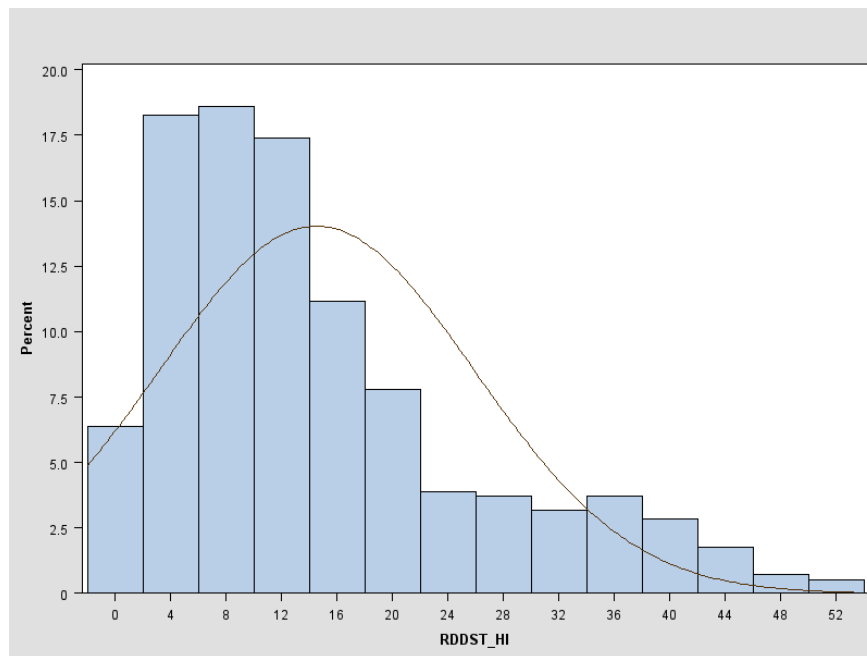


Figure 4.8 A distribution graph with a normal curve of spatial proximity to highly disadvantaged neighborhoods (RDDST_HI). The values represent road network distance from the center point of each municipality to the nearest census tract of high concentrated disadvantage (in miles).

In the regression procedures, distance of municipalities to highly disadvantaged census tracts is the “proximity to disadvantage” variable. See Figure 4.8 above for the frequency distribution of this variable. The other independent variables measure demographic, socioeconomic, and housing characteristics of municipalities (from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Summary File, 2006-2010)

and also two school district characteristics, average school district enrollment and percent of students receiving free lunch. The independent variables in the regression analyses are:

- Proximity to disadvantage
- Percent black population
- Percent Asian population
- Percent Hispanic of Latino population
- Percent of population under age 18
- Percent whose income is below poverty level
- Percent unemployed
- Percent female householders with children
- Percent who moved to the municipality in 2000 or later
- Percent vacant housing units
- Average student enrollment in municipality, 2005-2009
- Average percent of students in municipality receiving free lunch, 2005-2009

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Dependent Variables

Variable	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	Median	Min.	Max.
Gang Presence in Municipalities	559	0.46	0.50	0	0	1
Gang Presence in Municipality Schools	559	0.21	0.41	0	0	1
Severity of Gang Presence in Municipalities	272	1.92	0.79	2	1	3
Severity of Gang Presence in Municipality Schools	127	1.97	0.78	2	1	3
Average Crime Rate in Municipalities	559	21.63	17.51	16.95	1.61	143.47
Average Violent Crime Rate in Municipalities	559	1.90	2.72	1.08	0.00	22.51
Average Total Incidents in Municipality Schools Per 1,000 Students	559	12.17	10.39	10.20	0.00	79.96

Note: Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation, Min = Minimum, Max = Maximum.

The dependent variables are: gang presence in municipalities (yes or no), gang presence in municipality schools (yes or no), severity of gang presence in municipalities

(SGPM), severity of gang presence in schools (SGPMS), average crime rate, average violent crime rate, and average total incidents of violence per 1,000 students in municipality schools. Gang presence data was taken from 2010, crime rates are 5-year averages (2005 through 2010), and total incidents per 1,000 students and average district enrollment are 4-year averages (2005-2006 through 2008-2009). Descriptive statistics of the dependent variables are in Table 4.2 (above) and frequencies of the gang presence variables and gang severity indices are in Table 4.3 (below).

Table 4.3 Frequency of Gang Presence and Severity of Gang Presence Variables

Variable / Value		Freq.	Pct.
Gang Presence in Municipalities			
	0	300	53.67
	1	259	46.33
Gang Presence in Municipality Schools			
	0	443	79.25
	1	116	20.75
Severity of Gang Presence in Municipalities			
	1	96	35.29
	2	101	37.13
	3	75	27.57
Severity of Gang Presence in Municipality Schools			
	1	40	31.5
	2	51	40.16
	3	36	28.35

Note: Freq. = Frequency, Pct. = Percent; Gang Presence Variables: 0 = No, 1 = Yes

Severity of Gang Presence Variables: 1 = Low, 2 = Moderate, 3 = High

The regression analyses consist of seven procedures that have four models each. Binomial logistic, logistic, and multiple regressions are employed (see Figure 4.8 for dependent variables, regression procedures, and independent variables). The sample size for the regression analyses was 559 out of the 566 municipalities in New Jersey. The

seven municipalities that were removed from the analysis either had a total population less than 150 people or the municipality lacked sufficient data.

Category	Independent Variable	Regression Models n=559			
		1	2	3	4
Proximity to Disadvantage	Road Distance to High Concentrated Disadvantage				
Demographics	Percent Black in Municipality				
	Percent Asian in Municipality				
	Percent Hispanic or Latino in Municipality				
	Percent Under 18 in Municipality				
Socioeconomics	Percent Income Below Poverty Level				
	Percent Unemployed				
	Percent Female Householder with Children				
Housing Characteristics	Percent Moved Into Town 2000 or Later				
	Percent Vacant Housing Units				
School District Characteristics	Average Enrollment in School District				
	Percent Students Receiving Free Lunch				

Figure 4.9 Regression models and their corresponding independent variables. The same models are applied to all dependent variables: gang presence, severity of gang presence, crime, violent crime, and school violence

Selection and ordering of the independent variables in the regression procedures was based on the evaluation of Spearman correlations between variables as well as a logical sequence of categories. Each successive regression model was meant to build upon the previous one, progressively adding more categories of demographic, socioeconomic, housing, and school-based characteristics until the last model, which encompasses all categories. The influence of spatial proximity to disadvantage on crime, school violence, and gang presence in any given municipality is not likely to act alone, but with the presence of neighborhood characteristics as well. Hence, spatial proximity was never tested by itself but always with other municipality- or school-based

characteristics. See Figure 4.9 (above) for how the independent variables correspond with the regression models.

The first regression model in each procedure consists of proximity to neighborhoods with high levels of concentrated disadvantage, percentages of race/ethnicity, and percentage of population under 18. The models then incrementally add variables to the previous model. The second model adds percentage poverty-stricken, unemployed, and female householders with children, which are socioeconomic indicators in municipalities. The third regression model adds residential transiency (percent who moved into the municipality in the year 2000 or later) and percentage vacant housing units, which are housing characteristics of municipalities. The last model adds average total student enrollment in the municipality and percentage of students in the municipality receiving free lunch, which are school district characteristics. All statistical analysis procedures were completed using SAS.

Following the data merging guidelines described earlier, some municipalities (32) were not assigned any school district-level values. So, the 32 municipalities without school district values were assigned the mean of the average school enrollment between 2005 to 2009 of all municipalities with school data. For example, of the municipalities with school values assigned to them, the mean of the “average enrollment of students between 2005 and 2009” was 2513.35, which was then assigned to the empty enrollment field of the 32 municipalities without school values. The same was done for students receiving free lunch and average total incidents of violence in municipality schools.

Of the municipalities that were already assigned school district-level data, the mean of the “average percent of students receiving free lunch between 2005 and 2009”

was 14.39 percent and the mean of the “average total incidents in municipality schools” was 29.69. These numbers were then assigned to the corresponding empty fields of the 32 municipalities without school data. This was done to ensure that empty cells were not interpreted as “0” and to create estimated values for those municipalities for the regression analyses. Additionally, average school district enrollment was divided by 1,000 to yield more interpretable regression results and average total incidents in municipality schools was converted to a rate per 1,000 students so that school violence incidents were represented with proportion to average student enrollment in each municipality.

4.4 Community Composition

The first set of findings from Phase I intends to illuminate the composition of communities throughout New Jersey and how community composition varies by community type (Figures 4.10 through 4.34 on pages 115-136). Community composition includes demographic, socioeconomic, and housing characteristics of neighborhoods. School-based characteristics are also included in community composition because they represent school-age populations that are linked more closely to school violence and gang presence. It was critical to this study to understand the distribution of community characteristics and where neighborhoods with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage are located.

The population of New Jersey is concentrated in the northeastern, central, and southeastern portions of the state. Since New Jersey is located between New York City at its northeastern border and Philadelphia at its west-central border, most of the population is concentrated in these areas. Population density is also greatest in the northeastern,

central, and southwestern portions of the state. Some of the highest municipal population densities in the country are in northeastern New Jersey just across the Hudson River from Manhattan. The New Jersey coastal area, particularly the northern portion, is also heavily populated. Similar to the population density map, the map that shows community types demonstrates the concentration of urban and suburban populations in the northeastern, central, and southeastern portions of the state. The majority of urban centers, as well as the most populated ones, are in northern parts of the state near New York City. Urban centers in central and southern New Jersey are less numerous and less populous (See Figure 4.10 below for maps of total population, population density, and community types in New Jersey).

In 2010, 44.1 percent of the state's population resided in suburbs, 23.7 in urban suburbs, 20.2 in urban centers, 9.4 percent in rural areas, and 2.7 percent in rural centers. Figure 4.11 shows the total population that resided in each community type in 2010. It is evident in Figure 4.12 that, on average, the densest type of municipalities were urban centers, appropriately followed by urban suburbs, suburbs, rural centers, and rural areas. Since the white population is widespread and numerous in much of New Jersey, it is not displayed in a map. Black, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino populations, however, show some geographic concentrations. In Figure 4.13 the first map demonstrates that in 2010 black populations were highly concentrated in the southern, west-central, and northeastern parts of the state. The second map shows that Asians were most highly concentrated in central and northern parts of the state. The third map in the series shows the heaviest proportions of Hispanic or Latino populations in the northeastern part of the state in the densely populated municipalities near New York City.

Race and ethnicity varied by community type in 2010. On average, urban centers had the highest mean percentages of black populations and Hispanic or Latino populations, followed by both urban suburbs and rural centers. Urban suburbs had the highest mean percentages of Asian populations, followed by suburbs and urban centers. Much of the black population in the northeastern portion of the state was concentrated in urban areas while in the central and southern regions the black population was numerous across all community types (see Figure 4.14).

In Figure 4.15, a pattern of wealth emerges when median household income in New Jersey municipalities in 2010 is displayed. The highest household incomes were concentrated in the north-central part of the state, the extreme northeastern corner, as well as in central New Jersey. Southern New Jersey as well as the major urban areas in northeastern New Jersey had low to moderate median household incomes. Similarly, the highest percentages of unemployment and poverty, as shown in the second and third maps in Figure 4.15, were experienced in the southern and northeastern areas of the state. High percentages of unemployed populations also occurred in the extreme northwestern part of the state.

The highest mean percentages of female householders with children were also found in the southern and northeastern regions of New Jersey, as illustrated in Figure 4.17. The second map shows that the highest concentrations of renter occupied housing units were near New York City in the northeastern part of the state as well as on a southwesterly axis toward Trenton and Philadelphia. In the third map it becomes apparent that the concentration of foreign-born populations were in the Northeastern part of the state, then followed a southwest axis toward Trenton and Philadelphia. As illustrated in

Figure 4.16, urban centers retained the largest mean percentages of unemployed populations, those with income below poverty level (poverty), female householders with children, and foreign-born populations. The mean percentage of unemployed populations, however, was almost evenly distributed across all community types. The highest mean percentages of foreign-born populations in 2010 were in urban centers and urban suburbs in by a wide margin.

The average total student enrollment in municipalities by community type in the 2008/2009 school year was highest, by far, in urban centers at 8,971. Urban centers were followed by suburbs at 2,584, urban suburbs at 2,416, rural centers at 1,280, and rural areas at 1,043 (these numbers are displayed graphically in Figure 4.18). The highest mean percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch over the school years occurred in urban centers at 61.88 percent. This is followed by urban suburbs at nearly 24 percent, rural centers at 19.56 percent, rural municipalities at 13.76 percent, and suburban municipalities at 11.50 percent (these numbers are shown in Figure 4.19).

As depicted in Figure 4.20, the presence of gangs in 2010 reached municipalities in every corner of the state. The most intense presence, however, occurred in the northeastern, central, and in parts of the southern region. Severity of gang presence in municipality schools (SGPMS), as shown in Figure 4.21, was concentrated in the same areas as gang presence in municipalities, but is much less numerous. Figure 4.22 shows the mean severity of gang presence in municipalities (SGPM) in 2010 by community type, before it was recoded from 0 to 3. Both the mean SGPM and mean SGPMS were highest in urban centers but are spread rather evenly throughout the other community types. Across the U.S., the percent of public schools reporting gang activities was highest

in cities at 28.3 percent, followed by 14.6 percent in suburbs, 13.9 percent in towns, and 9.1 of schools in percent in rural areas (Robers et al., 2012), similar to that of the distribution of gang presence in schools by community type in New Jersey.

Similar to the distribution of poverty and black populations, mean crime rates and mean violent crime rates were highest in municipalities in the southern and northeastern portions of New Jersey (see Figure 4.23). The highest rates of violent crime occurred in the state's cities, particularly those in the northeastern part of the state. Average total incidents of school violence, however, are more evenly distributed across the state. Municipality schools in the northwestern, south-central, and extreme southern portions of the state seem to experience the lowest levels of total incidents of violence, weapons, substance abuse, and vandalism. In Figure 4.24, crime rates were broken down into "averages of the averages" by community type. The highest mean crime rates, violent crime rates, and nonviolent crime rates all occurred in urban centers by a large interval, followed by other community types.

Starting with Figure 4.25, maps and charts illustrate the distribution of concentrated disadvantage in New Jersey in 2010. Across the state, disadvantage was clustered in northeastern New Jersey's urban areas as well as in southern New Jersey. Most census tracts with high levels of concentrated disadvantage were in urban centers while census tracts of moderate concentrated disadvantage were scattered throughout all community types. Figures 4.26 shows the distance of municipalities to the nearest census tract with high and moderate levels of disadvantage (distance to highly disadvantaged census tracts is used in the regression analyses as the spatial proximity variable).

Concentrated disadvantage was distributed in distinct patterns throughout the state in 2010. Figure 4.27 shows the total number of disadvantaged census tracts in municipalities of each community type. In the first graph on the left, it is clear that urban centers contained the largest number of highly disadvantaged census tracts at nearly 100, while urban suburbs and suburbs followed. The same pattern was exhibited for the total number of moderately disadvantaged census tracts and the total number of both moderately and highly disadvantaged census tracts: urban centers contained the most of these, followed by urban suburbs, suburbs, rural areas, and rural centers.

Finally, Figure 4.28 presents the average number of disadvantaged census tracts in municipalities by community type. In all three graphs, urban centers exhibited the highest average number of disadvantaged census tracts, followed again by urban suburbs and suburbs. Urban centers had an average of just over 11 census tracts with both high and moderate levels of disadvantage per municipality whereas urban suburbs had an average of nearly 2, followed by suburbs with an average of less than one. Overall, urban centers and urban suburbs had the highest concentrations of disadvantaged census tracts, but the highest number of municipalities with at least one disadvantaged census tract were suburban and urban suburban municipalities, probably because of their high numbers throughout the state compared to urban and rural centers.

In a more localized context, Figure 4.29 shows the distribution of concentrated disadvantage in the Newark-Elizabeth area (the original disadvantage scale was used in this map, prior to recoding from 0 to 3). Figures 4.30 through 4.35 are overlay maps that show the relationships between three variables: one independent variable as the choropleth base map, one dependent variable as the different-sized circles, and

moderately and highly disadvantaged census tracts as square and triangle symbols. Such maps begin to illustrate the geographic interrelationships between, for example in Figure 4.30, percent black population, average violent crime rate, and moderately and highly disadvantaged census tracts in the area of Newark, Elizabeth, and Plainfield. In Figure 4.30 one can see geographic patterns such as the high spatial correlation between percent black population in municipalities and average violent crime rate, as well as the tendency for the values of both of those to be highest near moderately and highly disadvantaged census tracts. An array of information can be communicated through a single map.

Figures 4.31 through 4.33 are maps of the same geographic area but with different combinations of independent and dependent variables. Figure 4.31 demonstrates the high spatial correlations between percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch and average violent crime rate, as well as the tendency of these variables' higher values to be located close to moderately and highly disadvantaged census tracts. Figure 4.32 shows high spatial correlation between percent black population and gang presence in municipalities, as well as the tendency of these variables' higher values to be located close to moderately and highly disadvantaged census tracts. In Figure 4.33 there are also visually identifiable spatial correlations between average total incidents in schools and average percent black students in municipality schools, as well as their close proximity to disadvantage.

Figure 4.34 is the final overlay map. Here, median household income is shown as the choropleth map while gang presence in both municipality schools and municipalities is shown as bar charts. In this map, although the relationship is not completely straightforward, there seems to be an overall spatial correlation between wealth and gang

presence in schools and municipalities. Although there are exceptions it seems as though the lower the median household income, the higher the gang presence in both schools and municipalities. Disadvantaged neighborhoods, however, do not show a clean spatial relationship to gang presence. One of the most noteworthy aspects of this map, however, is the steep wealth divide across a short distance. For example, compare Millburn (median household income in 2010 was \$165,603) and Newark (median household income in 2010 was \$35,659), which are separated only by two municipalities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Millburn and Newark, two dramatically different demographic and social worlds, are only a short distance apart.

Aside from these more localized relationships, the maps suggest that crime, poverty, and black populations are geographically associated with one another at the statewide level. First of all, where poverty is concentrated and there are high percentages of black populations, there tend to be elevated levels of crime. Increased values of these variables seem to be linked to high values of the others. Second, gang presence, foreign-born populations, and renter occupied housing units also show some spatial correlations along a southwest to northeast axis from Philadelphia to New York and along the New Jersey Turnpike. Third, urban centers, on average, have higher percentages of minority populations, foreign born populations, poverty, population density, students receiving free or reduced lunches, and crime rates, as well as higher numbers of disadvantaged neighborhoods than their suburban and rural counterparts. Changes in demographic and socioeconomic characteristics across New Jersey were also notable from 2000 to 2010. Such changes are shown in maps and charts in the following chapter.

Total Population, Population Density, and Community Types in New Jersey

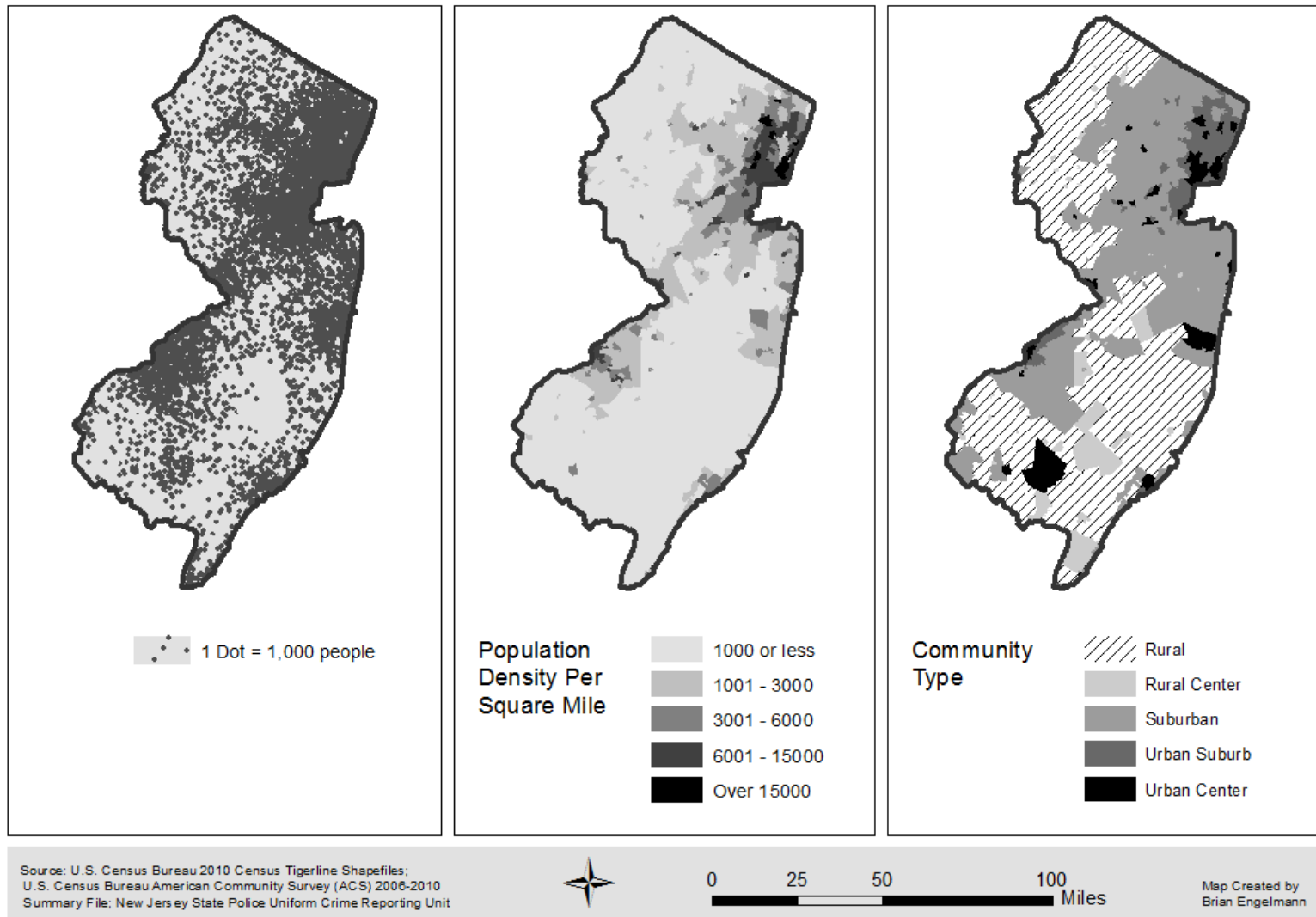


Figure 4.10 Total population, population density, and community types in New Jersey municipalities in 2010.

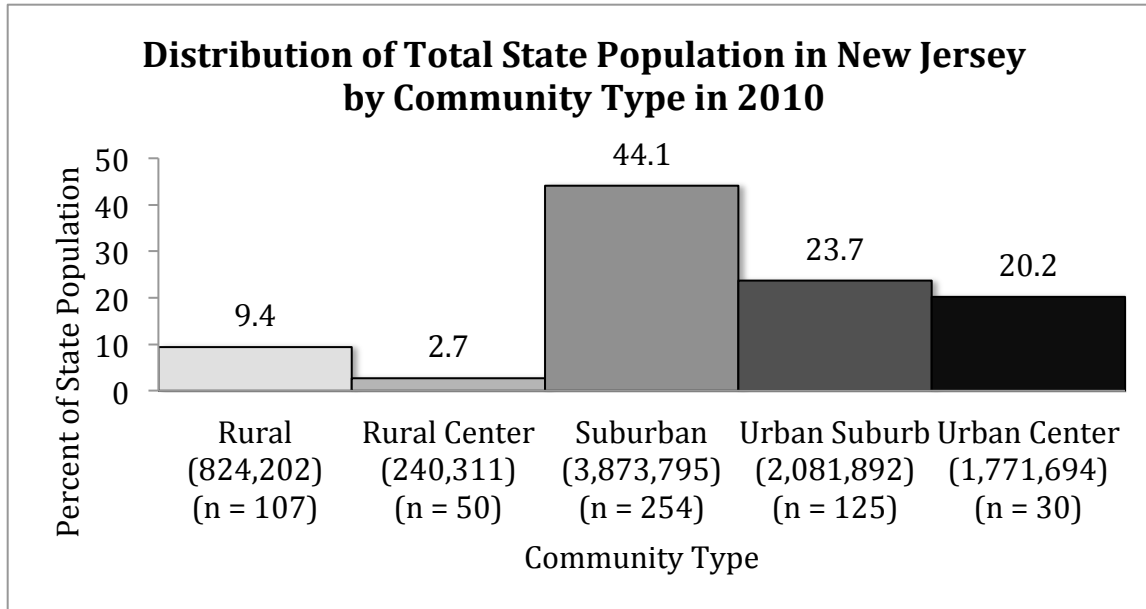
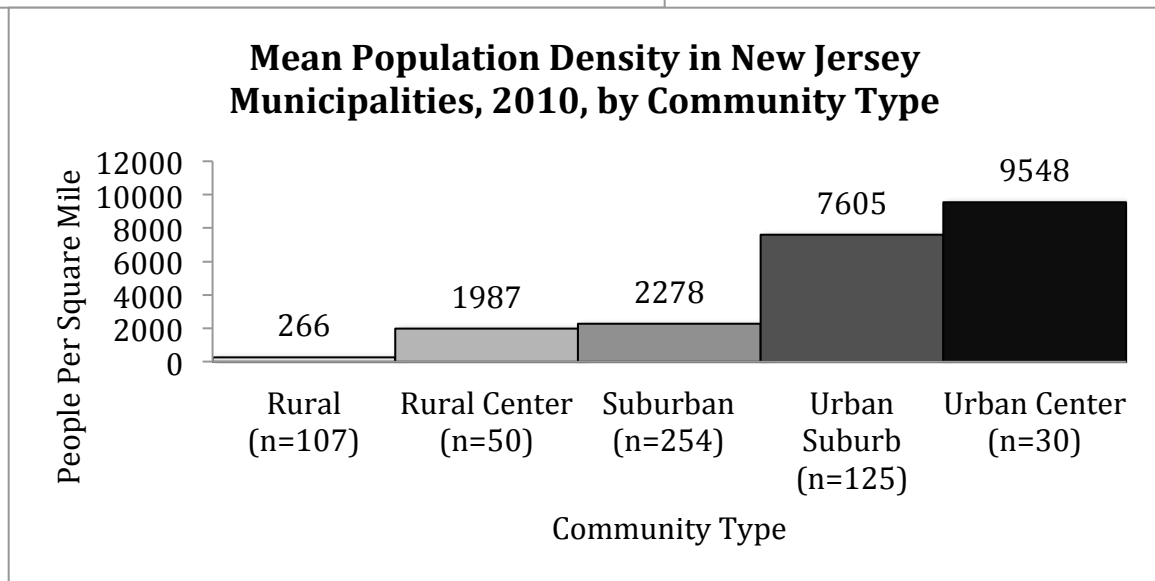


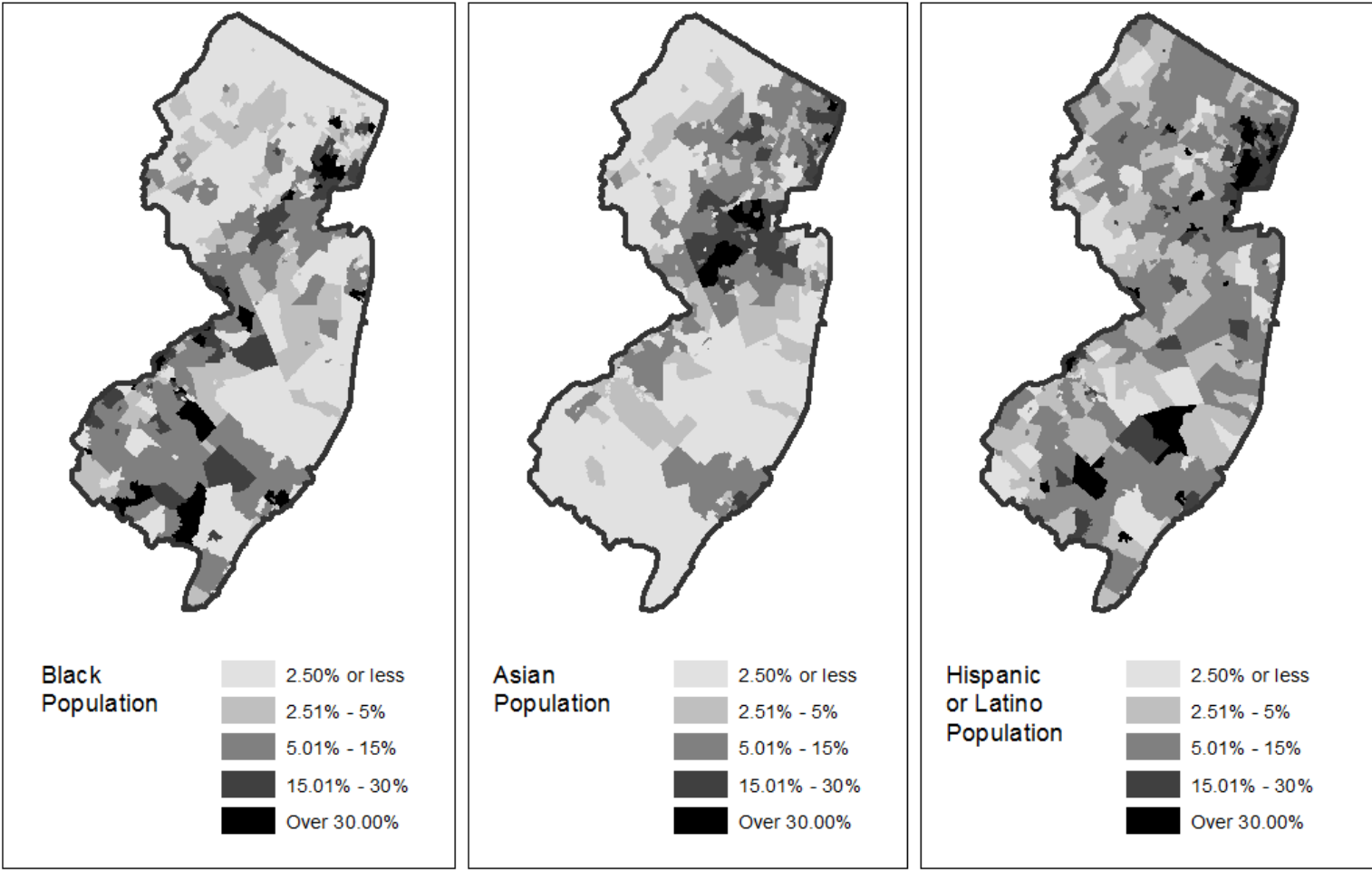
Figure 4.11 (above): The distribution of total population in New Jersey by community type.

Figure 4.12 (right): Mean population density in New Jersey by community type.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, American Community Survey 5-Year Summary File, 2006-2010.



Race and Ethnicity in New Jersey, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles; U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2006-2010 Summary File



Map Created by Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.13 Percentage of race and ethnicity in New Jersey municipalities in 2010.

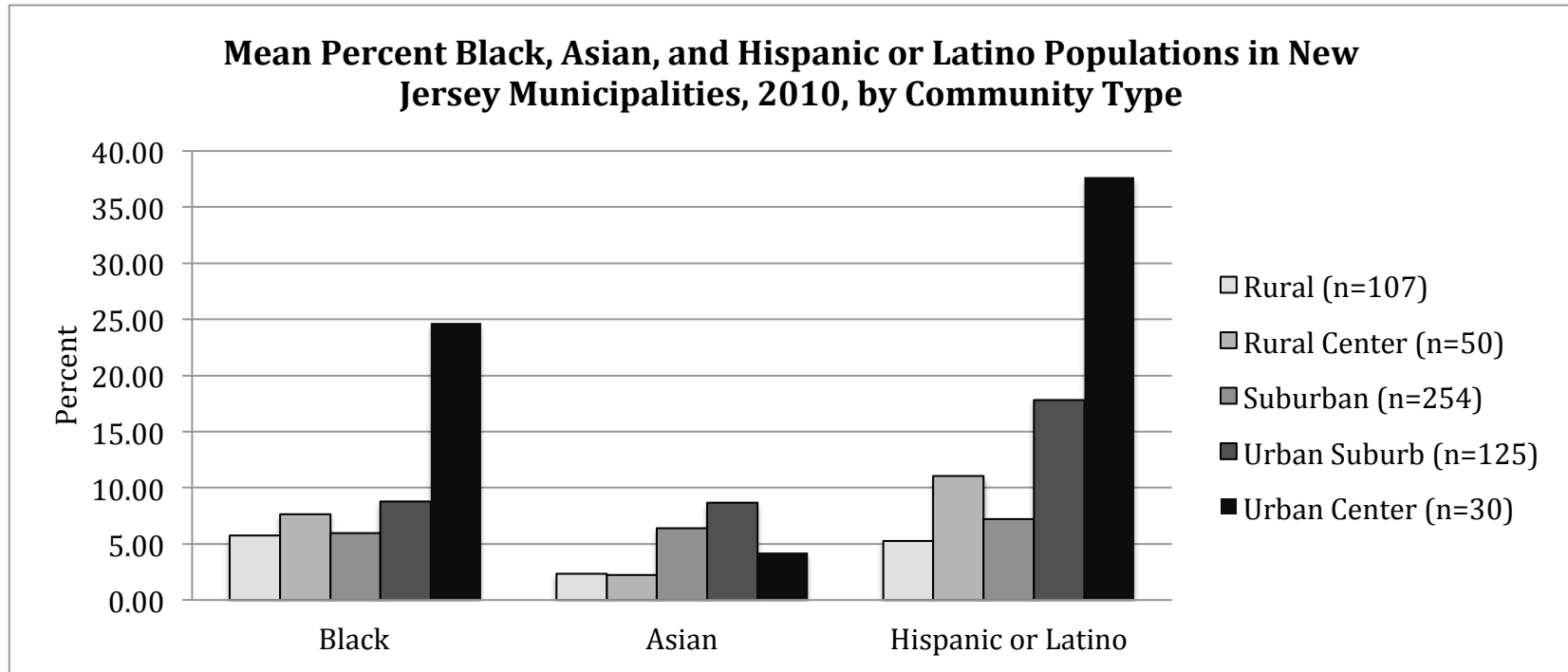
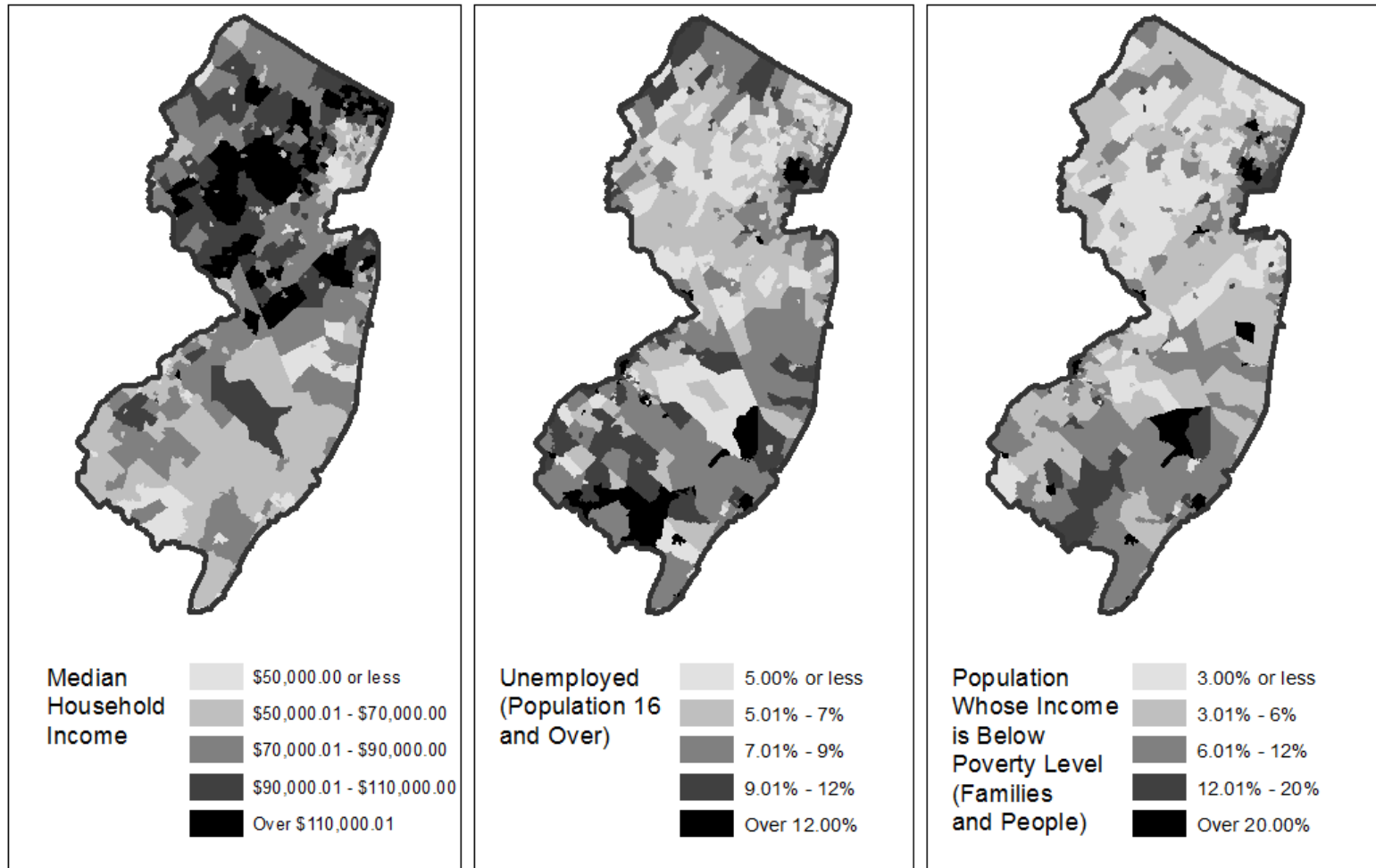


Figure 4.14 Mean percent of race and ethnicity in New Jersey municipalities by community type.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, American Community Survey 5-Year Summary File, 2006-2010.

Wealth, Employment, and Poverty in New Jersey, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles; U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2006-2010 Summary File



0 25 50 100 Miles

Map Created by Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.15 Median Household Income, Percent Unemployed, and Percent living under poverty level in New Jersey municipalities in 2010.

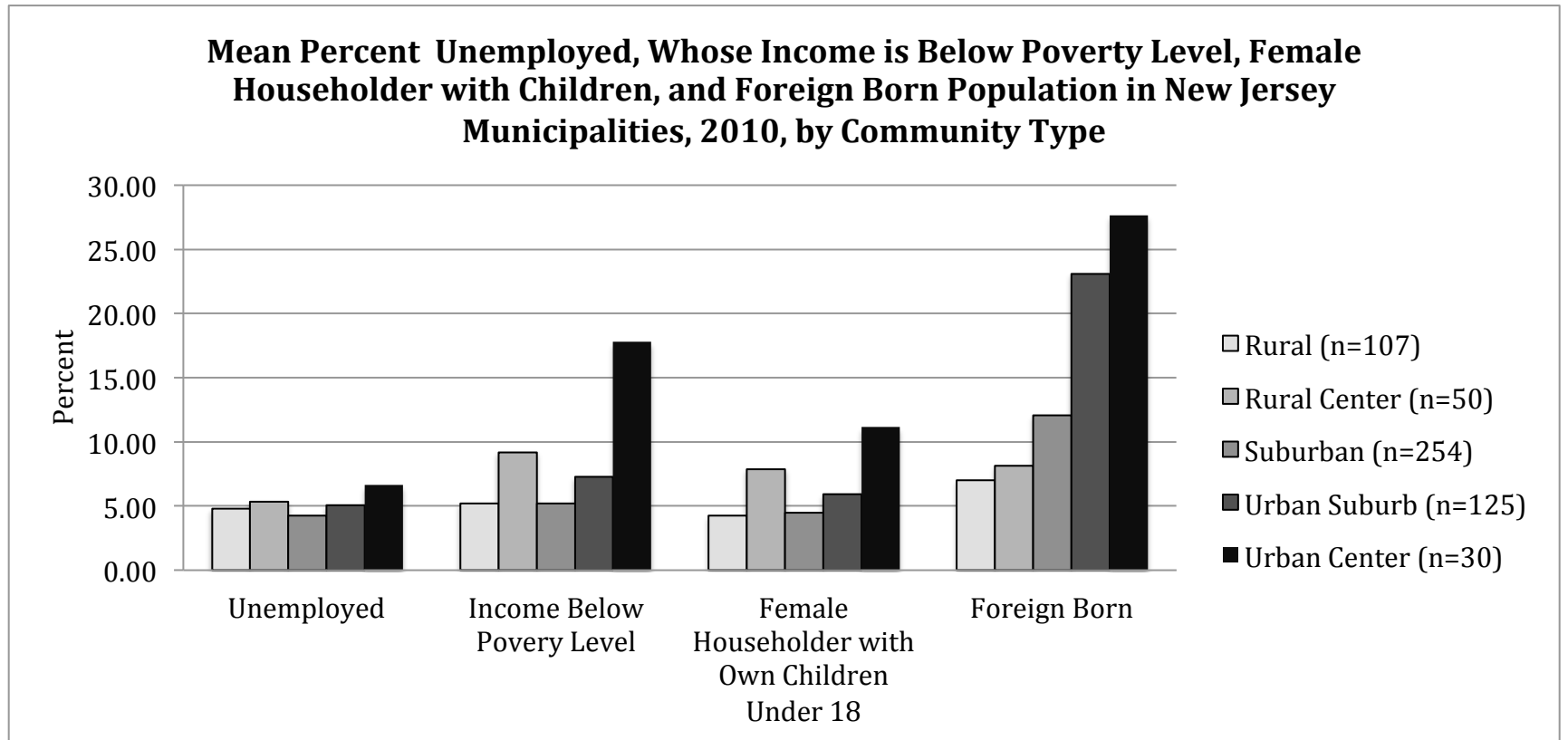
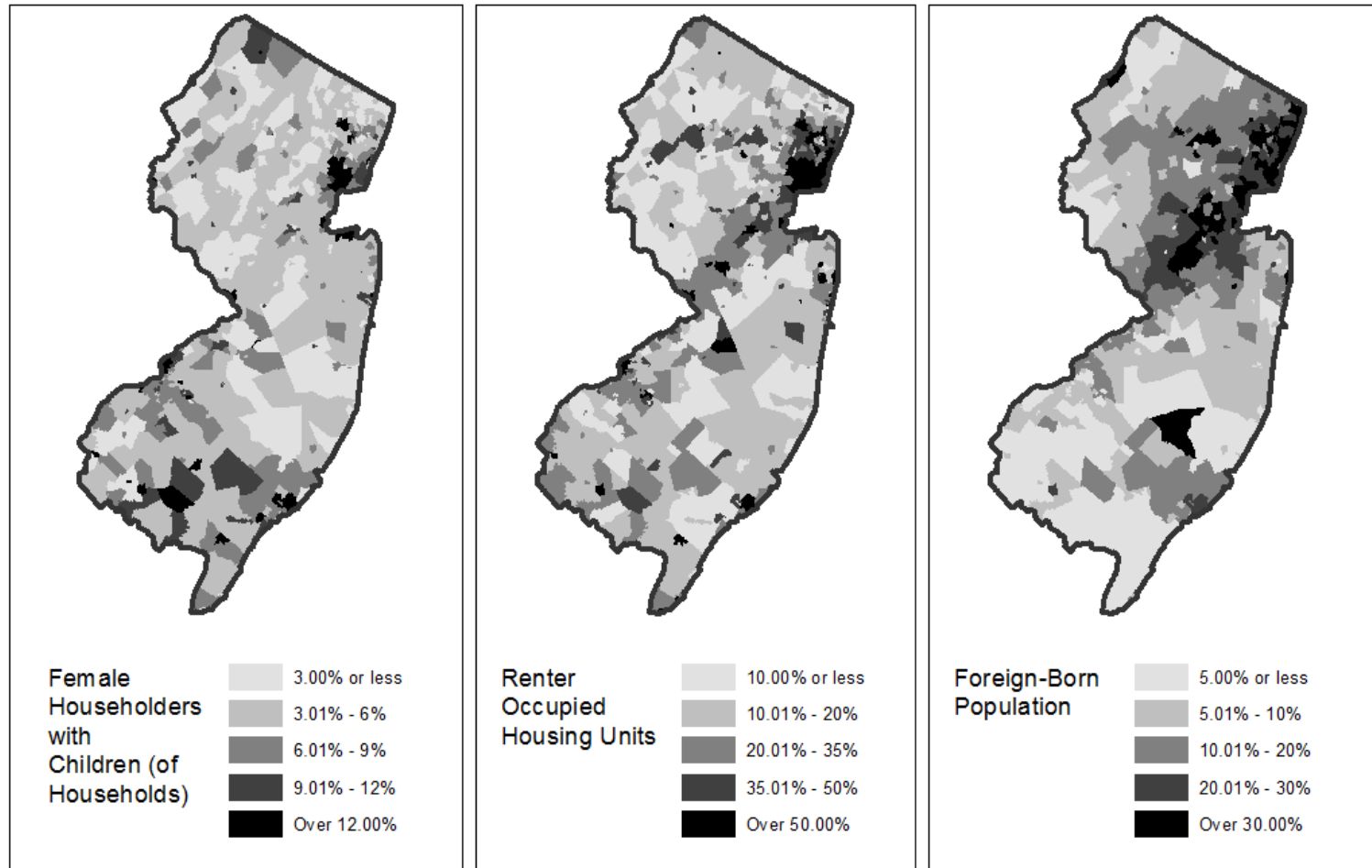


Figure 4.16 Mean percent of unemployment, poverty, and foreign-born population in New Jersey municipalities by community type in 2010.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, American Community Survey 5-Year Summary File, 2006-2010.

Female Householders, Renter Occupied Housing, and Foreign-Born Populations in New Jersey, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles; U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2006-2010 Summary File



0 25 50 100 Miles

Map Created by Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.17 Percentage female householders with children, renter occupied housing, and foreign-born population in New Jersey municipalities in 2010.

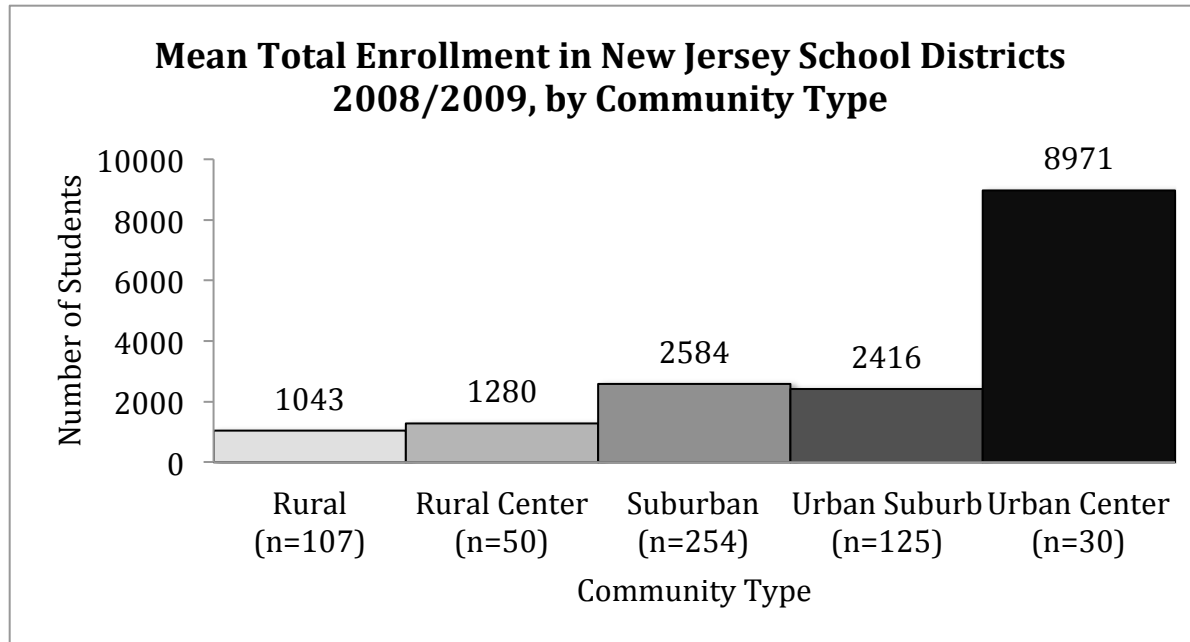
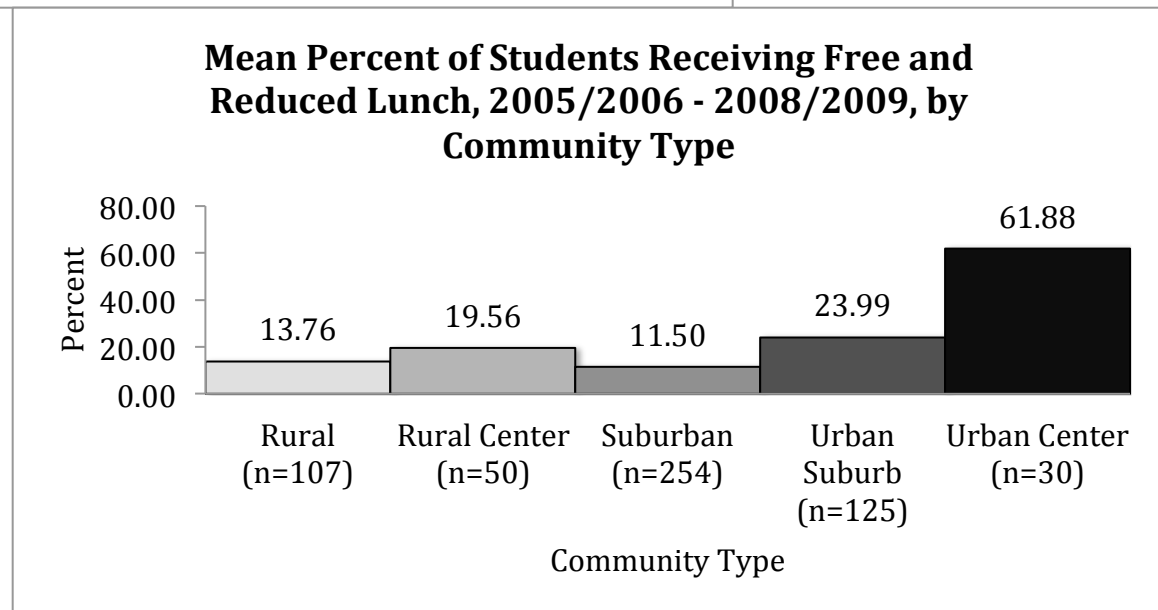


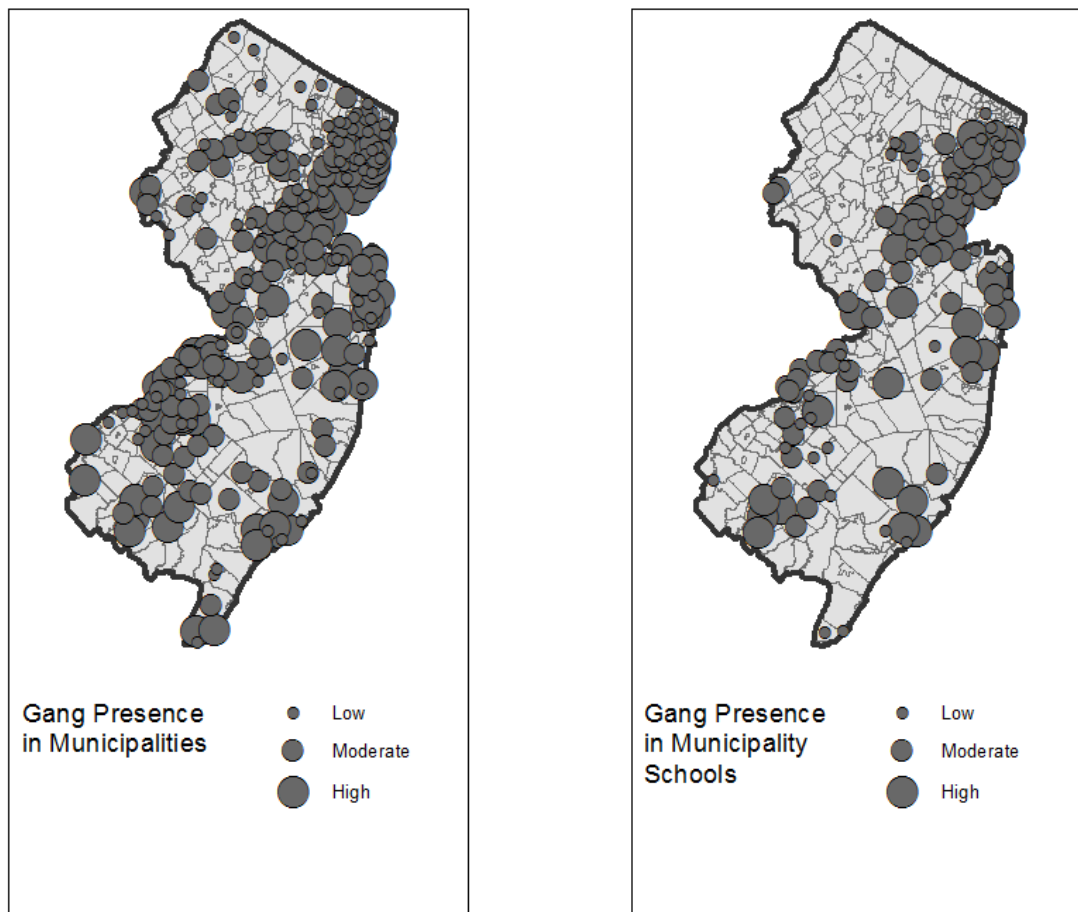
Figure 4.18 (above): Mean total enrollment of students in New Jersey municipality schools by community type.

Figure 4.19 (right): Mean percent of students receiving free or reduced lunches in New Jersey municipality schools by community type.

Source: New Jersey Department of Education



Gang Presence in New Jersey Municipalities and Schools, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles; New Jersey State Police Gang Survey 2010



0 25 50 100 Miles

Map Created by Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.20 The severity of gang presence in New Jersey municipalities (SGPM) and in municipality schools (SGPMS) in 2010.

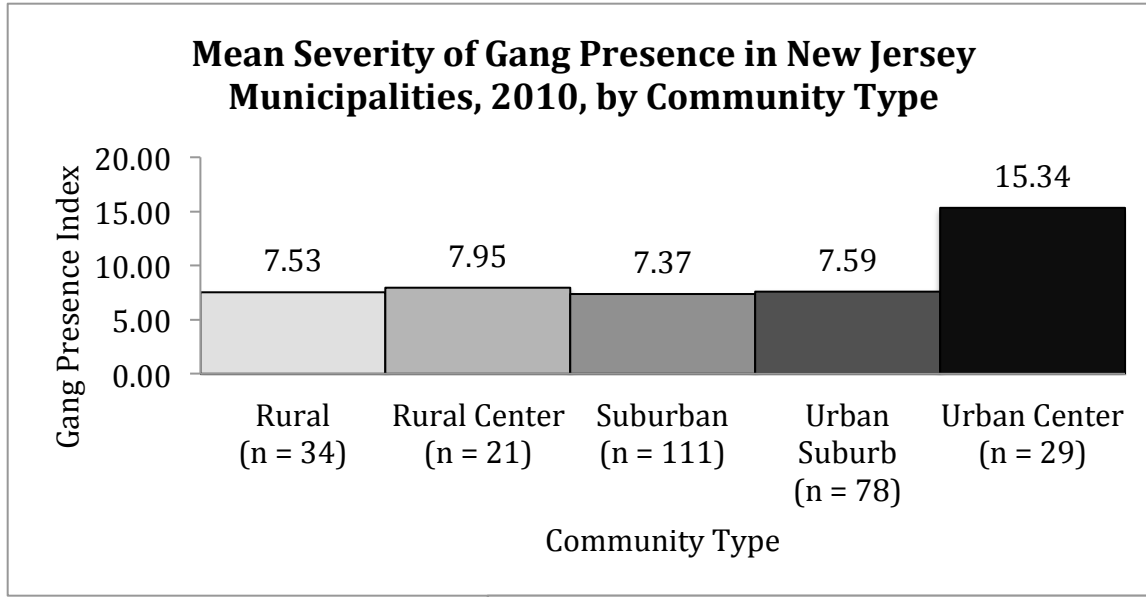
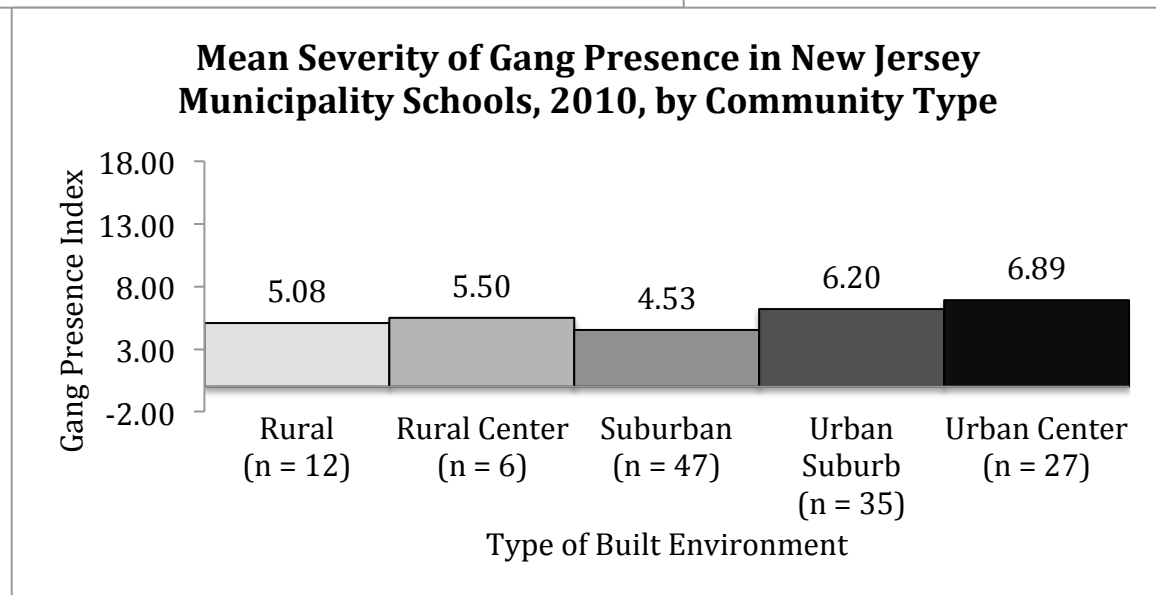


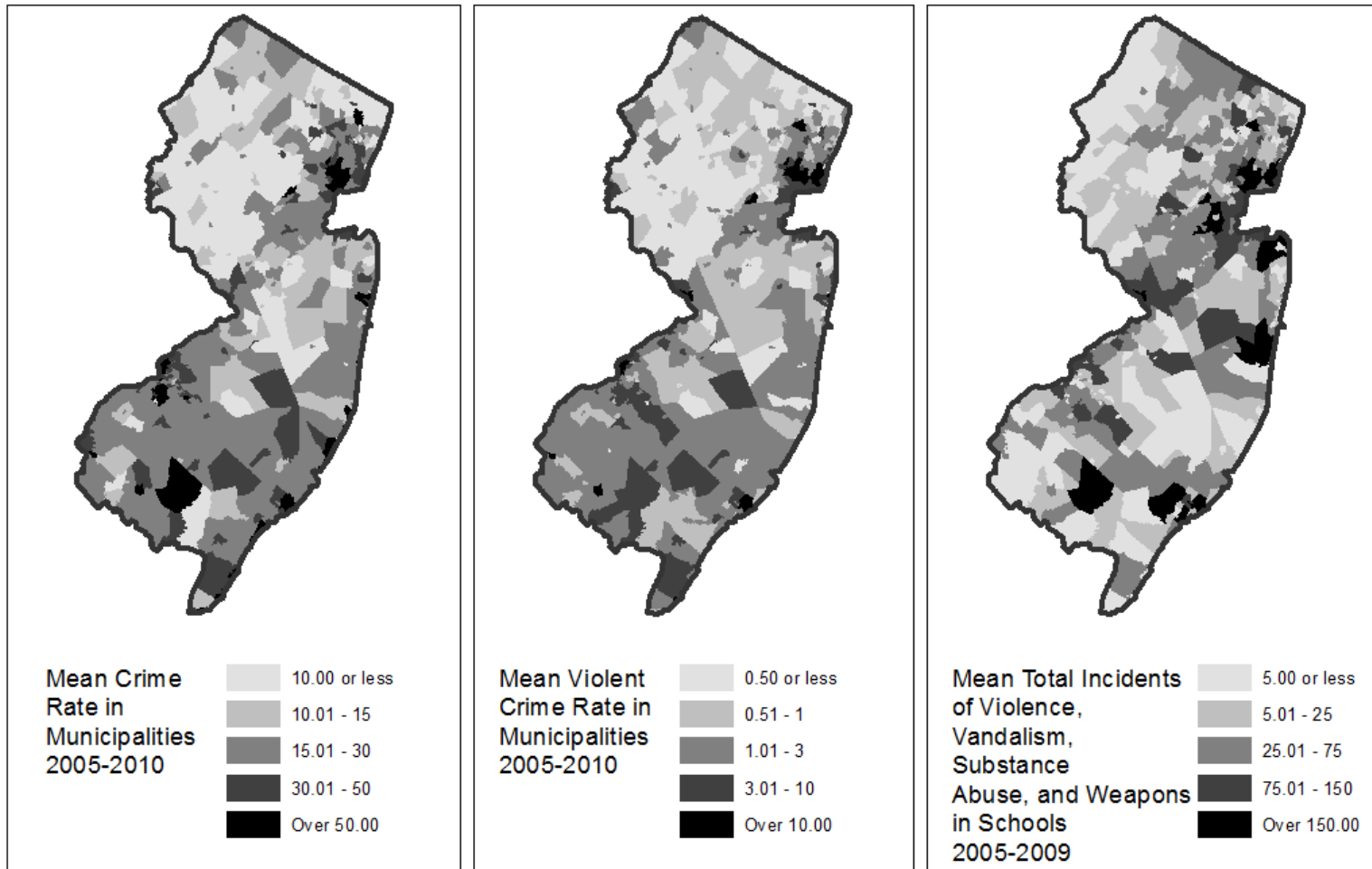
Figure 4.21 (above): Mean severity of gang presence index in New Jersey municipalities by community type.

Figure 4.22 (right): Mean severity of gang presence index in in New Jersey municipality schools by community type.

Source: New Jersey State Police Street Gang Survey 2010



Average Crime Rates and Incidents of School Violence in New Jersey, 2005-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles; New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Unit; New Jersey Department of Education



0 25 50 100 Miles

Map Created by Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.23 Mean crime rate, mean violent crime rate, and mean total incidents of school violence in New Jersey municipalities

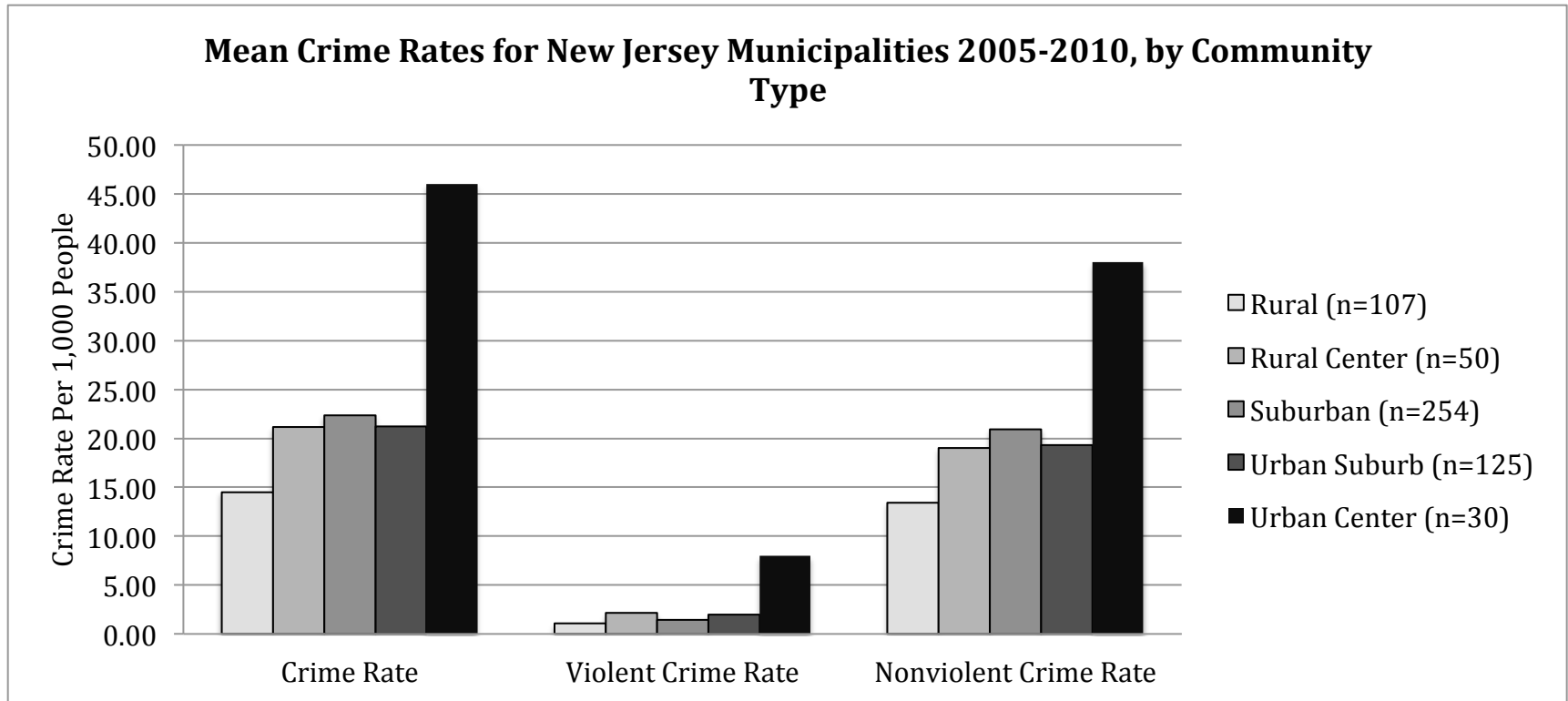
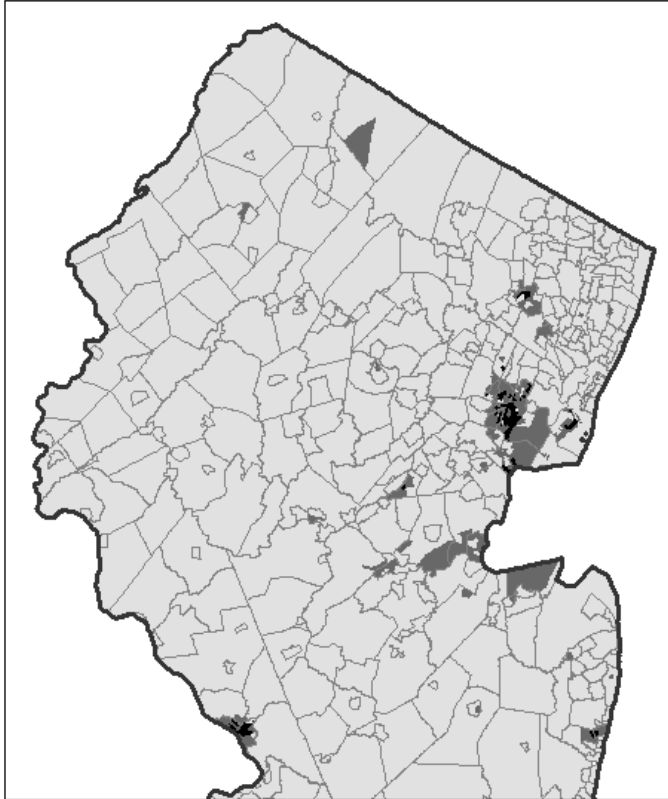


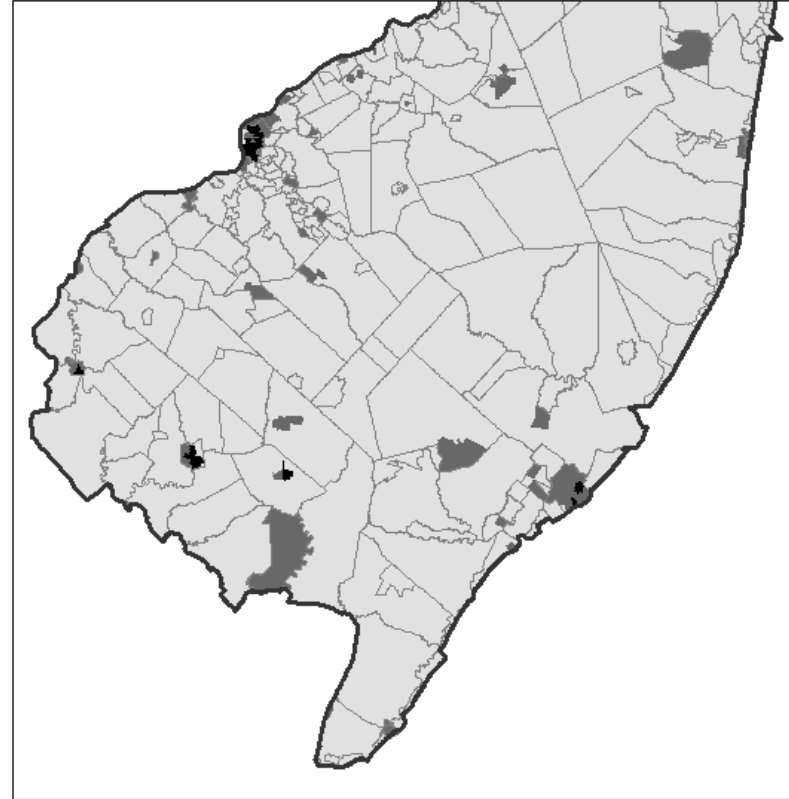
Figure A.24 Mean crime rates in New Jersey municipalities by community type, 2005-2010.
Source: New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Unit

Disadvantaged Neighborhoods in New Jersey, 2010

Northern Half of New Jersey



Southern Half of New Jersey



■ Census Tracts with High Concentrated Disadvantage
■ Census Tracts with Moderate Concentrated Disadvantage

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles;
New Jersey State Police Gang Survey 2010

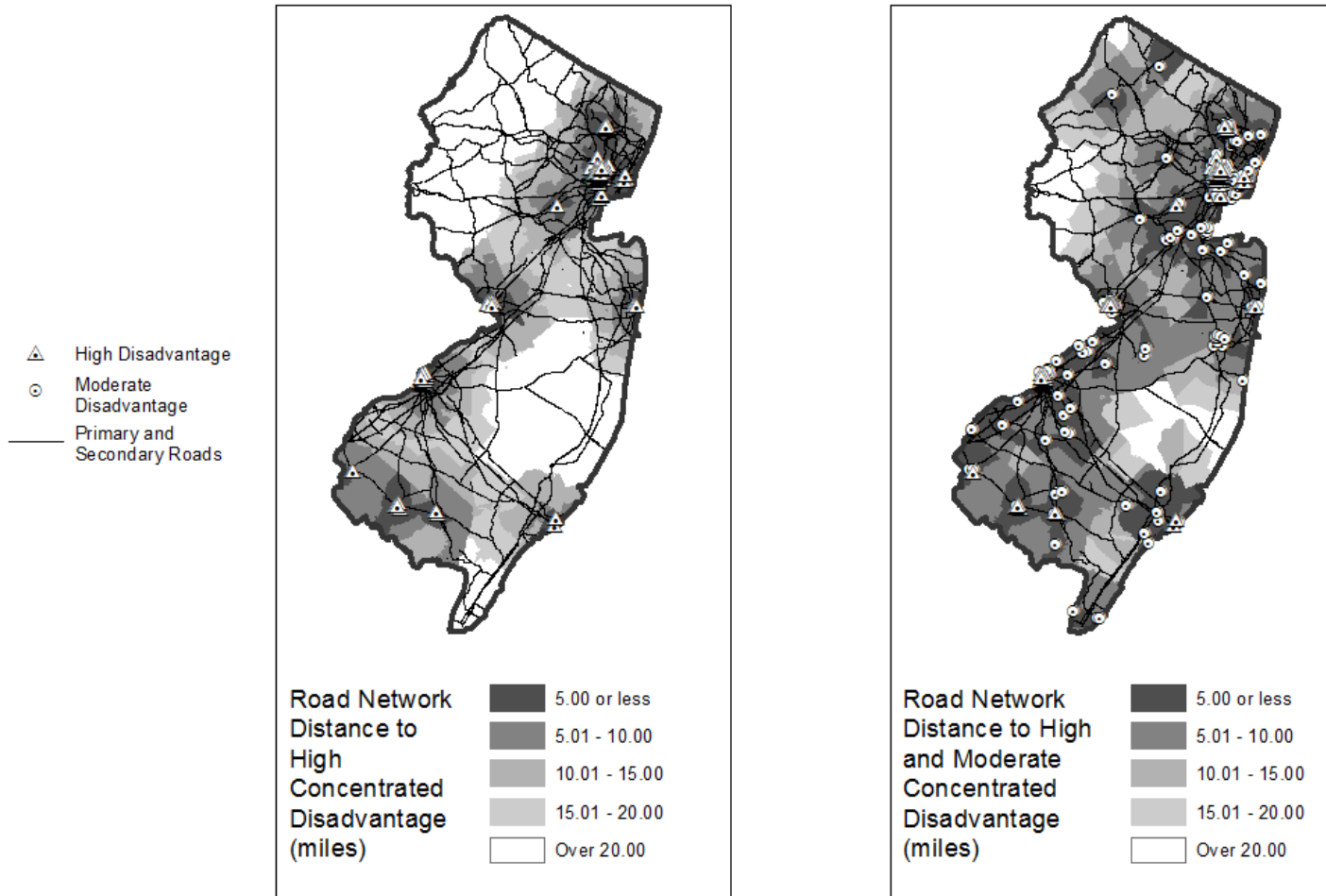


0 10 20 40
Miles

Map Created by
Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.25 The distribution of census tracts with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage in New Jersey in 2010. Municipality borders are shown on the map for reference.

Road Network Distance of Municipalities to Disadvantaged Neighborhoods in New Jersey, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles; U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2006-2010 Summary File; NJDOT



0 25 50 100 Miles

Map Created by Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.26 Road network distance of municipalities in New Jersey to the nearest census tract with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage.

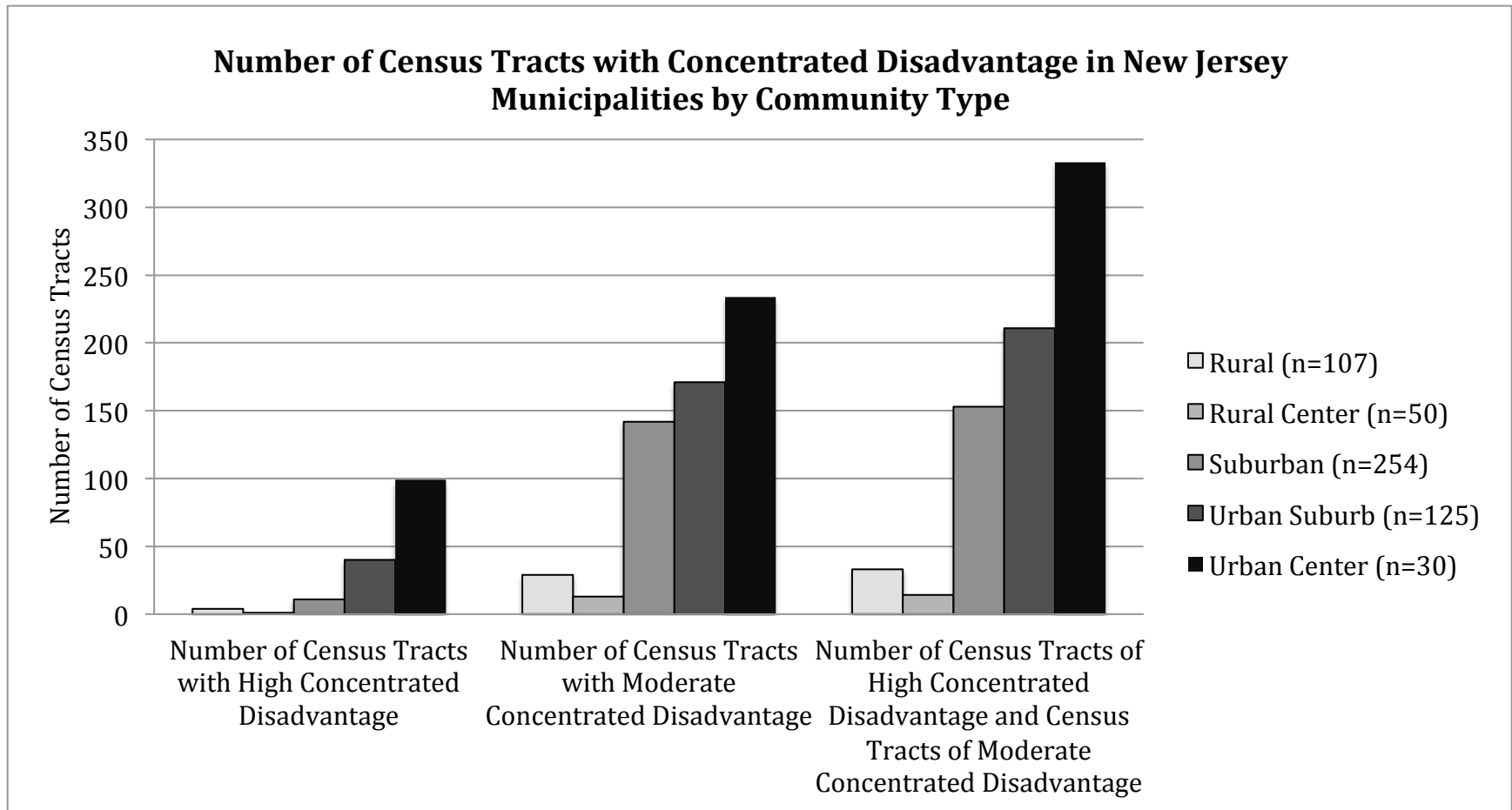


Figure 4.27 Total number of census tracts with concentrated disadvantage in New Jersey municipalities by community type. For example, the darkest colored bar in the first set of bars on the left indicates that there is a total of 100 census tracts of high concentrated disadvantage in municipalities classified as an urban center.

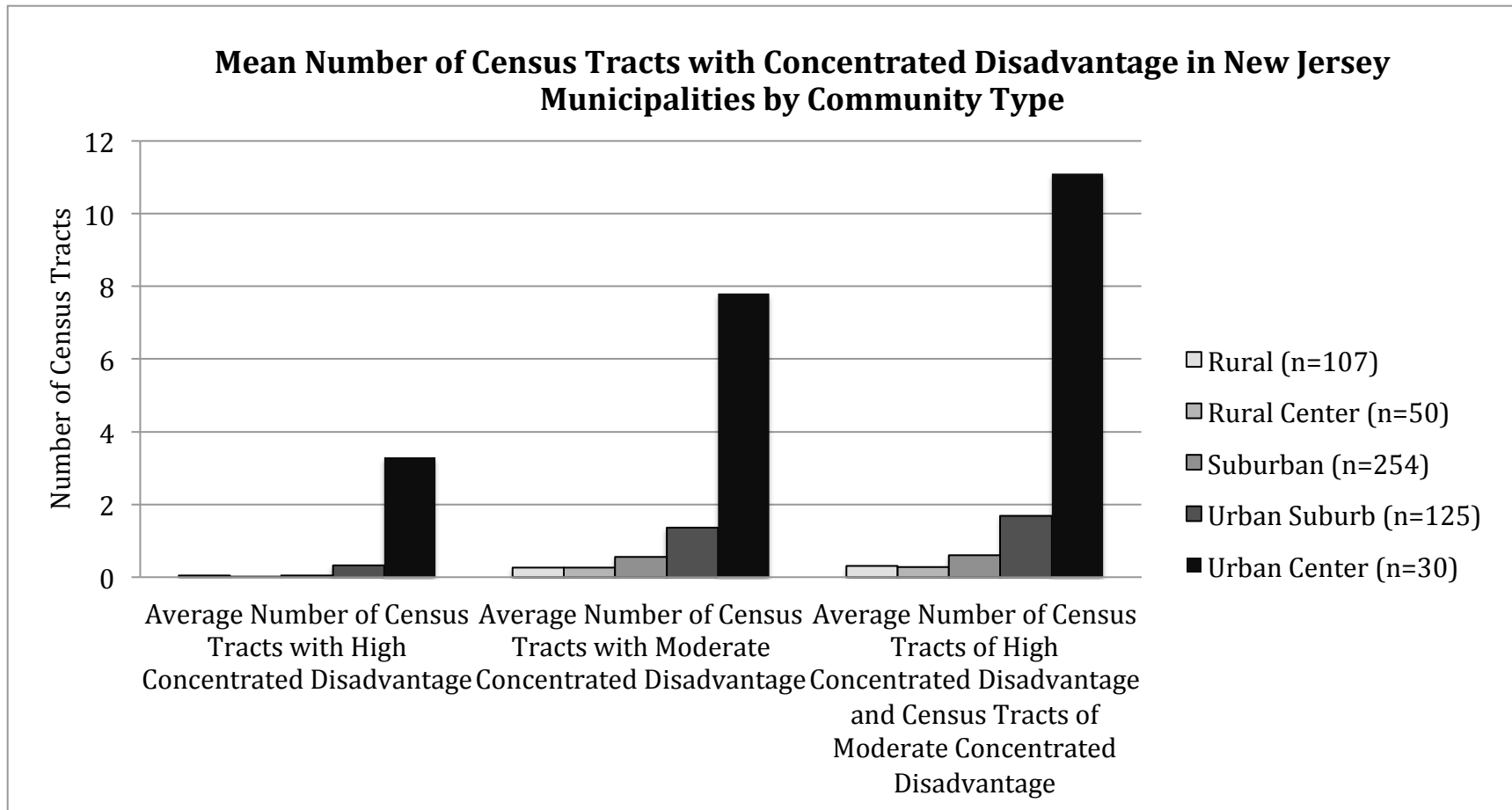


Figure 4.28 Mean number of census tracts with concentrated disadvantage in New Jersey municipalities by community type. For example, the darkest colored bar in the first set of bars on the left indicates that there is an average of over 3 census tracts of high concentrated disadvantage in municipalities classified as an urban center in New Jersey.

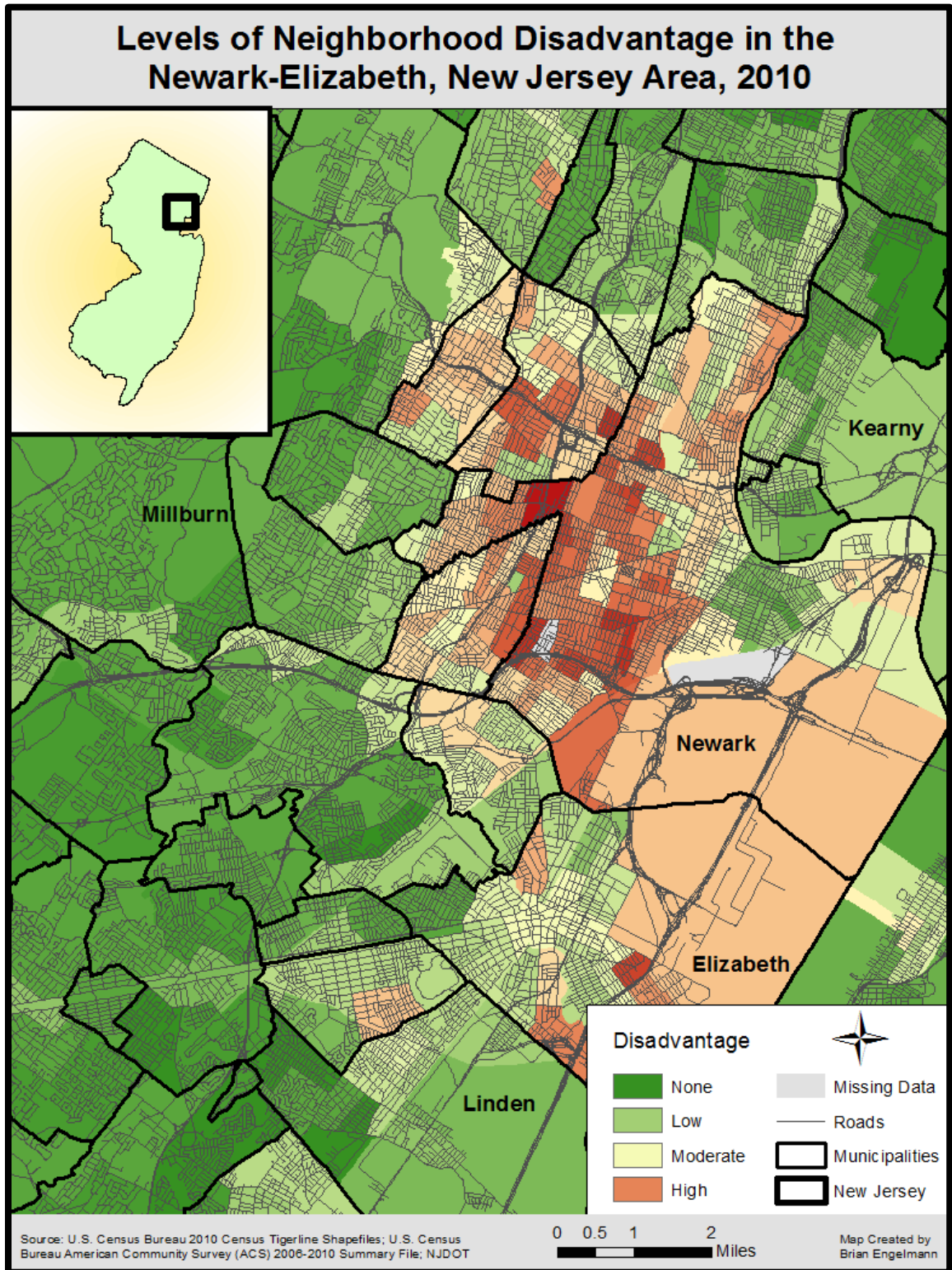


Figure 4.29 Levels of concentrated disadvantage in census tracts near the cities of Newark, Elizabeth, and Linden, New Jersey.

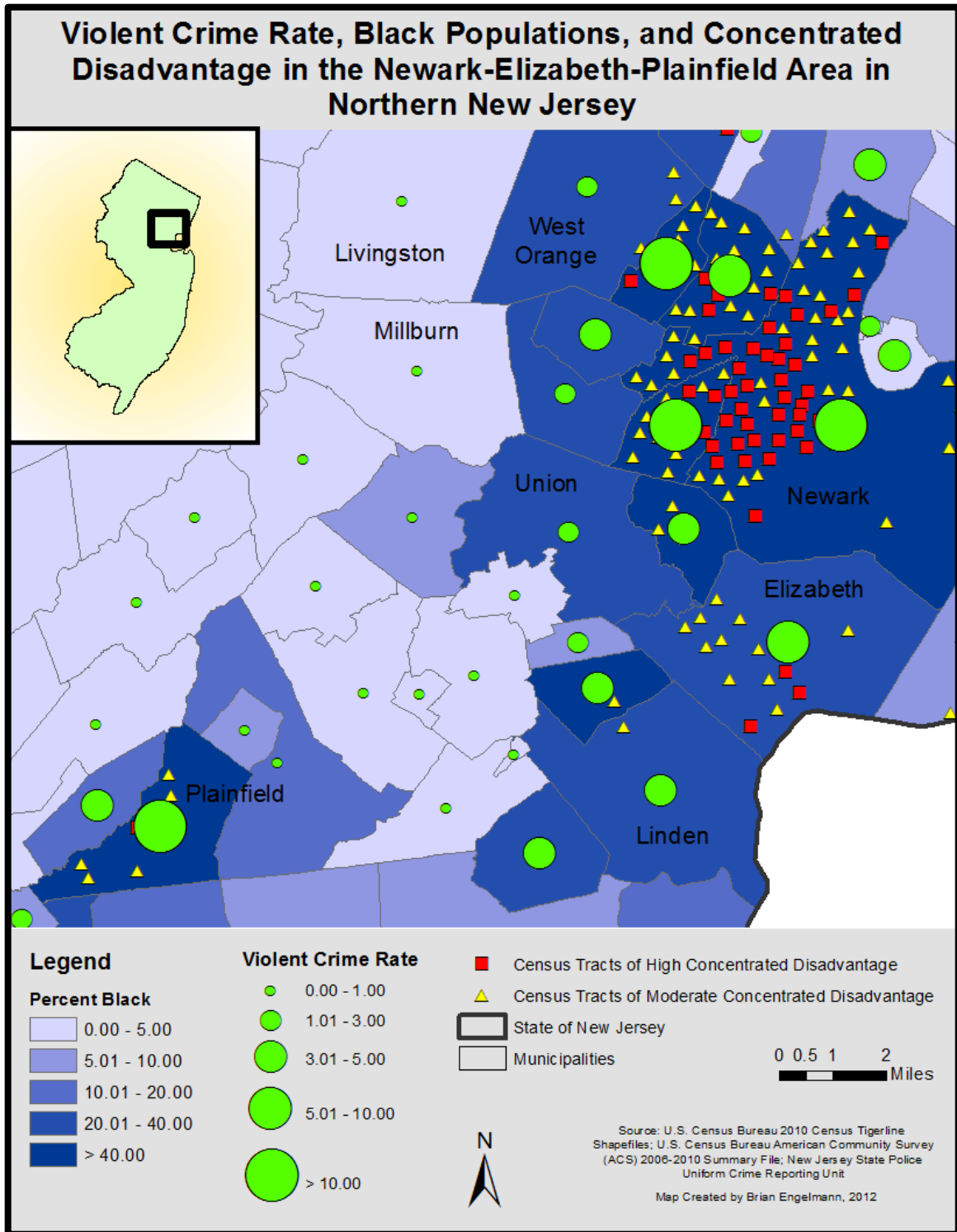


Figure 4.30 Interrelationships between percent black population in municipalities in 2010, average violent crime rate in municipalities from 2005 to 2010, and census tracts with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage in Northeastern New Jersey near the cities of Newark, Elizabeth, and Plainfield. Violent crime rate is per 1,000 people.

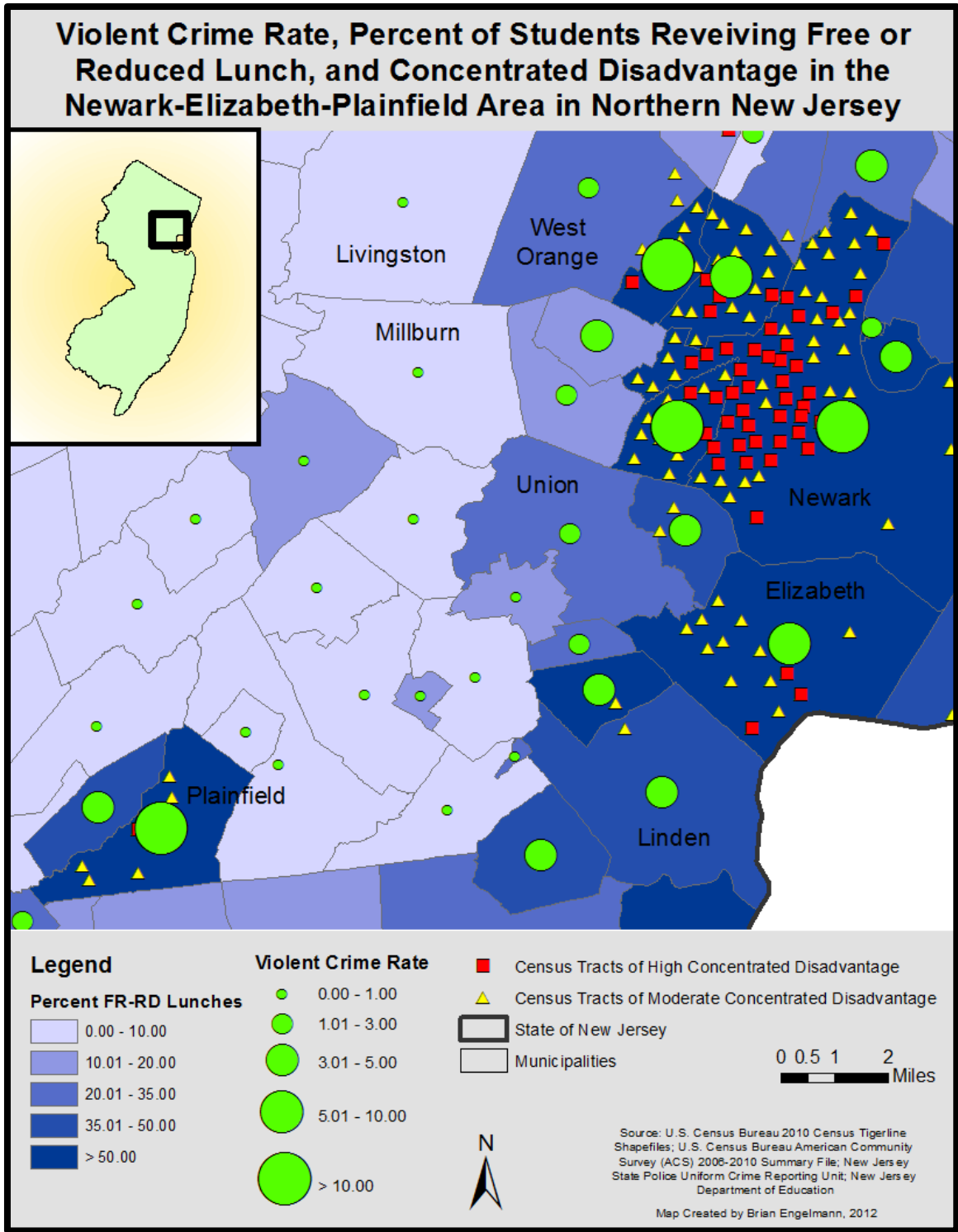


Figure 4.31 Interrelationships between average percent of students in municipalities receiving free or reduced lunch (Percent FR-RD Lunches) between the school years of 2005-2006 and 2008-2009, average violent crime rate in municipalities between 2005 and 2010, and census tracts with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage in Northeastern New Jersey near the cities of Newark, Elizabeth, and Plainfield. Violent crime rate is per 1,000 people.

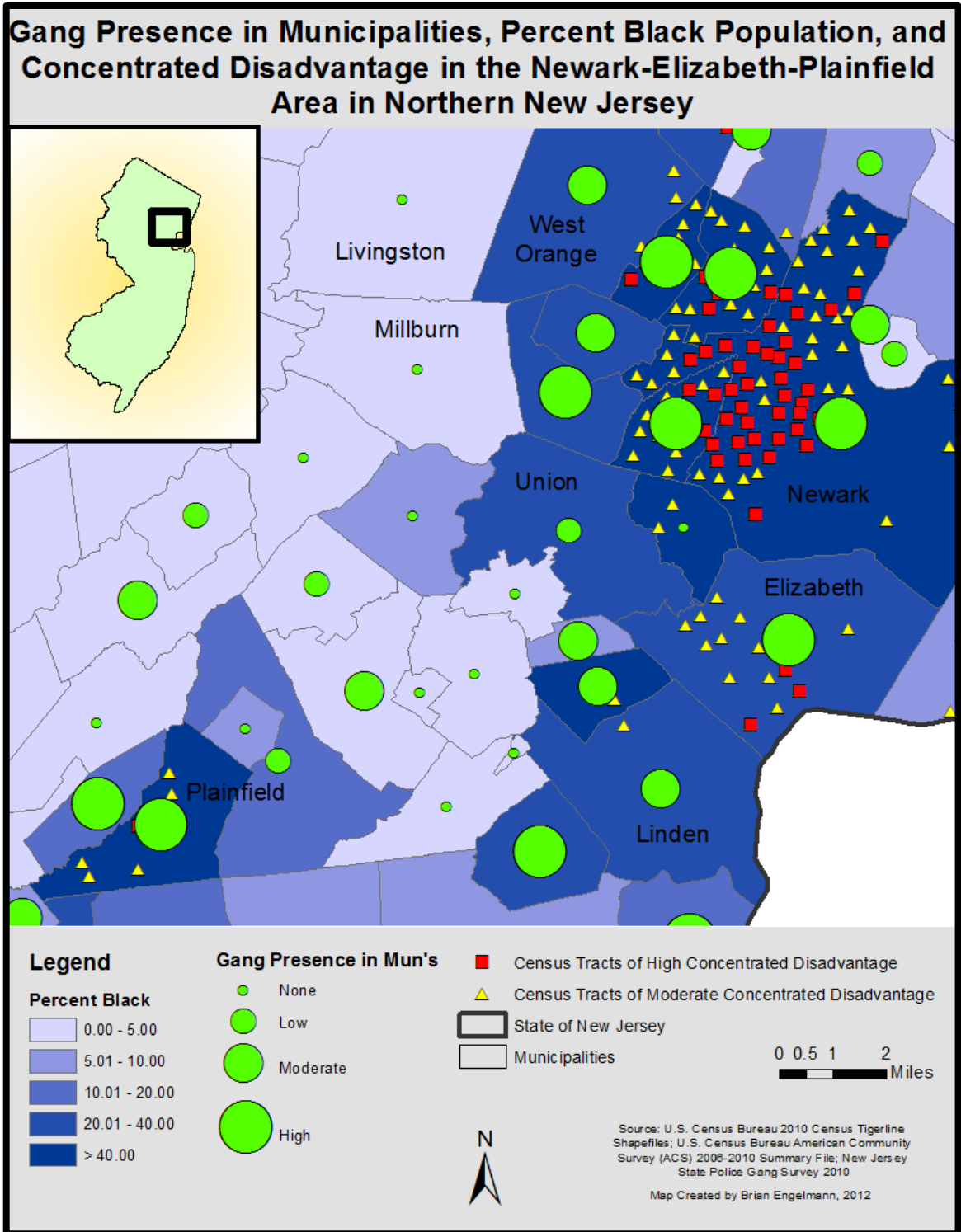


Figure 4.32 Interrelationships between percent black population in municipalities (Mun's), severity of gang presence in municipalities (SGPM), and census tracts with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage in Northeastern New Jersey near the cities of Newark, Elizabeth, and Plainfield. All data is from 2010.

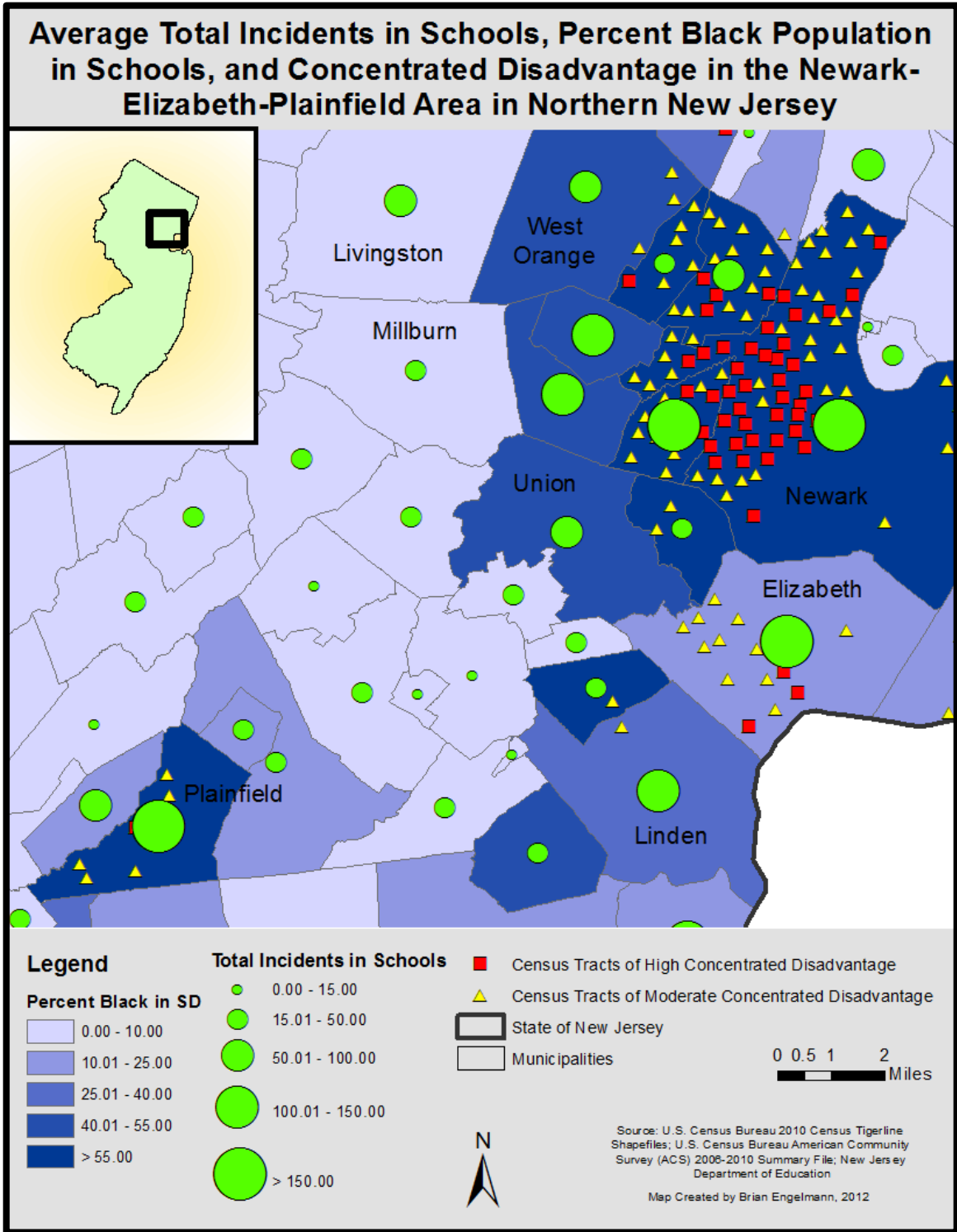


Figure 4.33 Interrelationships between percent black student population in municipality schools (SD), total incidents of violence in municipality schools, and census tracts with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage in Northeastern New Jersey near the cities of Newark, Elizabeth, and Plainfield. Total incidents in schools is the average total incidents of violence, vandalism, substance abuse, and weapons incidents between the school years of 2005-2006 and 2008-2009.

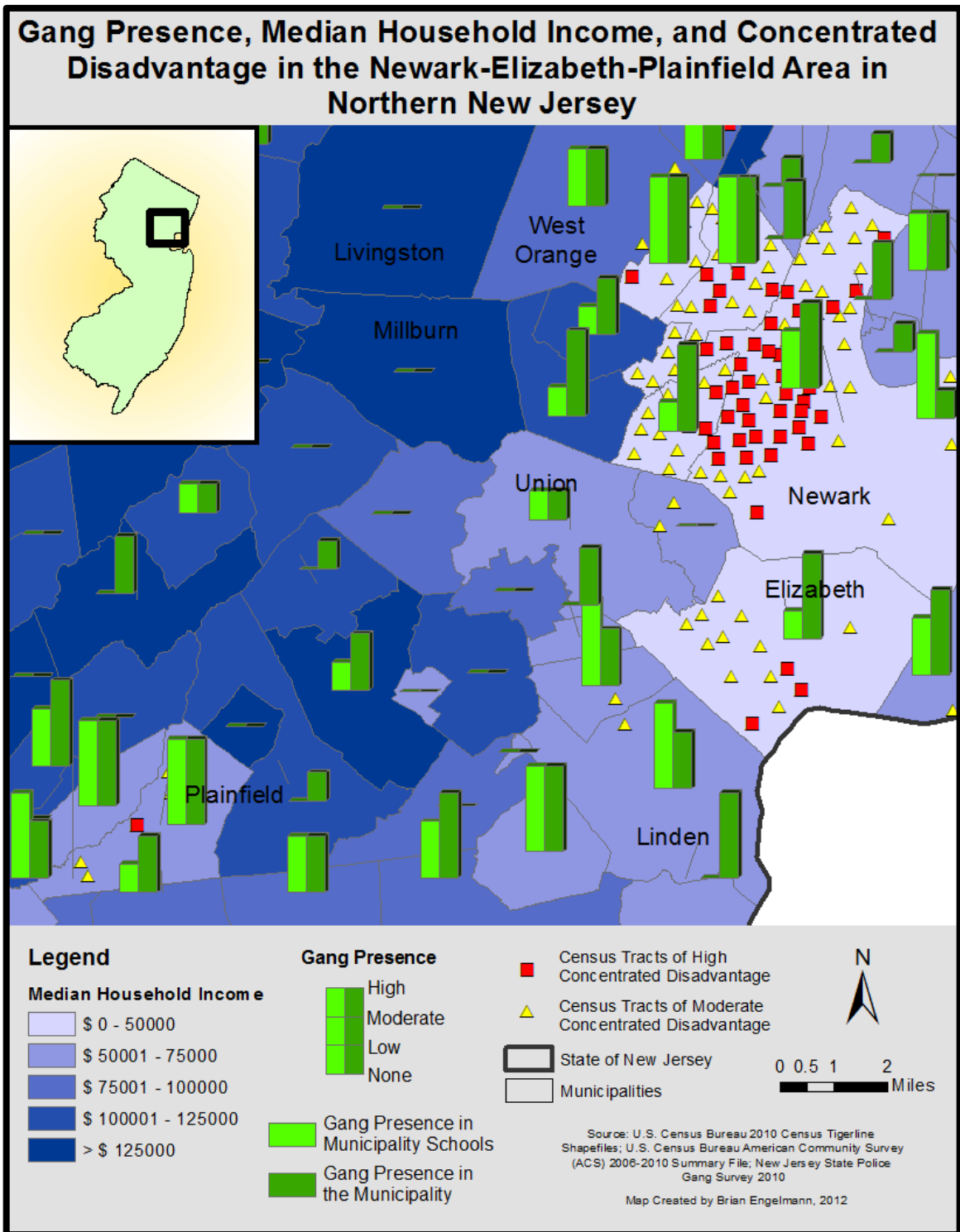


Figure 4.34 Interrelationships between severity of gang presence in municipalities (SGPM), median household income in municipalities, and census tracts with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage in Northeastern New Jersey near the cities of Newark, Elizabeth, and Plainfield. All data is from 2010.

4.5 Community Change

Community changes from 2000 to 2010 are shown in in Figures 4.35 through 4.45 and Table 4.4 on pages 145-156. The maps display changes in demographic and socioeconomic characteristics in municipalities and the bar charts show changes in demographic, socioeconomic, crime, and gang presence conditions by community type. Analysis of community composition and change in six municipalities in eastern Essex County provides an example of how composition and change from to 2000 to 2010 varied by community type (see Table 4.4 and Figure 4.45).

From 2000 to 2010 the overall population of New Jersey increased by over 300,000 people, a growth of 4.5 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2006-2010). Figure 4.35 shows that the mean total population increased in all community types. The highest percent increase in total population was in rural municipalities at about 12 percent, followed by urban suburbs at just over 4 percent, rural centers, suburbs, and urban centers. Population density also increased, on average for all types of municipalities. The highest percent increase in population density was in rural areas at nearly 14 percent followed by rural centers, urban suburbs, and suburbs at around 3 percent, and urban centers at around 2 percent.

The white population in New Jersey experienced an overall decline. New Jersey was 68.6 percent white in 2010, which is a decrease of 1.2 percent since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2006-2010). As indicated in Figure 4.36, the largest areas of white population loss are in northeastern, central, north-shore, and parts of southeastern New Jersey. Places that experienced growth in white population are some urban areas in northeastern New Jersey, suburban and rural municipalities of northwestern New Jersey,

and throughout parts of the central and southern areas of the state. New Jersey was 13.7 percent black or African American in 2010 and this racial group experienced an increase of 5.5 percent from 2000 to 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2006-2010). There are some distinct patterns of black population growth across the state, as demonstrated in Figure 4.36. Particularly noticeable is the growth in black population in municipalities in the northwestern corner as well as the south-central area. Extreme southern New Jersey experienced a decrease or little growth in black population. Northeastern New Jersey's cities experienced decreases in black population but nearby urban suburbs and suburban areas experienced an increase.

Asian populations in 2010 made up 8.3 percent of New Jersey's population. The state's Asian population experienced a growth of 51.1 percent, the largest increase of all racial and ethnic groups since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2006-2010). Asian populations remained stable in the already-established large Asian population centers of northeastern, north-central, and central New Jersey. Northwestern New Jersey, parts of central New Jersey outside of Trenton as well as southern parts of the state experienced the largest increases in Asian populations from 2000 to 2010, as illustrated in Figure 4.37. Hispanic or Latino populations also grew significantly. New Jersey's population was 17.7 percent Hispanic or Latino in 2010 and this ethnic group grew by 39.2 percent since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2006-2010). Also demonstrated in Figure 4.37, the Hispanic or Latino population grew by over 75 percent in many municipalities scattered throughout the state. With only a very small number of municipalities experiencing a loss in Hispanic or Latino populations, the regions where the ethnic group's growth was lowest were in northeastern, central north shore, and in extreme southern New Jersey.

A similar pattern occurred with average changes in racial and ethnic composition across community types (shown in Figure 4.38). The exception is the white population, which experienced mean decreases in urban suburbs, suburbs, and rural centers and only experienced slight growth in rural areas and urban centers. Average growth in black, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino populations was highest in rural municipalities. The largest increases in Asian and Hispanic or Latino populations were in rural areas followed by rural centers, suburbs, urban suburbs, and urban centers. The second-highest average percent increase in black population occurred in urban suburbs, followed by rural centers, suburbs, and urban centers. Urban centers experienced only a slight increase in black populations. In summary, minority populations have grown the most in rural and suburban areas in New Jersey and have grown least in urban centers.

The population whose income is below the poverty level has experienced both losses and gains across the state, as illustrated in Figure 4.39. Poverty more than doubled in many municipalities in the northwestern part of the state, yet many of these municipalities are adjacent to others that experienced a decrease in poverty. Many municipalities showed a mix of increasing and decreasing poverty between 2000 and 2010. Central and southeastern New Jersey, however, seemed to experience a more uniform increase in poverty, but still not at the levels of the cluster of municipalities in the northwestern part of the state.

The vast majority of municipalities experienced an increase in unemployed populations. Figure 4.39 indicates that some of the highest increases in unemployed populations occurred in the western part of central New Jersey as well as in the central and western portions of northern New Jersey. Changes in female householders with

children under 18 years old, however, were much more mixed across the state (See Figure 4.40). However, the group of municipalities in northwestern New Jersey that experienced a large increase in poverty also experienced large increases in female householders with children. Parts of northeastern and southern New Jersey also showed significant increases in female householders with children.

New Jersey's population in 2010 consisted of about 21 percent foreign-born residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010). This population increased by nearly 25 percent from the year 2000. As indicated in Figure 4.40, in most of northern and north-central parts of the state, the foreign-born population remained stable or grew slightly. In northwestern New Jersey and most of central and southern areas of the state, many municipalities saw their foreign populations increase by over 50 percent, and in many municipalities this population group more than doubled. However, other municipalities scattered throughout the state experienced losses in foreign-born population.

Figure 4.41 shows average changes in measures of poverty in municipalities by community type. Overall, unemployed populations, those with income below poverty level, and female householders with children have all increased the most, on average, in rural environments, followed by suburban environments, and then urban centers. "Rural environments" refers to both rural centers and rural areas and "suburban environments" refers to both urban suburbs and suburbs. A similar pattern occurred with regard to mean changes in foreign-born populations and those who were not a U.S. citizen. The highest percent increases in foreign-born populations occurred in rural environments followed by suburban environments (shown in Figure 4.42).

Student populations that received free lunch, reduced lunch, and with limited English proficiency experienced varied changes across community types between the 2005-2006 and 2008-2009 school years. In Figure 4.43, the graph on the left shows that the mean percent change in students receiving free lunch between 2005-2006 and 2008-2009 increased the most in rural areas followed by suburban municipalities, rural centers, urban suburbs, and urban centers. The highest mean percent increase in students receiving reduced lunch was experienced in rural municipalities followed by urban suburbs, suburbs, urban centers, and rural centers. The highest mean percent increases in students with limited English proficiency occurred in urban suburbs followed by rural centers, rural areas, urban centers, and suburban municipalities.

Last, Figure 4.44 displays the mean percent change in various crime rates in municipalities by community type. Overall, crime rate, violent crime rate, and nonviolent crime rate decreased by an average of over 10 percent in urban centers throughout New Jersey. Urban suburbs experienced average percent decreases in crime rate but saw increases in violent crime and slight increases in nonviolent crime. Suburban municipalities also experienced mean percent decreases in violent crime. Percent increases in crime rates between 2005 and 2010 were the highest in rural environments followed by suburban environments. The highest mean percent increases in violent crime rate occurred in rural centers, followed by urban suburbs and rural areas. Nonviolent crime rates followed similar changes: rural environments experienced the highest average percent increases with suburban environments following behind.

In summary, analyses of community change in New Jersey municipalities indicated increases in minority populations, foreign-born populations, and measures of

poverty in rural and suburban environments from 2000 to 2010, while such characteristics in urban centers remained relatively static. Geographic patterns of racial and ethnic change, as well as changes in poverty and foreign-born populations, were also evident, and usually took place away from the most highly populated areas of the state. Although crime overall seems to have dramatically dropped in urban centers and increased elsewhere between 2005 and 2010, these conclusions are not based on averages of multiple years and should be interpreted with caution.

As a case-in-point of racial and income segregation and differences in concentrations of disadvantage and crime, Table 4.4 illustrates the stark demographic, socioeconomic, as well as the crime differences among seven municipalities in Essex County (Figure 4.45 is a geographic key to the locations of the municipalities included in Table 4.4 and the numbers on the map correspond with the municipalities in the table.) The municipalities in Table 4.4 are: Newark, East Orange, Irvington, South Orange, West Orange, Millburn, and Livingston. Key changes from 2000 to 2010 are the large increases in those whose income is below poverty level and in black populations in the suburban municipalities of Millburn, Livingston, and West Orange as compared to urban municipalities of Newark, East Orange, and Irvington, which experienced decreases or little change in poverty as well as shrinking black populations.

South Orange is an urban suburb like Irvington, but has a moderate black population. The municipality lost black population but experienced a large increase in poverty. Millburn and Livingston have very small black populations as well as little poverty, violent crime, and no gang presence. South Orange and West Orange, however, have moderate black populations along with elevated levels of poverty, higher violent

crime rates, and a moderate gang presence. According to the findings in in Table 4.4, higher instances of poverty, gang presence, percent black population, percent foreign-born population, and percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch all have a tendency to be correlated with higher proportions of black populations. In other words, such characteristics seem to increase or decrease with changes in percent black population. The same could be said about poverty in each municipality, which is highly related to the percentage of black residents. Whether one characteristic affects another in a causal fashion is not an intended conclusion and is outside the scope of the study. However, associations between variables in this set of municipalities do not seem to occur by chance. Such associations are similar to the findings of Peterson and Krivo (2010) and Sampson (2012).

Additionally, Figure 4.45 suggests that of the municipalities being compared, those with the highest black populations, poverty rates, violent crime, and gang presence have highly disadvantaged census tracts inside their borders (Newark, East Orange, and Irvington). West Orange has three moderately disadvantaged census tracts and contains a moderate black population and elevated poverty rate, violent crime rate, and moderate gang presence. South Orange does not contain any disadvantage but is adjacent to numerous highly and moderately disadvantaged areas and has a moderate black population with elevated levels of poverty, violent crime rate, and a moderate gang presence. Millburn and Livingston are farthest away from disadvantaged neighborhoods and have lower black populations, levels of poverty, violent crime rates, and gang presence. In this particular case, comparisons of data, geographic locations, and

disadvantage neighborhoods between this grouping of municipalities in Essex county are stunning and reemphasize the presence of segregation and concentrated disadvantage.

In the example provided above, it was demonstrated that municipalities with highly disadvantaged neighborhoods have the highest violent crime rate, gang presence, and percentage black populations. Municipalities that are located near other highly disadvantaged neighborhoods have moderate levels of violent crime and gang presence as well as moderate percentage black populations. Municipalities farthest away from disadvantage neighborhoods had the lowest violent crime rates, gang presence, and percentage black populations but experienced marked increases in minority populations between 2000 and 2010. While this small group of municipalities is not representative of the entire state, relationships between demographic characteristics and crime and gang presence in municipalities can be investigated statewide through the use of statistical analysis. In the next chapter, the results of regression analyses are presented.

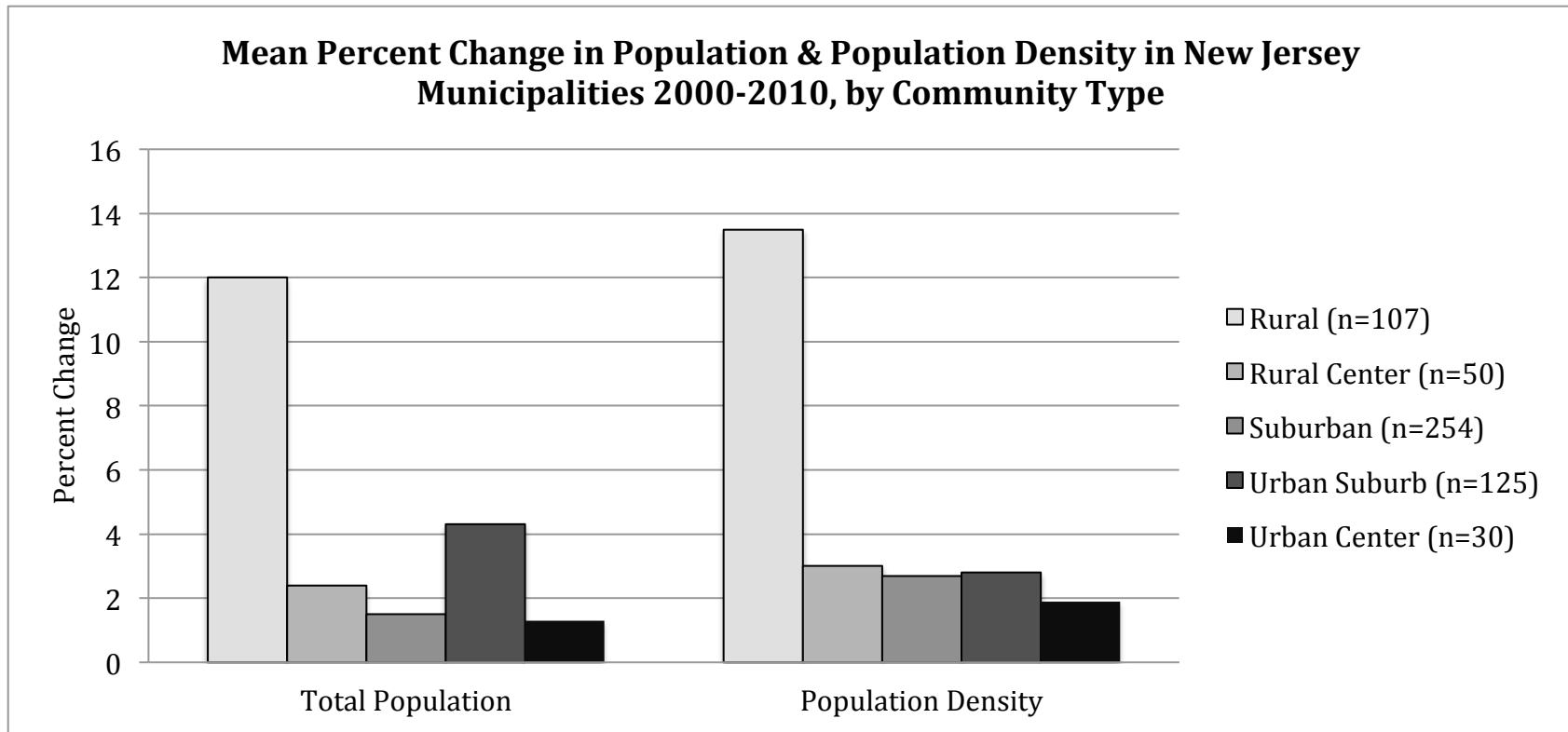
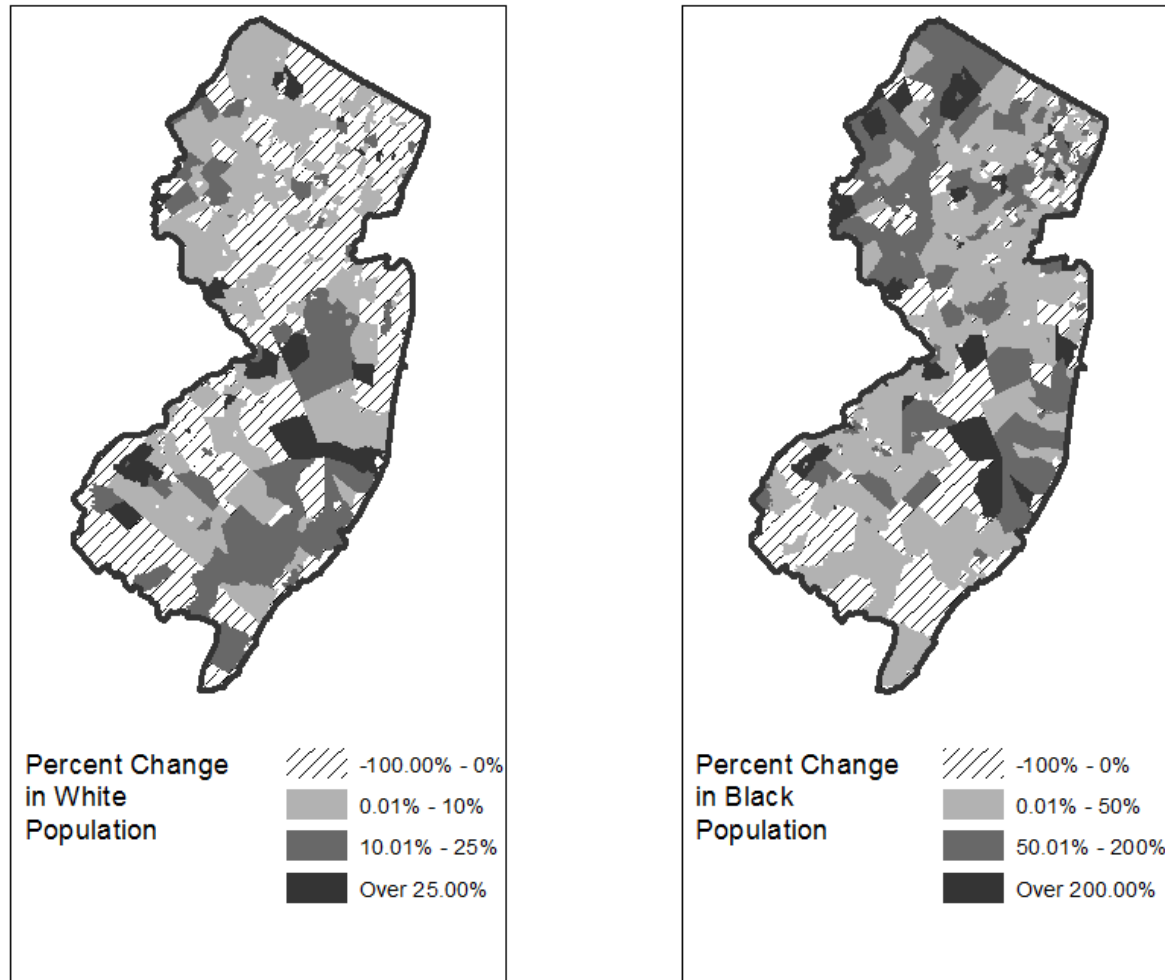


Figure 4.35 Mean percent change in population and population density in New Jersey municipalities from 2000 to 2010 by community type.

Change in White and Black Populations in New Jersey, 2000-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles; U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2006-2010 Summary File

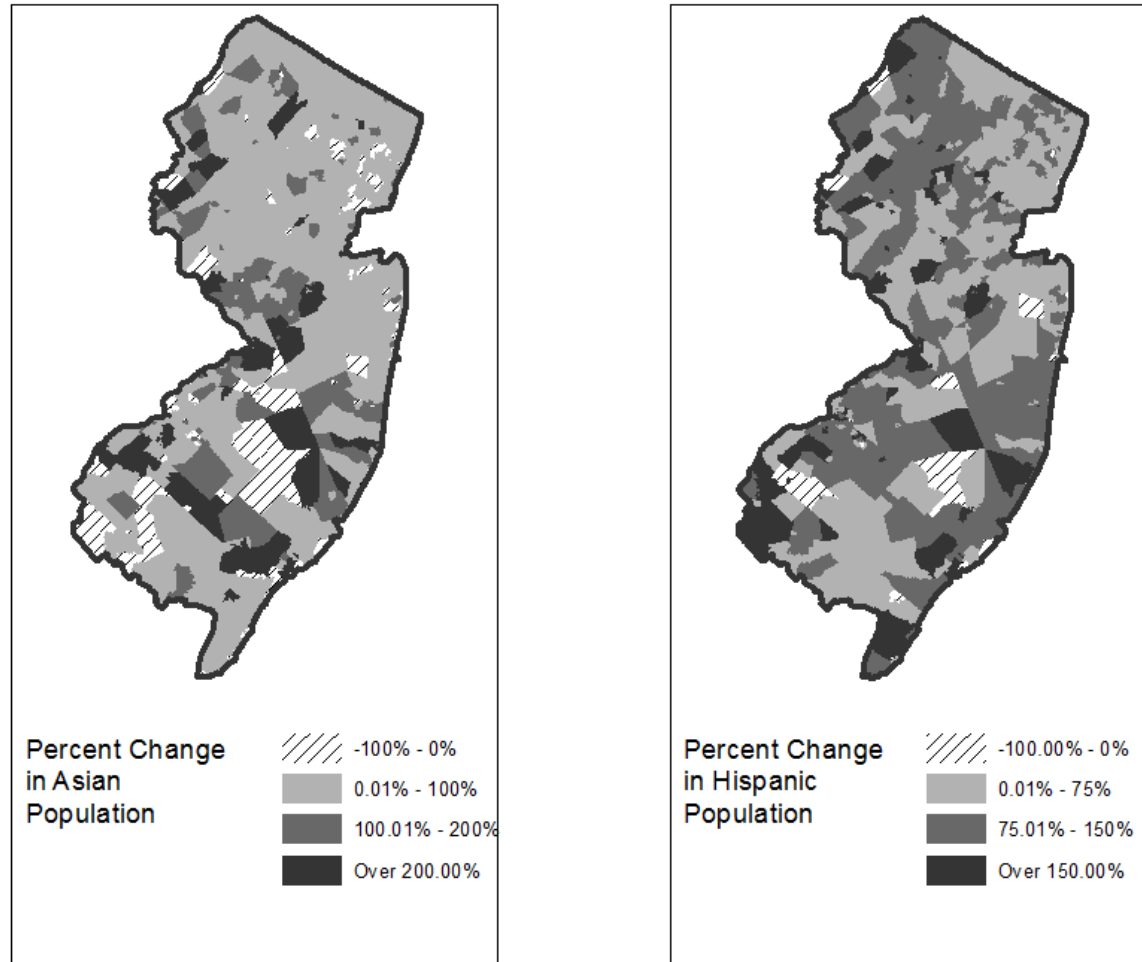


0 25 50 100 Miles

Map Created by Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.36 Percent change in white and black populations in New Jersey municipalities, 2000-2010.

Change in Asian and Hispanic or Latino Populations in New Jersey, 2000-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles; U.S. Census Bureau Census 2000, American Community Survey (ACS) 2008-2010 Summary File



0 25 50 100 Miles

Map Created by Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.37 Percent change in Asian and Hispanic or Latino populations in New Jersey municipalities, 2000-2010.

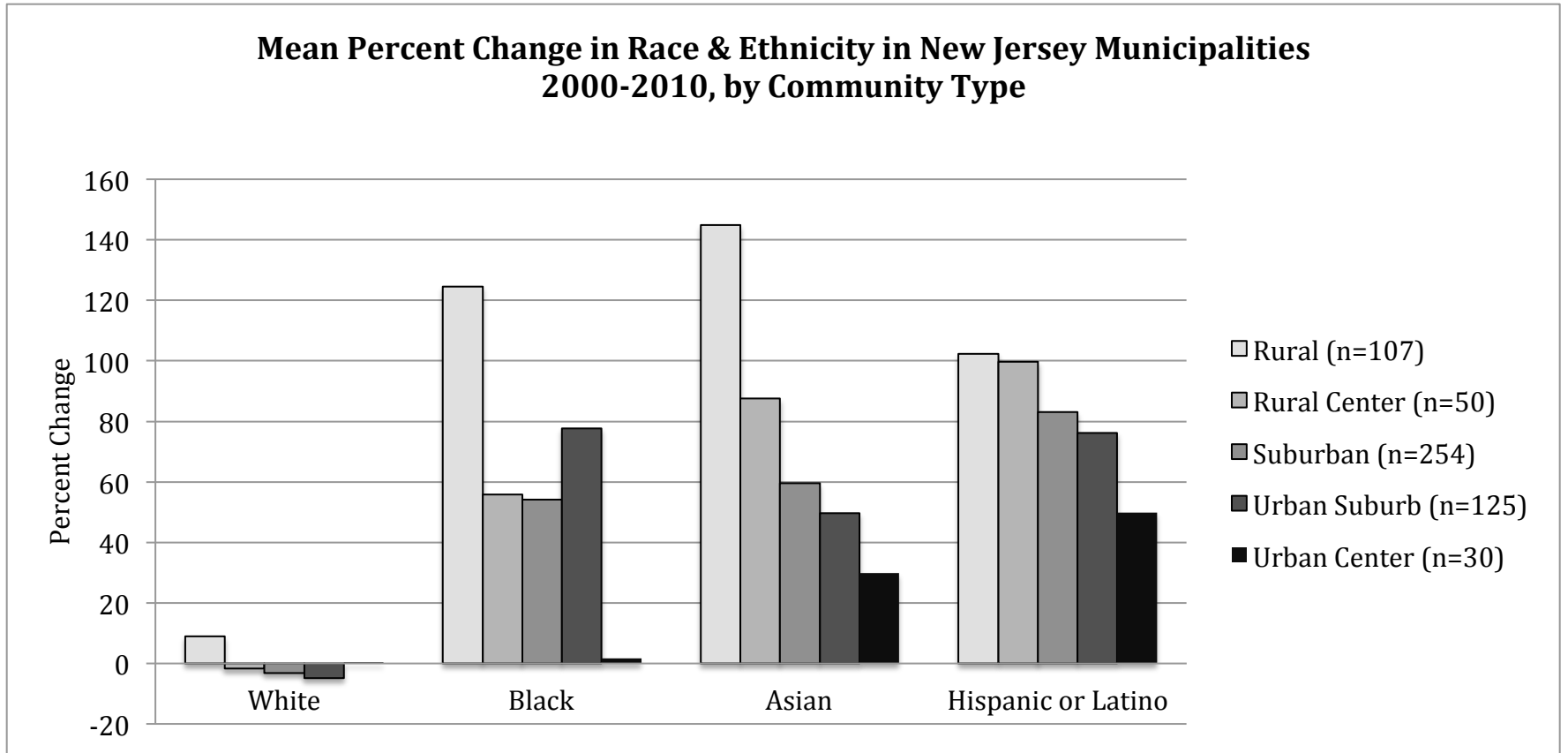
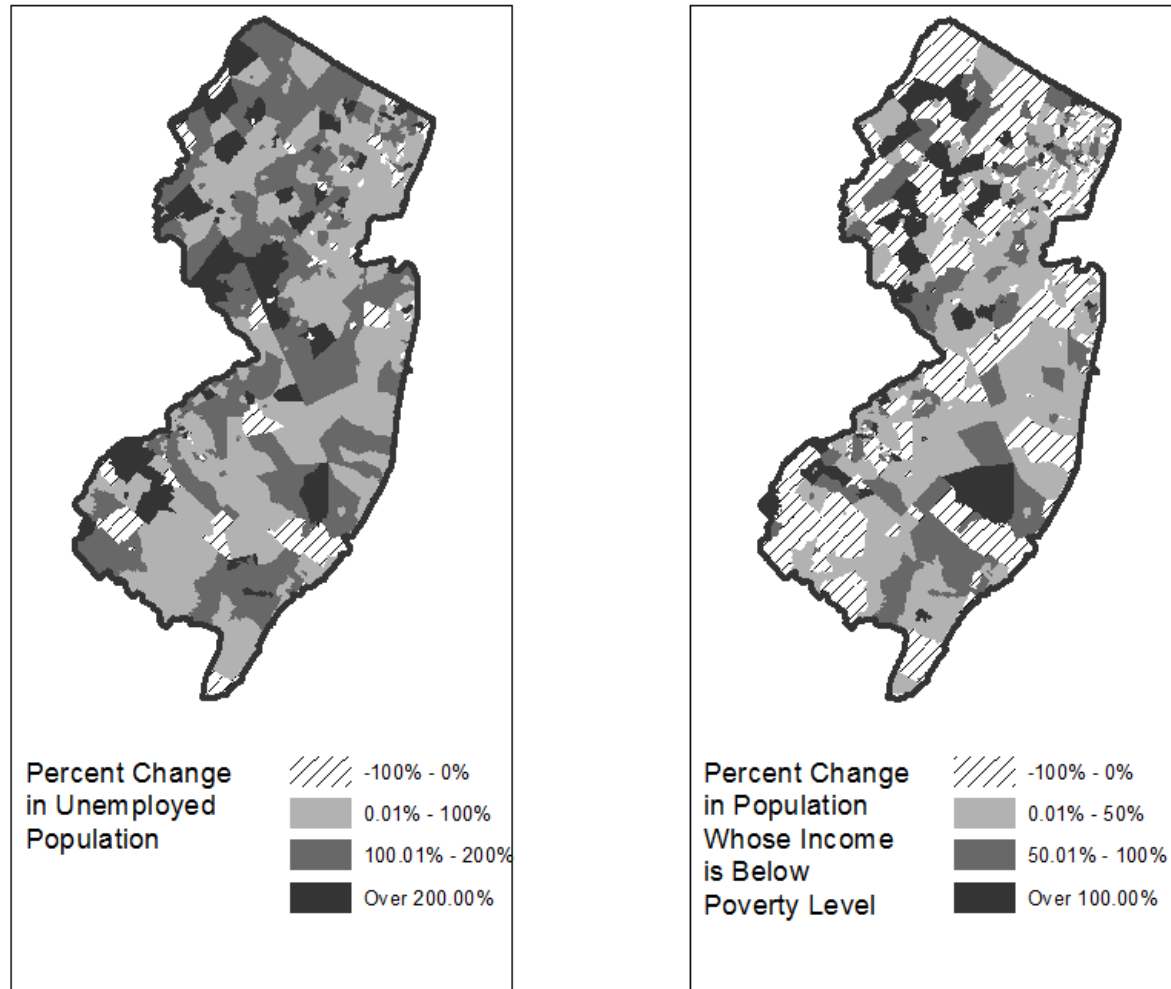


Figure 4.38 Mean percent change in race and ethnicity in New Jersey municipalities from 2000 to 2010 by community type.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, American Community Survey 5-Year Summary File 2006-2010.

Change in Unemployment and Poverty in New Jersey, 2000-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles; U.S. Census Bureau Census 2000, American Community Survey (ACS) 2006-2010 Summary File

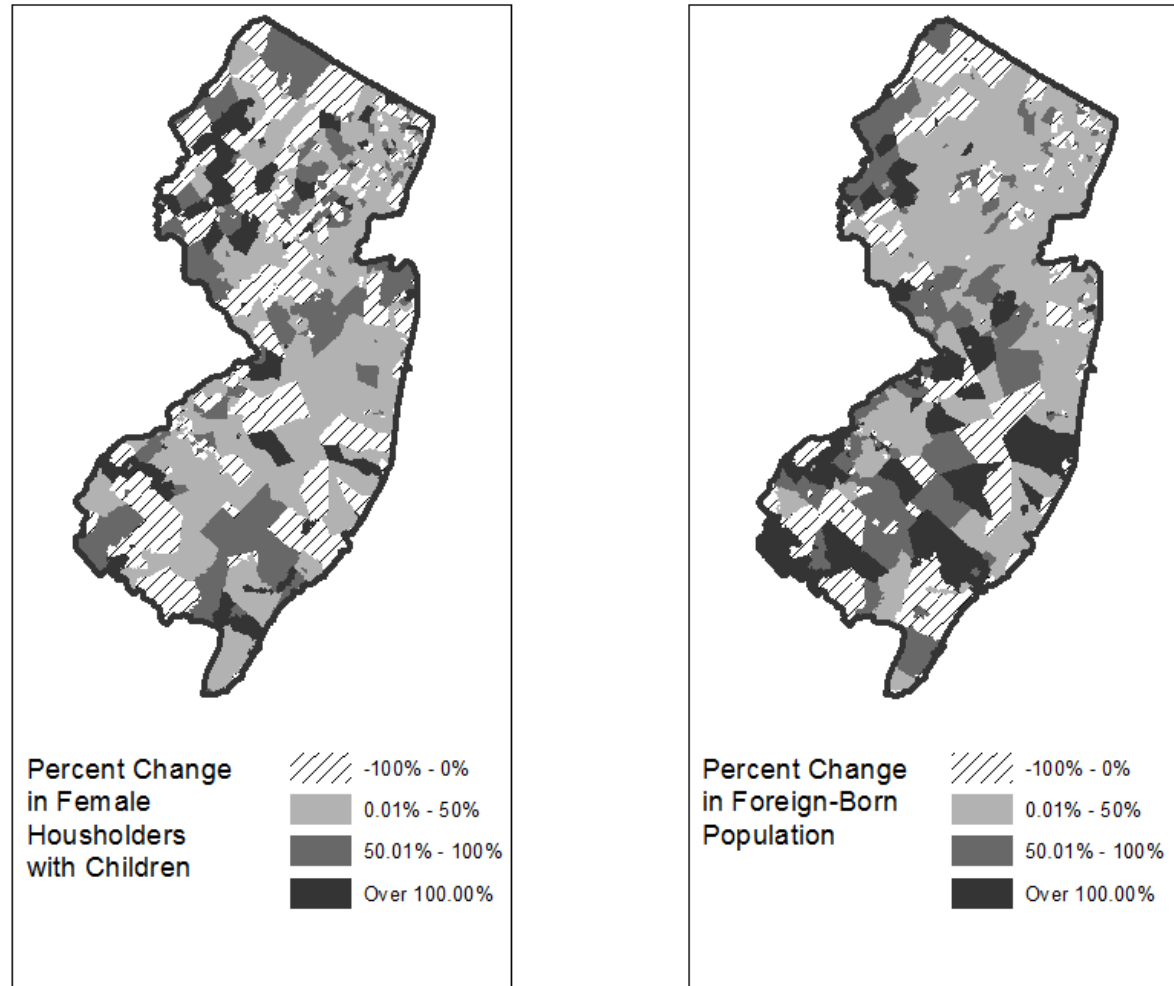


0 25 50 100 Miles

Map Created by Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.39 Percent change in unemployment and population whose income is below poverty level in New Jersey municipalities, 2000-2010.

Change in Female Householders with Children and Foreign-Born Population in New Jersey, 2000-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Tigerline Shapefiles; U.S. Census Bureau Census 2000, American Community Survey (ACS) 2006-2010 Summary File



0 25 50 100
Miles

Map Created by
Brian Engelmann

Figure 4.40 Percent change in female householders with children and foreign-born population in New Jersey municipalities, 2000-2010.

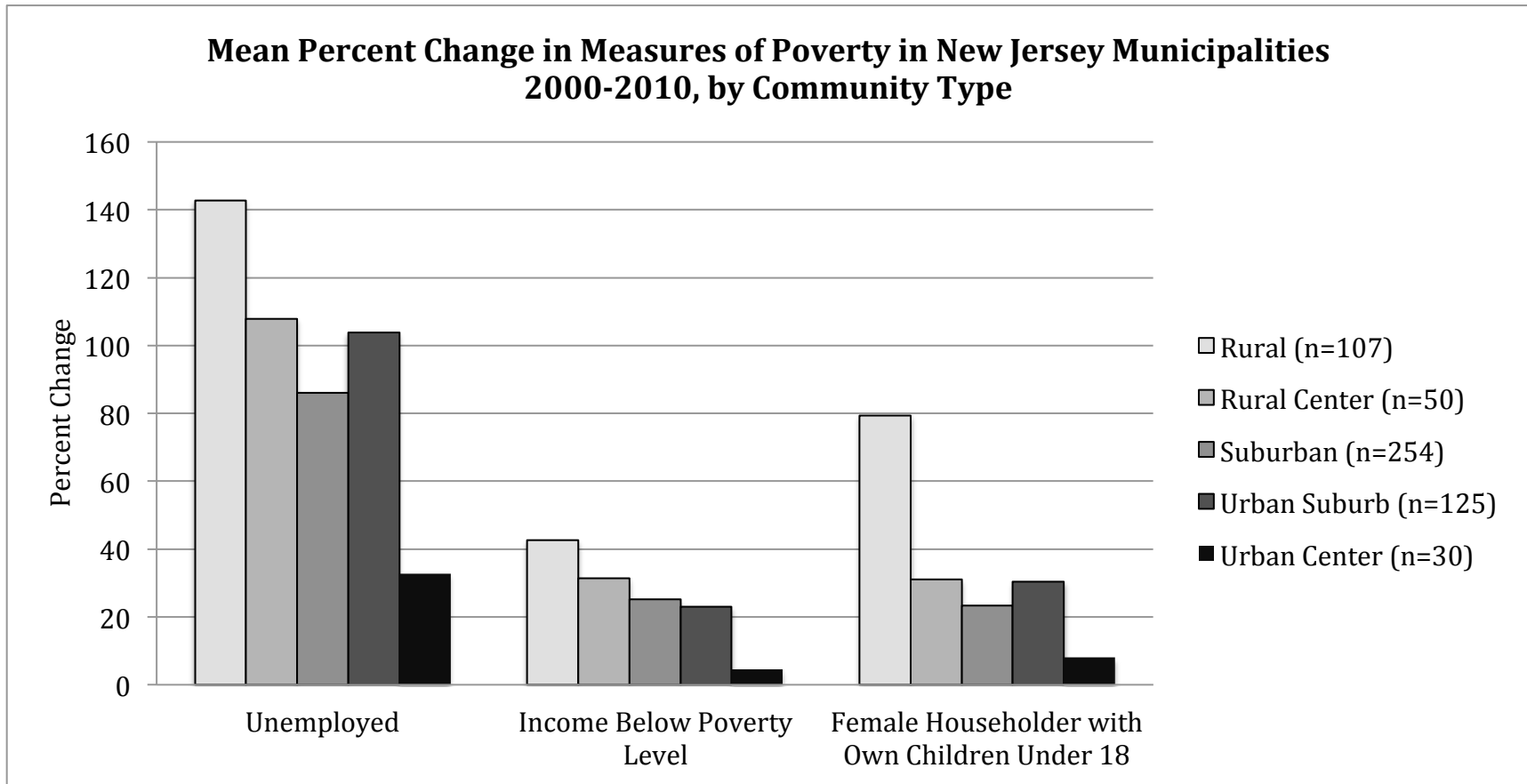


Figure 4.41 Mean percent change in race and ethnicity in New Jersey municipalities from 2000 to 2010 by community type.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, American Community Survey 5-Year Summary File 2006-2010.

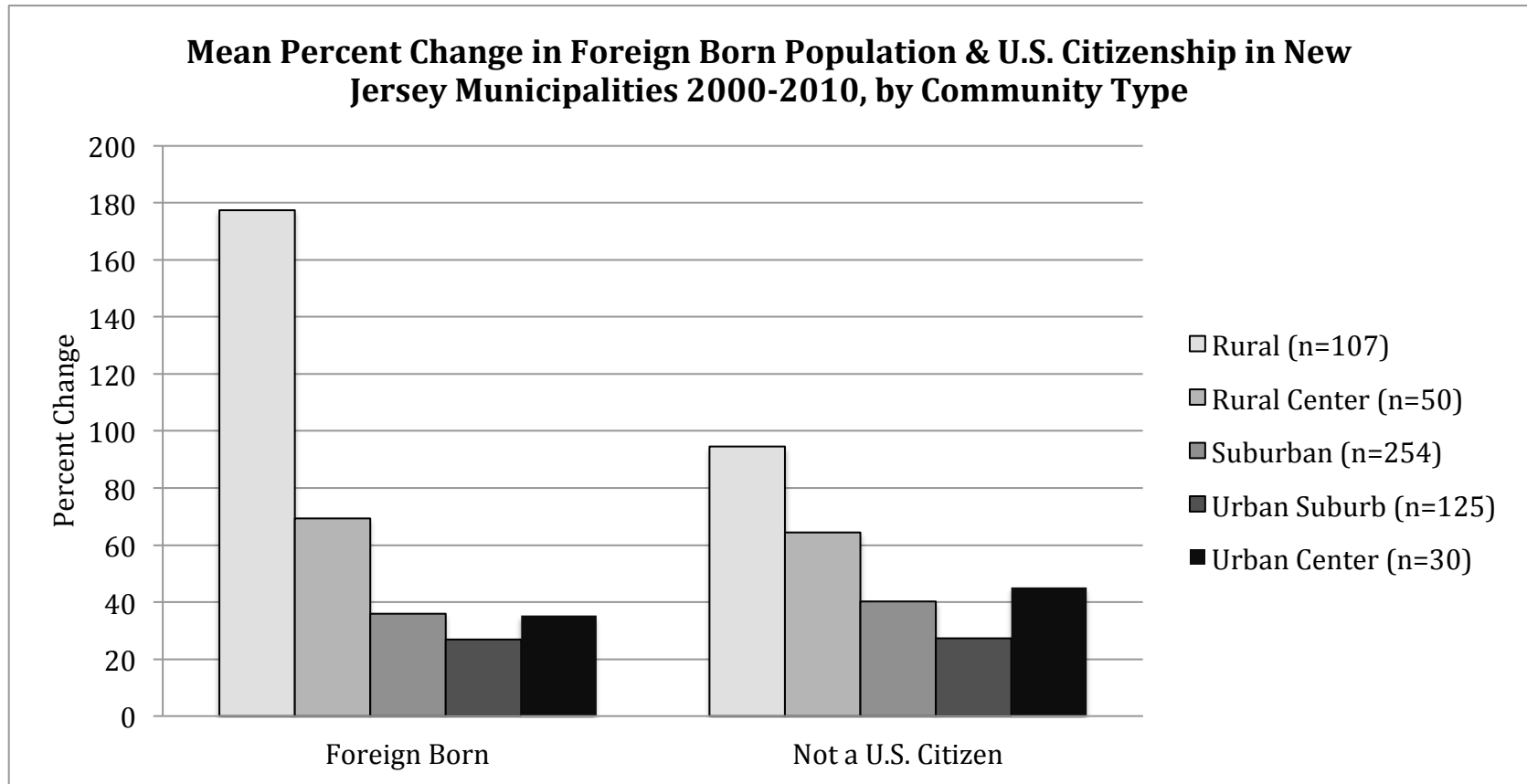


Figure 4.42 Mean percent change in foreign-born population and those who are not a U.S. citizen in New Jersey municipalities from 2000 to 2010 by community type.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, American Community Survey 5-Year Summary File 2006-2010.

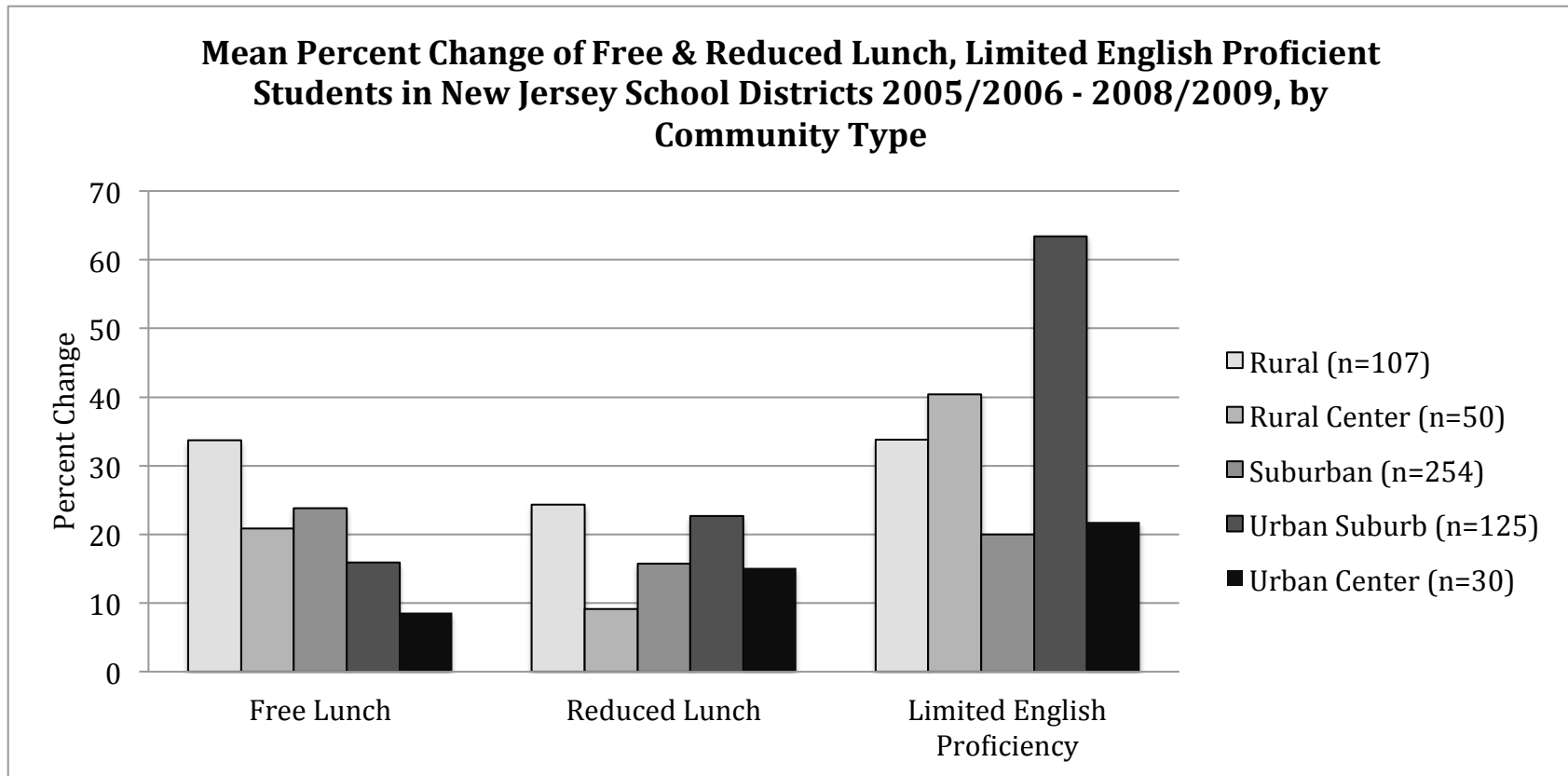


Figure 4.43 Mean percent change in students with free lunch, reduced lunch, and limited English proficiency in New Jersey municipality schools from 2005/2006 school year to 2008/2009 school year by community type.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, American Community Survey 5-Year Summary File 2006-2010.

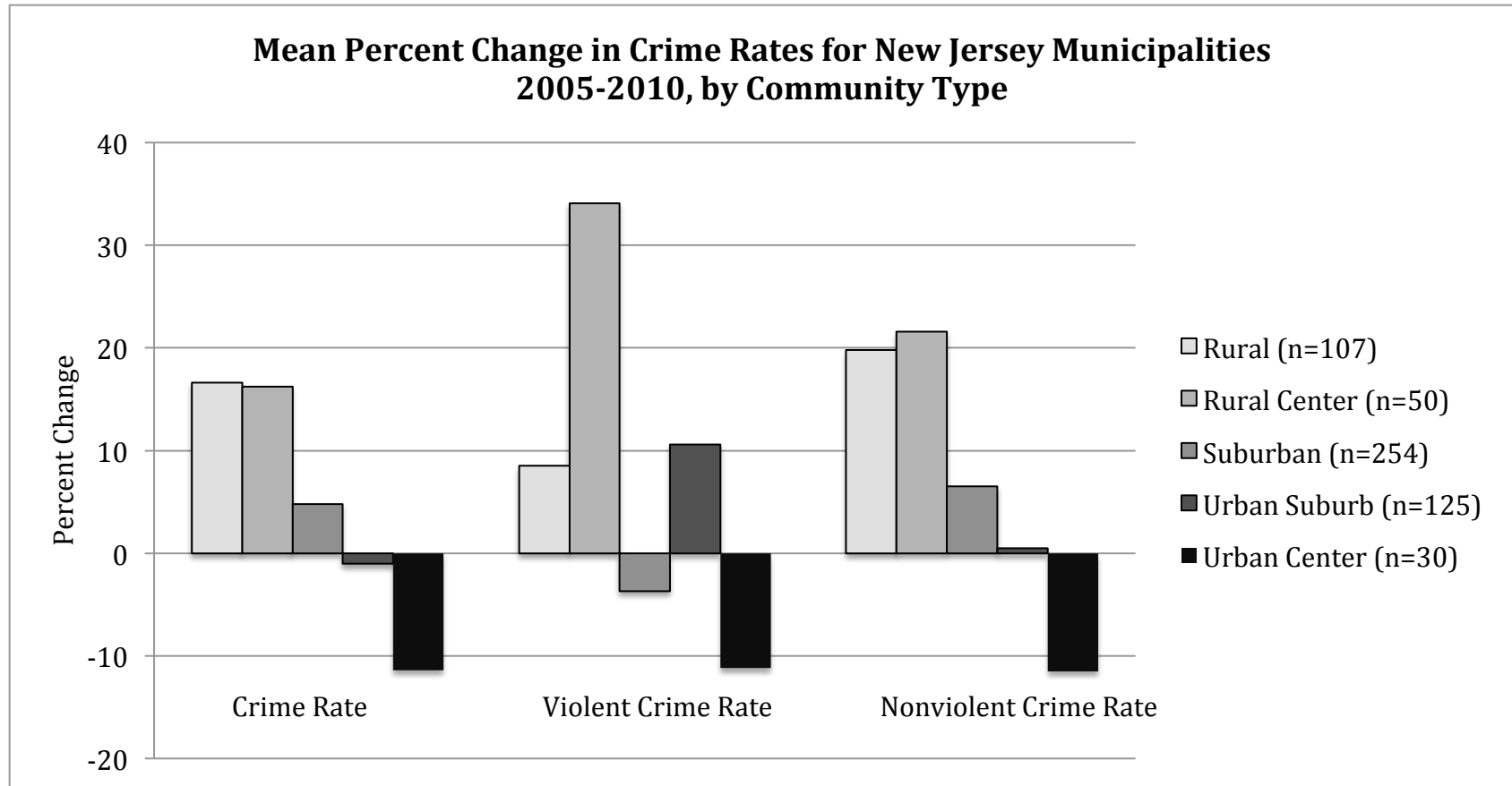


Figure 4.44 Mean percent change in average crime rates in New Jersey municipalities from 2005 to 2010 by community type.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, American Community Survey 5-Year Summary File 2006-2010.

Table 4.4 Comparisons of Demographic, Socioeconomic, Crime, and Gang Presence Characteristics Across Seven Municipalities in Essex County, New Jersey

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Newark	East Orange	Irvington	South Orange	West Orange	Millburn	Livingston
Community Type	Urban Center	Urban Center	Urban Suburb	Urban Suburb	Suburb	Suburb	Suburb
Total Population	277,140	64,270	53,926	16,198	46,207	20,149	29,366
Percent Change in Total Population, 2000 – 2006/2010	1.31	-7.95	-11.15	-4.52	2.81	1.94	7.21
Percent Black Population	52.40	88.50	85.40	28.70	26.60	1.60	2.30
Percent Change in Black Population, 2000 – 2006/2010	-.80	-8.93	-7.08	-12.56	56.52	51.61	102.13
Percent of Population Below Poverty Level	25.00	21.40	16.80	7.80	7.10	1.90	2.30
Percent Change in Population Below Poverty Level, 2000 – 2006/2010	-11.79	3.59	-12.15	42.73	28.04	30.90	38.75
Percent of Population Who is Foreign-Born	26.00	22.5	28.9	15.00	25.70	18.40	21.20
Percent Change in Foreign-Born Population, 2000 – 2006/2010	8.18	14.66	8.10	-15.44	2.45	26.70	18.26
Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunches	66.99	68.59	66.02	17.04	27.83	.75	.78
Average Violent Crime Rate (Per 1,000 People), 2005-2010	10.04	9.42	20.54	3.45	1.97	.96	.69
Gang Presence in the Municipality, 2010	High	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	None	None

Note: The numbers above the municipality names correspond with a map in Figure 4.45 on the following page.

Source: U.S. Census 2000; U.S. Census 2006-2010 ACS Summary File; New Jersey Uniform Crime Reporting Unit; New Jersey State Police Gang Survey 2010; New Jersey Department of Education

Sample Municipalities in Essex County Used for Data Comparison in Table 4.4

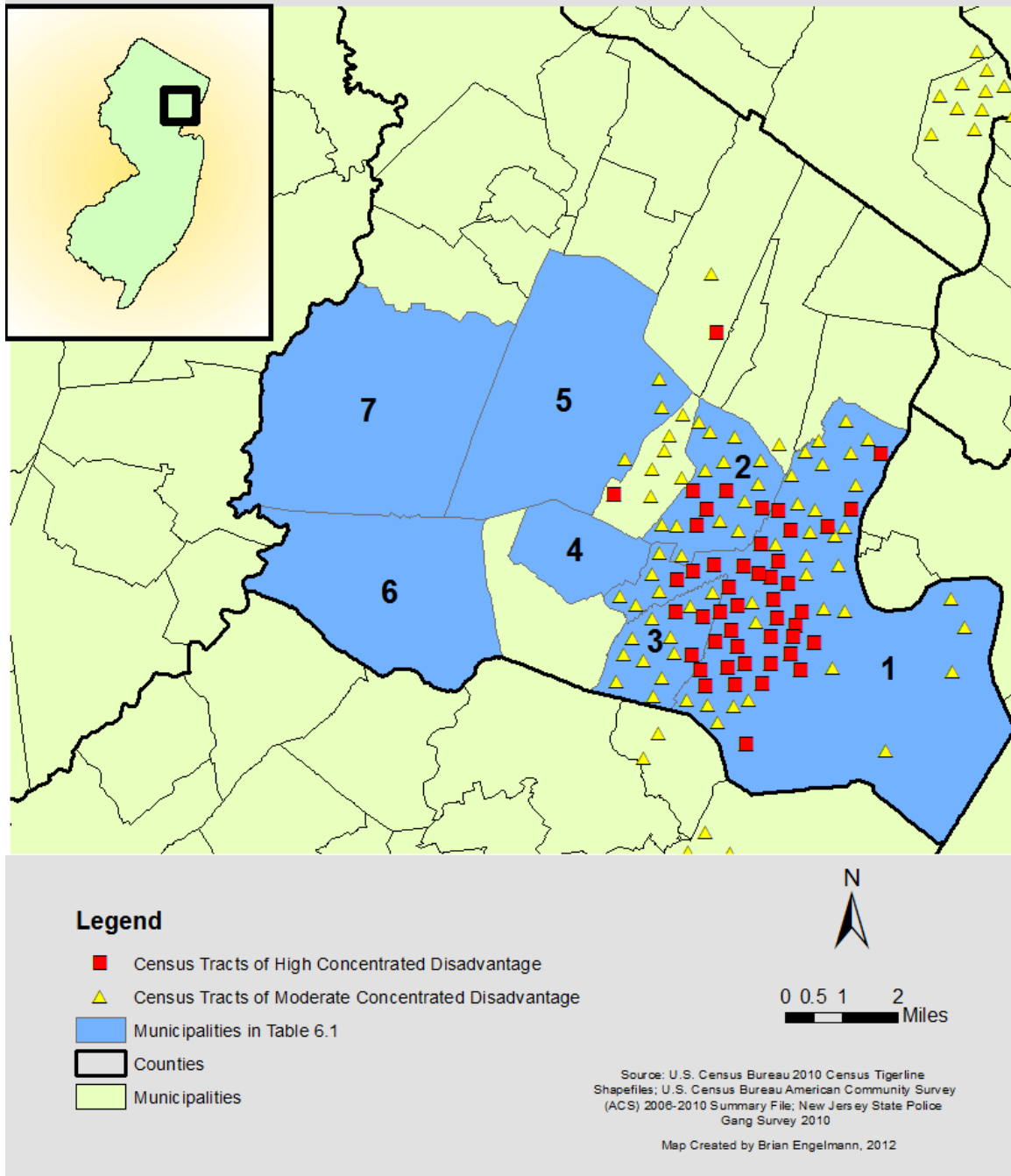


Figure 4.45 The municipalities sampled (in blue) in Essex County for comparisons between demographic, socioeconomic, crime, and gang presence characteristics. The numbers match with the municipality names in Table 4.4.

4.6 The Influence of Proximity and Community Composition

The results of the regression analyses are presented in Tables 4.5 through 4.11 on pages 163-169. Tables 4.5 through 4.8 present the results of logistic regression procedures that measured relationships of the independent variables (proximity to disadvantage, demographics, socioeconomics, housing characteristics, and school characteristics) to gang presence and severity of gang presence in municipalities and municipality schools. Tables 4.9 through 4.11 present the results of multiple regression procedures that measured relationships of the independent variables to average crime rate, violent crime rate, and total incidents of violence in municipality schools.

In Table 4.5, the results of binary logistic regression procedures suggest that, among the demographic variables included in Model 1, percent black population and percent Hispanic or Latino population are significant ($p < .050$) predictors of gang presence in municipalities. In Model 2 socioeconomic characteristics are added and all race and ethnicity variables, as well as poverty, show significant effects on gang presence in municipalities. In Model 3 housing characteristics were added as independent variables; percent Asian population loses its significance while residential transiency (percent who moved to the municipality in 2000 or later) becomes the most significant predictor of gang presence in municipalities. In the last model, which adds school characteristics, two municipality variables are significant predictors (poverty and vacant housing units), while school enrollment in municipalities and students receiving free lunch are the strongest predictors. Spatial proximity to disadvantage is not a significant predictor of gang presence in municipalities in any of the models.

Table 4.6 presents the results of binary logistic regression procedures that investigated predictors of gang presence in municipality schools. In Models 1, 2, and 3, percent black population and percent Hispanic or Latino population are significant ($p < .050$) predictors of gang presence and in Models 2 and 3 poverty is a significant but weaker predictor. In Model 4 percent black population retains its significance and the added school characteristics of average total enrollment and students receiving free lunch become significant predictors of gang presence in municipality schools. Municipality poverty and percent Hispanic or Latino population lose their significance altogether (as compared to Models 1, 2, and 3). Since race and ethnicity in municipalities are strongly correlated with race and ethnicity in municipality schools, it is likely that, for example, in Model 4, percent black population in municipality schools would also be a significant predictor of gang presence in municipality schools. Spatial proximity to disadvantage is not a significant predictor of gang presence in municipality schools in any of the models.

Table 4.7 displays the results of logistic regression procedures that investigated predictors of severity of gang presence in municipalities (SGPM). The sample size is 272 because only those municipalities that had a gang presence in 2010 (about 49 percent) are included. In Models 1 and 2, percent black population and percent Hispanic or Latino population are significant ($p < .050$) predictors of SGPM and in Model 2 poverty is also significant. In Model 3, when housing characteristics are added, percent black population and poverty remain significant and percent Hispanic or Latino population loses its significance, compared to Models 1 and 2. When school characteristics are added in Model 4, poverty loses significance, percent black population remains significant, and proximity to disadvantage, average school district enrollment, percent of student

receiving free lunch, percent vacant housing, and proximity to disadvantage become significant predictors of SGPM, as compared to Models 1, 2, and 3.

Table 4.8 presents the results of logistic regressions that explored predictors of severity of gang presence in municipality schools (SGPMS). The sample size is 127 because only the municipalities with a gang presence in their schools were included in the analysis. Among all the models, there is only one significant predictor of SGPMS: percent Hispanic or Latino population in Model 1. This may be because of the way in which the SGPMS index was created; not only was the data entirely different for gang presence in schools than gang presence in municipalities, there was not nearly as much data available to create the SGPMS index as there was for the SGPM index. There were also far fewer municipalities with gang presence in schools than in towns.

Table 4.9 displays the results of multiple regressions that investigated the predictors of average crime rate in municipalities. Many variables are significant ($p < .050$) predictors in the models, the strongest of which is percent vacant housing units. In Models 3 and 4, one standard deviation increase in percent vacant housing units is estimated to cause roughly a .516 standard deviation unit increase in the average crime rate, which a substantial relationship ($\beta = .516$). Percent unemployed and those in poverty are significant predictors of average violent crime rate in Models 2 through 4. Percent black population is a significant predictor in all the models. In Models 3 and 4, proximity to disadvantage becomes statistically significant ($p < .0001$) and the standardized coefficient is negative in both models ($\beta = -0.162$ in Model 3 and $\beta = -0.150$ in Model 4), indicating that one standard deviation increase in the proximity to disadvantage variable (further distance and thus increased number of miles) is linked to a 0.162 (Model 3) and a

0.150 (Model 4) standard deviation unit decrease in average crime rate. In other words, there is a chance that the closer a municipality is to a highly disadvantaged neighborhood, the increased likelihood of higher crime rate in that municipality. Lastly, in Models 2 and 4, an increase in percent Hispanic or Latino residents indicates a decrease in average violent crime rate, a relationship of which is discussed in a later chapter.

Table 4.10 shows the predictors of average violent crime rate in municipalities. Like average crime rate, several variables are significant predictors of average violent crime rate in two or more of the regression models; proximity to disadvantage, percent black population, percent of population under 18, poverty level, percent unemployed, and percent vacant housing units ($p < 0.050$). In the last model average school district enrollment and percent of students receiving free lunch are also significant. The strongest predictor variables, however, are percent black population ($\beta = 0.339$ in Model 3) and poverty (percent whose income is below poverty level) ($\beta = 0.431$ in Model 3). Percent of students in the municipality receiving free lunch is also one of the stronger predictors ($\beta = 0.234$) of violent crime rate. In Models 2 through 4, proximity to disadvantage is a significant predictor of average violent crime rate in municipalities (β is between 0.000 and -0.1000). In these models, the closer a municipality is to a disadvantaged neighborhood, the more likely it is to experience an increase in violent crime rate.

The last multiple regression procedure investigated predictors of average total incidents of violence per 1,000 students in municipality schools (results displayed in Table 4.11). This is the only set of regression models where proximity to disadvantage is statistically significant in all models. Also, few additional predictor variables are significant. In Model 2 proximity to disadvantage is the only statistically significant

predictor of school violence and in Model 3, it is also significant along with residential transiency. In the last model when school characteristics are added, percent of students receiving free lunch becomes a more powerful predictor of the rate of violence in schools than proximity to disadvantage. Percent Hispanic or Latino becomes a significant predictor and school district enrollment is also significant in Model 4.

Overall, counter to the researcher's expectation, proximity of municipalities to disadvantaged neighborhoods is not a significant predictor of gang presence or severity of gang presence in municipalities or in municipality schools in almost all of the models. Proximity to disadvantage is only a significant predictor of SGPM in Model 4. However, proximity to disadvantage is a significant predictor of average crime rate and average violent crime rate in municipalities, as well as rate of school district violence. When significant, however, proximity to disadvantage is almost always the weaker predictor among independent variables in any given regression model. In most of the regression models neighborhood characteristics such as racial and ethnic composition, poverty, vacant housing units, and even students receiving free lunch show higher statistical significance and stronger standardized coefficients than proximity to disadvantage, especially with regard to crime rate and violent crime rate.

In the logistic regressions that investigate predictors of gang presence and severity of gang presence, racial and ethnic composition of the community, poverty, and vacant housing units are the most significant predictors. In Model 4, when school characteristics are added, school enrollment and students receiving free lunch are also statistically significant in all instances except in relation to severity of gang presence in municipality schools. The logistic regression analyses of gang presence in municipality schools

produced only one statistically significant relationship, which was in Model 1. As stated earlier, this may be due to the low sample size and different methods of constructing the SGPMS as compared to the SGPM.

Last, there are very strong relationships between proximity to disadvantage and average total incidents of violence per 1,000 students in municipality schools in all models. In two out of the four models, proximity to disadvantage is the most significant predictor variable. In the last model, percentage of students receiving free lunch is more statistically powerful and has a stronger standardized coefficient than proximity to disadvantage. Regarding Model 4, however, it is important to understand how proximity to disadvantage influences school violence. According to the model, for every one standard deviation increase in proximity to disadvantage (which means larger distance values and thus further away from disadvantaged neighborhoods), there is a 0.133 standard deviation unit decrease in average incidents in schools per 1,000 students. The further away from disadvantaged areas, the more likely a municipality is to have lower rates of school violence.

Another interesting relationship was demonstrated between average student enrollment (divided by 1,000 for statistical analysis) and rate of school violence in municipality schools. The rate of school violence seems to fall as enrollment increases. However, if total average incidents of violence in municipality schools were to replace total average incidents of violence in municipality schools per 1,000 students, the relationship is statistically significant ($p < .0001$) and the standardized coefficient is very large at 0.738. This relationship is discussed further in a later chapter.

Table 4.5 Binary Logistic Regression Models: Gang Presence in Municipalities (1= Yes, 0 = No), n = 559

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.
Proximity to Disadvantage	1.005	.987 - 1.023	0.603	1.000	.982 - 1.019	0.978	0.998	.979 - 1.018	0.842	1.013	.992 - 1.034	0.226
Percent Black Population	1.068	1.040 - 1.096	<.0001	1.050	1.020 - 1.080	0.001	1.038	1.009 - 1.067	0.009	1.005	.976 - 1.036	0.731
Percent Asian Population	1.019	.993 - 1.046	0.150	1.028	1.000 - 1.057	0.049	1.016	.987 - 1.046	0.295	1.000	.967 - 1.034	0.994
Percent Hispanic or Latino Population	1.073	1.046 - 1.101	<.0001	1.054	1.026 - 1.084	0.000	1.040	1.012 - 1.070	0.006	1.011	.980 - 1.042	0.496
Percent of Population Under 18	1.003	.963 - 1.044	0.888	1.026	.979 - 1.075	0.285	1.015	.962 - 1.072	0.587	0.991	.935 - 1.051	0.759
Percent Whose Income is Below Poverty Level				1.105	1.033 - 1.182	0.004	1.106	1.031 - 1.185	0.005	1.080	1.001 - 1.164	0.046
Percent Unemployed				1.042	.956 - 1.135	0.348	1.053	.965 - 1.150	0.247	0.979	.888 - 1.079	0.670
Percent Female Householders with Children				0.984	.900 - 1.076	0.727	0.967	.882 - 1.060	0.473	0.941	.850 - 1.041	0.237
Percent Who Moved to Municipality in 2000 or Later							1.038	1.012 - 1.065	0.004	1.023	.996 - 1.051	0.092
Percent Vacant Housing Units							0.982	.962 - 1.002	0.080	0.972	.950 - 0.995	0.018
Average Student Enrollment in Municipality, 2005-09										1.438	1.268 - 1.632	<.0001
Percent of Students in Municipality Receiving Free Lunch										1.081	1.049 - 1.114	<.0001

Note: Bold values indicate $p < .050$. OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval, Sig. = Significance.

Table 4.6 Binary Logistic Regression Models: Gang Presence in Municipality Schools (1= Yes, 0 = No), n = 559

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.
Proximity to Disadvantage	0.978	.951 - 1.007	0.132	0.973	.945 - 1.002	0.071	0.973	.944 - 1.003	0.079	0.990	.958 - 1.024	0.565
Percent Black Population	1.082	1.056 - 1.108	<.0001	1.082	1.052 - 1.113	<.0001	1.077	1.047 - 1.108	<.0001	1.060	1.028 - 1.092	0.000
Percent Asian Population	1.024	.994 - 1.055	0.119	1.025	.994 - 1.056	0.112	1.017	.985 - 1.050	0.298	0.983	.942 - 1.025	0.412
Percent Hispanic or Latino Population	1.044	1.026 - 1.062	<.0001	1.038	1.017 - 1.060	0.000	1.032	1.010 - 1.055	0.004	1.012	.984 - 1.041	0.395
Percent of Population Under 18	1.002	.949 - 1.058	0.940	1.024	.966 - 1.085	0.429	1.018	.956 - 1.084	0.577	0.965	.896 - 1.039	0.344
Percent Whose Income is Below Poverty Level				1.073	1.007 - 1.143	0.030	1.077	1.007 - 1.151	0.030	1.068	.985 - 1.159	0.113
Percent Unemployed				1.003	.906 - 1.110	0.955	1.012	.912 - 1.123	0.824	0.978	.868 - 1.103	0.719
Percent Female Householders with Children				0.917	.825 - 1.019	0.109	0.908	.815 - 1.012	0.081	0.897	.793 - 1.014	0.083
Percent Who Moved to Municipality in 2000 or Later							1.019	.988 - 1.051	0.234	1.002	.966 - 1.039	0.922
Percent Vacant Housing Units							0.982	.951 - 1.015	0.277	0.970	.933 - 1.008	0.119
Average Student Enrollment in Municipality, 2005-09										1.509	1.337 - 1.703	<.0001
Percent of Students in Municipality Receiving Free Lunch										1.035	1.005 - 1.066	0.021

Note: Bold values indicate $p < .050$. OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval, Sig. = Significance.

Table 4.7 Logistic Regression Models: Severity of Gang Presence in Municipalities (1=Low, 2=Moderate, 3=High), n = 272

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.
Proximity to Disadvantage	1.021	.994 - 1.047	0.123	1.017	.991 - 1.045	0.202	1.014	.986 - 1.043	0.326	1.032	1.002 - 1.064	0.036
Percent Black Population	1.104	1.072 - 1.136	<.0001	1.092	1.058 - 1.129	<.0001	1.085	1.051 - 1.121	<.0001	1.064	1.029 - 1.101	0.000
Percent Asian Population	1.001	.968 - 1.034	0.971	1.013	.979 - 1.048	0.461	1.003	.967 - 1.039	0.891	0.992	.953 - 1.032	0.679
Percent Hispanic or Latino Population	1.043	1.025 - 1.061	<.0001	1.031	1.010 - 1.052	0.004	1.022	1.000 - 1.045	0.052	0.996	.970 - 1.022	0.755
Percent of Population Under 18	1.015	.957 - 1.077	0.619	1.042	.975 - 1.114	0.227	1.035	.959 - 1.116	0.375	1.026	.945 - 1.115	0.536
Percent Whose Income is Below Poverty Level				1.088	1.015 - 1.167	0.018	1.105	1.024 - 1.192	0.010	1.063	.976 - 1.157	0.159
Percent Unemployed				1.086	.973 - 1.213	0.141	1.101	.985 - 1.231	0.089	1.029	.913 - 1.159	0.644
Percent Female Householders with Children				0.951	.848 - 1.068	0.396	0.931	.828 - 1.047	0.233	0.915	.808 - 1.036	0.161
Percent Who Moved to Municipality in 2000 or Later							1.028	.992 - 1.065	0.129	1.018	.981 - 1.057	0.336
Percent Vacant Housing Units							0.966	.932 - 1.001	0.058	0.948	.910 - 0.987	0.009
Average Student Enrollment in Municipality, 2005-09										1.254	1.139 - 1.382	<.0001
Percent of Students in Municipality Receiving Free Lunch										1.063	1.032 - 1.096	<.0001

Note: Bold values indicate $p < .050$. OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval, Sig. = Significance. Proportional Odds Assumption: Model 1, 0.6788; Model 2, 0.0014; Model 3, 0.0021; Model 4, 0.0338.

Table 4.8 Logistic Regression Models: Severity of Gang Presence in Municipality Schools (1=Low, 2=Moderate, 3=High), n = 127

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.	OR	CI	Sig.
Proximity to Disadvantage	0.974	.931 - 1.019	0.246	0.969	.925 - 1.014	0.176	0.977	.930 - 1.027	0.361	0.975	.928 - 1.026	0.332
Percent Black Population	1.017	.996 - 1.039	0.112	1.019	.991 - 1.048	0.188	1.021	.992 - 1.050	0.167	1.012	.981 - 1.043	0.462
Percent Asian Population	0.992	.949 - 1.036	0.709	0.992	.948 - 1.039	0.742	0.993	.947 - 1.041	0.757	1.003	.955 - 1.054	0.902
Percent Hispanic or Latino Population	1.025	1.005 - 1.046	0.015	1.020	.994 - 1.047	0.133	1.021	.992 - 1.050	0.154	1.006	.975 - 1.039	0.693
Percent of Population Under 18	0.994	.913 - 1.083	0.893	1.010	.922 - 1.106	0.837	0.982	.890 - 1.083	0.714	0.990	.896 - 1.093	0.838
Percent Whose Income is Below Poverty Level				1.073	.980 - 1.176	0.129	1.107	1.000 - 1.225	0.050	1.057	.943 - 1.186	0.342
Percent Unemployed				0.995	.855 - 1.157	0.944	0.993	.850 - 1.162	0.934	0.970	.828 - 1.137	0.707
Percent Female Householders with Children				0.904	.766 - 1.066	0.230	0.910	.769 - 1.076	0.271	0.926	.780 - 1.099	0.381
Percent Who Moved to Municipality in 2000 or Later							0.984	.932 - 1.040	0.570	0.984	.931 - 1.04	0.566
Percent Vacant Housing Units							0.959	.907 - 1.015	0.148	0.952	.898 - 1.009	0.098
Average Student Enrollment in Municipality, 2005-09										0.981	.917 - 1.048	0.566
Percent of Students in Municipality Receiving Free Lunch										1.033	.997 - 1.071	0.072

Note: Bold values indicate $p < .050$. OR = Odds Ratio, CI = Confidence Interval, Sig. = Significance. Proportional Odds Assumption: Model 1, 0.2053; Model 2, 0.1773; Model 3, 0.1700; Model 4, 0.1781.

Table 4.9 Multiple Regression Models: Average Crime Rate in Municipalities, 2005-2010, n = 559

AV_CRMRT	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	Par. Est.	β	Sig.	Par. Est.	β	Sig.	Par. Est.	β	Sig.	Par. Est.	β	Sig.
Proximity to Disadvantage	-0.044	-0.028	0.486	-0.106	-0.068	0.065	-0.252	-0.162	<.0001	-0.234	-0.150	<.0001
Percent Black Population	0.518	0.365	<.0001	0.170	0.120	0.007	0.204	0.143	0.000	0.166	0.117	0.004
Percent Asian Population	-0.303	-0.125	0.001	-0.145	-0.060	0.093	-0.038	-0.016	0.617	-0.020	-0.008	0.800
Percent Hispanic or Latino Population	0.118	0.084	0.031	-0.166	-0.117	0.007	-0.062	-0.044	0.254	-0.126	-0.089	0.040
Percent of Population Under 18	-1.126	-0.300	<.0001	-0.972	-0.259	<.0001	-0.073	-0.020	0.583	-0.077	-0.021	0.567
Percent Whose Income is Below Poverty Level				1.037	0.332	<.0001	0.613	0.196	<.0001	0.477	0.153	0.004
Percent Unemployed				1.014	0.179	<.0001	0.879	0.155	<.0001	0.761	0.134	0.001
Percent Female Householders with Children				0.291	0.060	0.272	0.224	0.046	0.323	0.205	0.042	0.365
Percent Who Moved to Municipality in 2000 or Later							0.059	0.034	0.355	0.037	0.021	0.567
Percent Vacant Housing Units							0.662	0.521	<.0001	0.656	0.516	<.0001
Average Student Enrollment in Municipality, 2005-09										0.094	0.018	0.572
Percent of Students in Municipality Receiving Free Lunch										0.132	0.127	0.035

Note: Bold values indicate $p < .050$. Par. Est. = Parameter Estimate, β = Standardized Estimate, Sig. = Significance Level.

Table 4.10 Multiple Regression Models: Average Violent Crime Rate in Municipalities, 2005-2010, n = 559

IV	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	Par. Est.	β	Sig.	Par. Est.	β	Sig.	Par. Est.	β	Sig.	Par. Est.	β	Sig.
Proximity to Disadvantage	-0.004	-0.017	0.611	-0.015	-0.064	0.017	-0.022	-0.093	0.001	-0.016	-0.067	0.012
Percent Black Population	0.130	0.591	<.0001	0.075	0.338	<.0001	0.075	0.339	<.0001	0.062	0.284	<.0001
Percent Asian Population	-0.037	-0.100	0.001	-0.013	-0.033	0.194	-0.011	-0.028	0.282	-0.008	-0.022	0.411
Percent Hispanic or Latino Population	0.057	0.261	<.0001	0.005	0.023	0.460	0.007	0.033	0.306	-0.013	-0.058	0.101
Percent of Population Under 18	-0.012	-0.021	0.475	0.024	0.041	0.119	0.063	0.108	0.000	0.058	0.099	0.001
Percent Whose Income is Below Poverty Level				0.229	0.472	<.0001	0.209	0.431	<.0001	0.170	0.351	<.0001
Percent Unemployed				0.131	0.148	<.0001	0.126	0.143	<.0001	0.092	0.104	0.001
Percent Female Householders with Children				-0.009	-0.012	0.756	-0.015	-0.020	0.606	-0.021	-0.028	0.455
Percent Who Moved to Municipality in 2000 or Later							0.011	0.039	0.194	0.004	0.013	0.662
Percent Vacant Housing Units							0.027	0.138	<.0001	0.025	0.125	<.0001
Average Student Enrollment in Municipality, 2005-09										0.057	0.072	0.007
Percent of Students in Municipality Receiving Free Lunch										0.038	0.234	<.0001

Note: Bold values indicate $p < .050$. Par. Est. = Parameter Estimate, β = Standardized Estimate, Sig. = Significance Level.

Table 4.11 Multiple Regression Models: Average Total Incidents Per 1,000 Students in Municipality Schools, 2005-2009, n = 559

IV	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	Par. Est.	β	Sig.	Par. Est.	β	Sig.	Par. Est.	β	Sig.	Par. Est.	β	Sig.
Proximity to Disadvantage	-0.128	-0.138	0.002	-0.137	-0.149	0.001	-0.135	-0.146	0.002	-0.123	-0.133	0.004
Percent Black Population	0.130	0.155	0.001	0.048	0.058	0.293	0.028	0.033	0.549	-0.002	-0.002	0.971
Percent Asian Population	-0.101	-0.070	0.101	-0.063	-0.044	0.312	-0.111	-0.077	0.084	-0.039	-0.027	0.548
Percent Hispanic or Latino Population	0.014	0.016	0.708	-0.033	-0.039	0.460	-0.075	-0.089	0.103	-0.146	-0.173	0.005
Percent of Population Under 18	-0.069	-0.031	0.453	-0.080	-0.036	0.426	-0.155	-0.069	0.173	-0.095	-0.043	0.401
Percent Whose Income is Below Poverty Level				0.036	0.020	0.776	0.045	0.025	0.728	-0.156	-0.084	0.263
Percent Unemployed				0.314	0.093	0.081	0.338	0.100	0.059	0.160	0.047	0.381
Percent Female Householders with Children				0.280	0.097	0.146	0.242	0.084	0.209	0.228	0.079	0.227
Percent Who Moved to Municipality in 2000 or Later							0.117	0.112	0.032	0.098	0.094	0.071
Percent Vacant Housing Units							-0.074	-0.098	0.054	-0.071	-0.095	0.060
Average Student Enrollment in Municipality, 2005-09										-0.357	-0.118	0.011
Percent of Students in Municipality Receiving Free Lunch										0.197	0.321	0.000

Note: Bold values indicate $p < .050$. Par. Est. = Parameter Estimate, β = Standardized Estimate, Sig. = Significance Level.

4.6 Phase I Research Limitations

The limitations of Phase I are many-fold and include limitations of the types of data used and in the calculations behind customized rankings and indices. First of all, the entire study is ecological in nature. The problem with studies that collect and analyze data at the population group level is that they fall prey to the “ecological fallacy.” Like Shaw and McKay’s (1943) early study on social and environmental influences on delinquency in concentric zones in Chicago, there are concerns about drawing conclusions about individuals in a certain area based on analysis at the population group level. For example, Shaw and McKay (1943) found the highest levels of delinquency in the inner most zones of Chicago. However, “one cannot assume that an individual young boy growing up in Zone II would be a delinquent... One cannot make individual predictions based on group level data” (Lersch, 2007, p. 52). Drawing conclusions about individuals based on data of population groups is called the ecological fallacy.

Second, studies such as this dissertation that use secondary crime data subject themselves to the weaknesses of labeling theory. In criminology, labeling theory posits that less powerful groups are more likely to be both sought-out by law enforcement and put through the justice system. Chambliss (1973) followed a group of middle-upper class white teenagers who committed as much or more delinquency as a lower-class group of white teenagers, yet the lower-class group was harassed and arrested more by police than the wealthier group. That study and others posit that social class structure biases police activity and wealthier communities exert more influence on law enforcement (Lersch, 2007).

In addition to treating the illegal activity conducted by lower-class youth as more serious in comparison to the same activities conducted by middle-upper class youth, lower-class minorities have less power over the law. Middle- and upper-class parents, as well as police officers, tend to dismiss illegal activity by middle- and upper-class children as a simple misjudgment and will often reprimand law enforcement to treat their children's crimes as youthful mistakes. Lower-class parents, on the other hand, tend to cooperate more with police in regards to their children's clashes with the law. When police are not challenged, they in turn make more arrests and pursue more illegal activity by youth as criminal (Lersch, 2007).

The same critique applies to the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and gang presence data, which were used for this dissertation research. In any state in the U.S., police departments in middle- to upper-class communities might not arrest, prosecute, or report crime as much as their urban counterparts do. This makes official crime data sets biased because just as much crime may take place in a suburban town as in a small city yet the suburban crime is not taken as seriously by community member or police and in turn may be underreported. The same applies to gang presence data. Law enforcement in wealthier suburban towns may view possible gang activity among youth in their towns as children simply "fooling around," whereas police in a lower-class urban area are more likely to take such actions as serious gang-affiliated behavior. As such, the UCR data used in this study is subject to labeling theory because local police departments collect it.

Town officials and law enforcement agencies may also underreport crime or gang activity in order to "save face," or to maintain peoples' perceptions that the area is crime and gang-free. The researcher is not suggesting that labeling, preferential treatment, or

underreporting occurs in New Jersey towns and law enforcement agencies. These are simply possibilities that criminologists have proposed and could affect the integrity of any research project that uses official crime data.

There are some well-known disadvantages of relying on UCR data in research projects. States and the FBI do not have the same crime definitions, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to spend time recalculating crime totals based on different definitions. When in a time crunch to submit UCR data by a specific date, some agencies fail to submit their data on time and are not included in the FBI's annual crime reports. And FBI guidelines for UCR data mandate that only the most serious crimes be reported, which is called the "hierarchy rule." Such guidelines result in large amounts of underreported nonviolent or non-serious crime. Since this study analyzes UCR data at the municipality level for the state of New Jersey, such limitations must be recognized and kept in mind when drawing conclusions (Lersch, 2007).

The gang presence data from the New Jersey State Police Street Gang Survey is an electronic survey submitted to the law enforcement agency of each municipality in New Jersey. This survey may suffer from underreporting. In any situation involving sensitive information that threatens to blemish a town's reputation when made public, underreporting and data manipulation are always possible. Also, police officers and sometimes entire agencies may have not undergone professional gang training, and thus the agencies do not keep track of gangs, gang members, or gang activity in town (if there is any). In about 15 percent (86 out of 566) of municipalities in New Jersey, a law enforcement official who had never received formal training on street gang awareness and recognition responded to the survey. As a result, officials in some municipalities are

unaware of whether there is a gang presence on the streets or in the school, or they may have estimated numbers to the best of their knowledge (New Jersey State Police, 2010).

For many municipalities in the gang survey, the number of gang members per gang ends in 0 or 5, suggesting the likelihood that these are estimates and not actual documented figures. Since municipal law enforcement agencies are strongly encouraged to respond to the survey (all but one in New Jersey responded to the 2010 survey), some towns may feel forced to provide data on subjects and activities that they have no documentation or knowledge of. And, although the State Police provides an explicit definition of a street gang in the survey, each individual is likely to have his or her own definition of what constitutes a gang, which is still an ongoing debate in the criminological literature. The likelihood of inaccurate reporting, underreporting, and lack of gang training across all law enforcement agencies renders the data used for measuring gang presence and severity of gang presence in this study limited. Also, construction of gang indices was calculated by the researcher and would likely vary from one researcher to another.

Defining census tracts in New Jersey by levels of concentrated disadvantage was another calculation made by this researcher. Like the gang severity indices, there is no concrete definition of concentrated disadvantage or the variables that it consists of. While this researcher's method of defining census tracts with high and moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage is not conventional, it does provide an estimate of which census tracts are experiencing more or less intense disadvantage based on the additive classification scheme in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software. The

researcher's previous knowledge of the state of New Jersey's demographic and socioeconomic landscape aided in the definitions of these census tracts.

Using the measurement of road network distance from municipalities to the nearest moderately or highly disadvantaged census tracts also has weaknesses. Measuring road network distance from the center point of each municipality to the nearest disadvantaged census tract makes this distance value representative of the entire municipality's land area and population. However, residents in any given municipality live at varying distances from the nearest census tract of concentrated disadvantage. Additionally, measuring distance by road network assumes that the majority of people move around the region by automobile. Therefore, the distance measure excludes possibilities of access by public transit, walking, or biking. Although road network distance is more realistic than measuring straight-line or Euclidian distance, it does exclude other possible modes of transit

Intimate knowledge of a research setting is known to cause biased results in many types of social science and ethnographic research. However, in the context of this study, the researcher's close relationship with the research setting served to strengthen the definition of disadvantage census tracts. Based on his own experience living in New Jersey the researcher is aware of where disadvantaged populations are located. This knowledge is similar to Sampson and Raudenbush's (1997) study of how demographic and socioeconomic variables influence levels of collective efficacy in neighborhoods, which in turn effects violent crime. Those researchers' knowledge of Chicago's neighborhoods aided in their delineation of neighborhood clusters, or groups of census

tracts, that contained homogeneous demographic, socioeconomic, and housing characteristics (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997).

CHAPTER 5

PHASE II: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

To expand upon the ecological, statewide study conducted in Phase I, the qualitative inquiry in this research, centered in a cluster of four municipalities, provided a ground-level perspective from officials who are immersed in the locations, social processes, and population groups of interest to the researcher. Interviews with school administrators and law enforcement officials were conducted to obtain their insights, experiences, and perceptions about student behavior, gang presence, and ways in which nearness to disadvantaged areas may impact students and communities. Information gathered from the interviews are perceptions and recollections about events, opinions, and observations rather than first-hand accounts from students themselves. Interviews were used to investigate student behavior through the eyes of community stakeholders and to obtain their perceptions of safety, community conditions, and nearby neighborhoods. The interviews were conducted between April and September of 2012 in four municipalities in northern New Jersey that are all located in close proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods.

5.1 Data Collection

The method of data collection most appropriate for this inquiry was the semistructured interview, where an interview protocol is followed with the flexibility to pursue leads and closely related topics that the respondent brings up. As long as the topics are still relevant to the research questions, the researcher wanted the opportunity to delve into subject matter not included in the protocol (Bernard, 2006). Probing the participants allowed the

researcher to gather additional information about topics and experiences. Probes were prewritten under questions on the interview protocol and new probes were used based on the course of discussion during the interview (2006).

Given the sensitive nature of the questions and information being sought from school and law enforcement officials, pseudonyms were used for schools, municipalities, schools districts, and counties, and respondent identities were not disclosed. This was done not only in order to protect the respondents' identities but to ensure that each interviewee felt comfortable enough to reveal truthful and sensitive information to the researcher without fear of being identified. In the write-up of the qualitative findings, other terms that might reveal the identity of a municipality or district were assigned pseudonyms as well. The following is a list of pseudonyms used:

- Communities studied: Clearfield, Eastfall, Lorview, Oakhollow
- Surrounding communities: Brookmill, Edgecliff, Fairvale, Highmont, Norburn, Rosegate Southton, Vallea
- Street gangs: Blasters, Demons, Reapers, Slammers, Slayers, Spiders, Tigers,
- Wannabe gangs: Lunatics, Outlaws
- Retail/restaurant establishments: Discount Commodities, Sizzle Stop

To ensure anonymity of the interviewees, schools, and locations, a form of consent was constructed that outlined the study and highlighted all ethical concerns using a template from the NJIT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The consent form guaranteed the anonymity of respondents and stated that pseudonyms would be used for schools, municipalities, and counties. The form guaranteed that no information collected from the qualitative phase of the research would be identifiable by school, place, or region. Each interviewee kept the original copy of the form, while the researcher received a second

copy. The researcher had previously obtained approval to conduct the interviews from the NJIT IRB.

Information from the “Eurogang Project” was used to guide the creation of interview question about gangs. The project was started by leading European and American criminologists and criminal justice experts to construct a universal framework for studying the increasing problem of youth gangs around the world (University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2012). The researcher obtained the Eurogang survey instrument from Dr. Cheryl Maxson, a Eurogang Project steering committee member. The Eurogang survey instrument contains definitions and precisely worded survey questions that provided the researcher with ideas for how to formulate interview protocol questions. A definition of a gang or troublesome youth group, however, was not used in the interview protocol because the interviews are intended to be semi-structured and thus the responses from the participants are intended to be their own perspectives and experiences.

Two different interview protocols were constructed. One protocol was made for school administrators and school resource officers (see the interview protocol in Appendix A) and another was made for law enforcement personnel not involved with youth. The protocol used most often was for school administrators and school resource officers. The protocol questions were completely open-ended and contained probes. The protocol questions were designed to address the following: how long the officials were in their positions, the best and most challenging characteristics of the municipality, school safety, frequency of violence, gang presence, wannabe presence, urban culture, community conditions, proximity to disadvantage, and gang/violence prevention measures.

5.2 Research Sites

Sites of interest for the qualitative inquiry were municipalities without disadvantaged neighborhoods within their borders but located in close proximity to other municipalities with moderately or highly disadvantaged neighborhoods. Since northern New Jersey was convenient to the researcher, municipalities in other parts of the state were not considered as candidates for the qualitative inquiry. Additionally, the researcher sought to investigate cases within a small geographic area so that results from the interviews were comparable to the same disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Obtaining four municipalities for the qualitative investigation involved contacting schools and law enforcement agencies and finding officials who were willing to participate. Requests for participation were made through phone calls and emails to municipalities in an area of interest in northern New Jersey. Officials and law enforcement personnel in more than 20 school districts were contacted and in many cases, outreach to non-responsive districts was made more than twice and in various mediums. Within the area of interest, very few school and law enforcement officials responded to requests for participation, mainly because interview requests were made at the end of the school year when school administrators are very busy.

Selection of research sites and participants comprised a non-probability sampling and included a combination of purposive, convenience, and snowball samples (Berg, 2009). On the municipality level, the sampling strategy was partly purposive because municipalities of interest were only those close to disadvantaged neighborhoods that contained little or no disadvantaged neighborhoods of their own, and partly convenience because the area of interest was convenient to the researcher. The researcher contacted

the first willing participant in each municipality directly; and during or after the interview the first participant often suggested colleagues who could also be of help to the researcher’s topic. These suggestions sometimes led to more interviews, a process that is called snowball sampling (Berg, 2009). Also, the search for interview participants was partially purposive because only school administrators and law enforcement personnel were of interest.

Table 5.1 Interview Participants by Community

Participant Title	Clearfield	Eastfall	Lorview	Oakhollow
High school Principal	1		1	
High school vice Principal	1			
Middle school Principal		1		1
Middle school vice Principal				2
School Resource Officer	1	1		3
School Criminal Investigator			1	
Municipality Gang Specialist		1		1

Note: The numbers above indicate frequency of participants, not interviews. There were a total of 10 interviews, some with multiple participants.

After 5 months of persistently contacting school district officials and conducting interviews, a total of ten interviews were completed in four municipalities in northern New Jersey. The municipalities are located at various distances from other municipalities that contain neighborhoods with high and moderate levels of disadvantage. In Clearfield interviews were conducted with the high school principal, vice principal, and one of two district School Resource Officers (SRO). In Eastfall interviews were conducted with the middle school principal, the district SRO, and a police department gang specialist. In Lorview the high school principal and the school district criminal investigator/ registrar were interviewed. In Oakhollow two interviews took place with three or more officials in

each interview. In one interview the researcher spoke with the police department gang specialist and three SROs at the same time, and in the district middle school the researcher interviewed the principal and two vice principals in the same room. Table 5.1 above shows the participants' professional titles and the municipalities where they work.

Nearly all participants have been in their current positions for 2 years or longer. The school principals and vice principals interviewed had been in their positions from

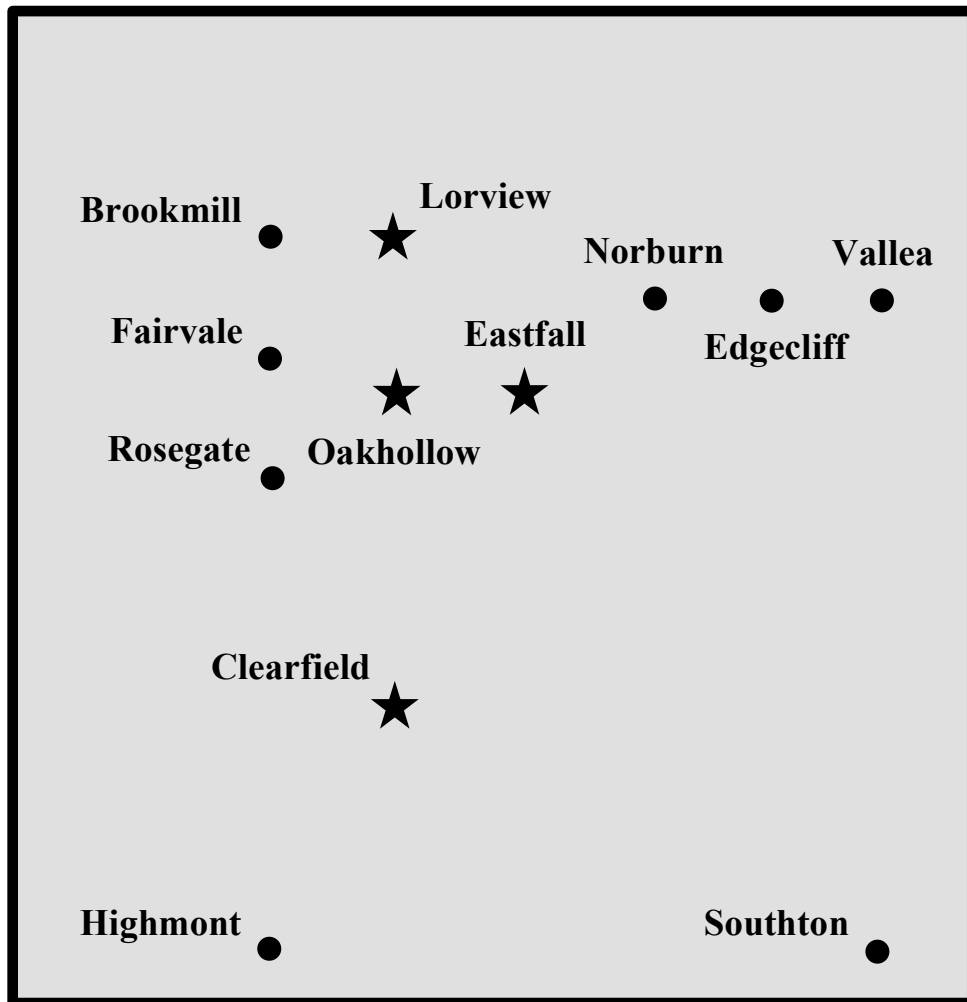


Figure 5.1 A map of the spatial relationships between the communities where interviews took place (stars) and surrounding municipalities (dots). Brookmill, Highmont, and Southton are cities that contain highly disadvantaged neighborhoods. Rosegate, Fairvale, Norburn, and Vallea have one or more moderately disadvantaged neighborhoods. Edgecliff has an elevated gang presence but does not contain any disadvantaged neighborhoods.

between 2 to 12 years. The SROs and law enforcement officials had been in their positions from between 1 to 15 years. The SRO that had been in his current position for less than a year was in the company of other SROs who had been in their current positions for more than 5 years.

Figure 5.1 (above) shows the communities where officials were interviewed (represented as stars) as well as the surrounding cities and towns that were mentioned in the interviews. In Figure 5.1, the surrounding cities and towns, represented as dots, have neighborhoods with either high or moderate levels of concentrated disadvantage or have a known gang presence. The community that is located closest to disadvantaged neighborhoods is Oakhollow at 0.8 miles, namely because there is a census tract of moderate concentrated disadvantage within its borders and because it is adjacent to Rosegate, a disadvantaged city. Lorview is located second closest to disadvantage, followed by Eastfall and Clearfield, all located less than 4 miles by car from disadvantaged neighborhoods. The community that is closest to a highly disadvantaged neighborhood is Lorview at only 2.91 miles, followed by Clearfield, Oakhollow, and Eastfall, all under 6 miles (see Table 5.2 for these measurements).

Table 5.2 Road Network Distance in Miles from Each Community to the Nearest Census Tract with High or Moderate Levels of Concentrated Disadvantage

Variable	Oakhollow	Lorview	Eastfall	Clearfield
Proximity to Nearest Census Tract of High or Moderate Concentrated Disadvantage	0.80	1.54	2.13	3.61
Proximity to Nearest Census Tract of High Concentrated Disadvantage	4.61	2.91	5.58	3.65

Note: Road network distance was measured in miles. Municipalities are listed from closest to moderate of high disadvantage to furthest, from left to right.

Table 5.3 Community Type, Gang Presence, Crime Rate, and School Violence Data for each Community

Variable	Oakhollow	Lorview	Eastfall	Clearfield
Community Type	Urban Suburb	Urban Suburb	Urban Suburb	Urban Suburb
Gang Presence in Municipality	High	High	None	Low
Gang Presence in Schools	High	Low	None	High
Average Crime Rate (Per 1,000 People)	17.4	23.6	15.6	17.3
Average Violent Crime Rate (Per 1,000 People)	1.9	1.3	1.6	.7
Average Total Incidents in Municipality Schools (Per 1,000 Students)	5.6	17.4	7.0	10.1

Note: Average crime rates and average total incidents of violence in municipality schools are rounded to the nearest tenth. Gang presence information is from the New Jersey State Police Gang Survey, 2010.

Source: New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Unit; New Jersey State Police; New Jersey Department of Education.

Oakhollow has a neighborhood of moderate concentrated disadvantage within its municipal borders and is adjacent to Rosegate, a small city entirely composed of moderately disadvantaged neighborhoods, some very close to ranking as highly disadvantaged. Lorview is adjacent to the city of Brookmill, a mid-sized city with many moderately and highly disadvantaged neighborhoods. Lorview and Oakhollow also share borders with Fairvale, a densely populated suburban town with a population approximately the size of Rosegate. Fairvale contains a few moderately disadvantaged neighborhoods and is located between Brookmill and Rosegate.

Eastfall is located next to Oakhollow and just southeast of Lorview. It does not share any borders with Brookmill, Fairvale, or Rosegate, but is adjacent to Norburn, a

small city with two moderately disadvantaged neighborhoods. Next to Norburn are communities such as Edgecliff and Vallea, which also have some moderately disadvantaged neighborhoods. Clearfield is located between the Rosegate-Oakhollow area and Highmont but does not share any borders with them. Highmont is large city with an intense concentration of highly and moderately disadvantaged neighborhoods. Southton is also a large city just to the East of Highmont and contains smaller amounts of disadvantaged neighborhoods. Because Clearfield is closest to Highmont, it is the second-closest community to highly disadvantaged neighborhoods. Lorview is the closest community to highly disadvantaged neighborhoods due to its location next to Brookmill.

Highmont, Brookmill, and Southton are not only the biggest cities in the area but are the only municipalities in Figure 5.1 with highly disadvantaged neighborhoods. These cities also have high crime rates, high violent crime rates, and are notorious for their high concentrations of street gangs and frequency of gang-related crimes. These cities contain high rates of poverty, unemployment, Hispanic and black populations, homicides, populations on public assistance, vacant housing units, gang crime, and so on. Each of them is stigmatized by area residents, likely due to the frequency of negative media that they receive. Many people in surrounding communities and the region are fearful of these cities. Rosegate is also known for its considerable gang presence and has a negative stigma as well. Fairvale, Norburn, Edgecliff and Vallea each have a low to moderate presence of gangs.

Each community where interviews took place is classified as an urban suburb, that is, “near an urban center but not as extremely developed and more residential areas” (New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Unit, 2010, p.5). According to the

New Jersey State Police Gang Survey data from 2010, the communities where interviews took place have varying levels of gang presence in the town and in the schools. The average violent crime rate is highest in Eastfall and Oakhollow but the average crime rate

Table 5.4 Percentage Data of Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Housing Characteristics for each Community Case Study, 2010.

Variable	Oakhollow		Lorview		Eastfall		Clearfield	
	Mun	Schl	Mun	Schl	Mun	Schl	Mun	Schl
White	77	51	75	51	68	41	83	73
Black	7	7	5	6	8	8	2	1
Asian	2	2	11	13	9	10	7	4
Some Other Race	11		6		12		6	
Hispanic or Latino	32	40	21	28	31	39	18	21
Under 18 Years Old	23		21		24		19	
Moved in Year 2000 or Later	59		45		56		49	
Unemployed	5		4		4		4	
Inc. Below Pov. Level / Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch	13	54	5	25	13	44	5	14
Vacant Housing Units	7		5		3		5	
Renter Occ. Housing Units	58		37		52		42	
Female-Headed HH with Children	12		8		9		4	
Bachelors Degree or Higher	18		24		20		29	
Foreign-born / Students with Limited English Proficiency	40	9	33	2	33	6	23	1

Note: Municipality values represent percent of total population, households, or housing units. School values represent average percent of total school enrollment, 2005/06 – 2008/09. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. “Mun” = Municipality Values, “Schl” = School Values, “Inc.” = Income, “Pov.” = Poverty, “Occ.” = Occupied, “HH” = Household. Municipalities are listed from closest to moderate of high disadvantage to furthest, from left to right.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates

and average total incidents in schools vary across the towns. The communities are densely-populated and could be considered inner-ring suburbs (see Table 5.3 above for more details).

Each community has a population of between 20,000 and 30,000 people. Oakhollow and Eastfall have the highest percentages of poverty, minorities, and renter occupied housing units among the communities. Similarly, Oakhollow and Eastfall also have the highest percentages of students receiving free or reduced lunches, minority students, and students with limited English proficiency. Additionally, Oakhollow and Eastfall have the highest percentages of population under 18, recent move-ins, and the lowest percentages of population with a bachelor's degree or higher among the communities. See Table 5.4 above for details on municipality- and school- based demographics, socioeconomics, and housing characteristics.

Over a span of 10 years from 2000 to 2010, there were some noteworthy demographic and socioeconomic changes that took place in all four communities, as exhibited in Table 5.5 below. Most noteworthy is the change in black population in all communities. In Lorview, Eastfall, and Oakhollow, the number of black persons more than doubled from 2000 to 2010 and in Clearfield the number of black persons more than tripled. Hispanic or Latino populations more than doubled in Clearfield and the number of foreign-born residents jumped by 36 percent, the highest increases among the communities. The other communities also experienced significant increases in Hispanic or Latino populations but a more gradual growth of foreign-born residents. Consequently, the white population in all the communities decreased, the highest in Lorview at 12

percent. There were no significant increases in total population, likely because each of the communities is almost entirely built out.

Table 5.5 Percent Change in Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics for each Community Case Study, 2000-2010

Variable	Oakhollow	Lorview	Eastfall	Clearfield
Total Population	2	3	1	6
White	-4	-6	-12	-2
Black	123	149	113	241
Asian	-15	41	-3	30
Hispanic or Latino	64	62	71	116
Unemployed	9	27	37	13
Inc. Below Pov. Level	70	-29	60	4
Vacant Housing Units	75	156	-19	80
Renter Occ. Housing Units	4	-1	-12	15
Female-Headed H.H. with Children	110	82	58	27
Foreign-born	3	11	12	36

Note: Values represent percent change of total population, households, or housing units. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. “Inc.” = Income, “Pov.” = Poverty, “Occ.” = Occupied, “HH” = Household. Municipalities are listed from closest to moderate of high disadvantage to furthest, from left to right.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Summary File; 2006-2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The number of female-headed households with children more than doubled in Oakhollow between 2000 and 2010, and substantially increased in the other communities as well. Unemployed populations and those with income below poverty level increased across the board, with the exception of Lorview, where those with income below poverty level decreased by 29 percent. The number of vacant housing units more than doubled in Lorview and also increased in Clearfield and Oakhollow, but decreased by 19 percent in Eastfall. Lastly, Clearfield and Oakhollow showed small gains in renter-occupied housing units while Lorview and Eastfall experienced slight decreases. Overall demographic and

socioeconomic trends in the communities from 2000 to 2010 included considerable increases in black populations, Hispanic or Latino populations, vacant housing units, and female-headed households with children. Small to moderate increases in poverty, unemployment, and foreign-born populations also occurred.

5.3 Qualitative Analysis

The interviews were audio recorded with permission of the participants and were transcribed by the researcher. Transcriptions were not word-for-word and often left out “fillers,” did not take note of pauses, and skipped segments that could not be understood or heard. After the interviews were transcribed into a Word document, they were coded using themes. The entire corpus of texts was used for coding (Bernard, 2006). The interview questions in the protocols served as a basis for the development of themes before coding took place. Because each participant answered nearly all questions in the protocol, this allowed for comparison across communities by predetermined themes, or questions. However, since the interviews were semistructured, other themes emerged as well. These circumstances called for a mix of predetermined and emerging codes throughout the coding process (Creswell, 2009).

The units of analysis for coding and transcribing the interviews were sentences, paragraphs, and multiple paragraphs – not smaller than a sentence and usually no larger than a few paragraphs (Bernard, 2006). Once the initial set of categories was developed from the interview protocol questions, coding began in a line-by-line fashion. Categorization of sentences or paragraphs was based on awareness of transitions, repetitions, and similarities and differences between sentence topics (Bernard, 2010). As the texts of the transcripts were analyzed, new categories emerged and were subsequently

added to the list of categories. In the transcripts, categories were assigned different colors and highlights (Bernard, 2010). There were about ten predetermined categories based on the protocol questions and about nine emerged from the text throughout analysis. The color-coded categories that the researcher used for content analysis were:

- Best characteristics of the school district and municipality
- Biggest challenges facing the school district or municipality
- Police presence in the schools
- Security personnel and security devices in the schools
- Feelings about overall safety in the schools and municipality
- Frequency and experiences of violence
- Gang presence
- Gang wannabe presence
- Influence of proximity to disadvantage on gangs or wannabes
- Urban culture
- Influence of proximity to disadvantage on urban culture
- Influence of media, TV, video games, social media on urban culture and gangs
- Importance of parental involvement
- Law enforcement rapport with students
- School uniforms
- School registration and transfer students
- Housing, demographic change, and starting and new life
- Gang prevention measures
- General violence and substance abuse prevention measures in school district

After color-coding and highlighting text for categorization, like categories were pasted into a new document under a category heading. Under each category heading, text was pasted into its representative community subheading (Oakhollow, Lorview, Eastfall, and Clearfield). This is called the “cutting-and-sorting” method, whereby the researcher is “identifying quotes or expressions that seem somehow important – these are called exemplars – and then arranging the quotes/expressions into piles of things that go

together” (Bernard, 2010, p. 63). After this process was completed, the content was nearly ready for synthesis and write-up. After the interview content was categorized and grouped by community, the most noteworthy and relevant content was extracted and moved to a new Word document. Then, the interview content was woven into narratives that told each community’s story through the eyes of community stakeholders. In the following sections are findings from the interviews with school administrators and law enforcement officials.

5.4 Oakhollow

Oakhollow is a densely populated inner-ring suburb of over 14,500 people per square mile. The town is located next to Rosegate, an urban center with moderately disadvantaged neighborhoods and a total population comprised of over 70 percent Hispanic or Latino residents and just over 10 percent black residents. Nearly 30 percent of the city’s residents live below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; 2011). There is a high presence of gangs in Rosegate’s neighborhoods and schools and the city has an average violent crime rate of 9.41 per 1,000 people (New Jersey’s mean average from 2005-2010 was 1.90 per 1,000 people) (New Jersey State Police Gang Survey 2010; New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Unit, 2005-2010).

Brookmill, a city of more than double the number of residents of Rosegate, is located two municipalities north and west of Oakhollow with a total population comprised of just over 55 percent Hispanic or Latino residents and a little over 30 percent black residents. Over a quarter of the city’s residents live below poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Like Rosegate, Brookmill also has a high presence of gangs in its neighborhoods and schools and its average violent crime rate is 10.06 (New Jersey State

Police Gang Survey 2010; New Jersey State Police Uniform Crime Reporting Unit, 2005-2010).

In Oakhollow, the three SROs, a law enforcement gang specialist, and three middle school administrators expressed great concern over their town's proximity to Rosegate and Brookmill and how it has affected community safety, gang presence, and urban culture. The officials also suggested that neighborhood changes since the 1990s have played a considerable role in destabilizing the sense of "community," neighborhood pride, safety and property care in the town. Part of this, they say, is due to the high and increasing number of renter-occupied housing units in town, which creates greater residential transiency than owner-occupied units and generates a loss of community attachment and investment. In 2010 almost 60 percent of the town's housing stock was renter occupied, a 4 percent increase since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000; 2010).

All members of the middle school administration were raised in Oakhollow and have experienced changes in the town's population since the 1960s and 70s. They described how most of the town's population was Caucasian, blue-collar, non-college educated individuals and families with high moral values. They believed that residents showed strong pride in the town, participated in community events, and cared for neighbors in times of need. A member of the middle school administration said:

Everyone knew everyone, kids would play with each other in the streets and in parks, people would ride bikes around town. Every day, families would sit down and have dinner and the parents would get involved in the kids' lives. They'd ask you what you did that day and how school was. Lots of people were involved in the churches and in clubs.

Administrators continued to explain how Oakhollow began to change more dramatically in the early 1990s. According to their experiences, the part of town in closest proximity

to Rosegate was the first to undergo changes when minority populations increased and it soon became the “poor side of town”. The elementary school on this side of town achieved the lowest standardized test scores in the district and became known for its low educational achievement outcomes. Officials believed that the middle section of town has remained relatively stable due to the higher numbers of owner-occupied homes there.

Officials perceived that gang presence and decreased safety in Oakhollow are partly due to physical proximity to disadvantage and partly due to changes in community composition. However, changes in community composition may result from proximity to disadvantage since most officials have encountered numerous transfer students from Brookmill or Rosegate. Both the school administrators and SROs strongly believed that families from places such as Brookmill and Rosegate are moving to affordable, safer communities nearby as their first step out of the inner city. One member of the middle school administration explained:

Poor people from inner cities began moving to Oakhollow to escape the chronic poverty and crime that plagued their neighborhoods, as well as the poor education systems there. Oakhollow was safer and still affordable, and provided a slightly better education. It was a step up from the inner cities and was especially attractive as an Abbott District because of its free daycare and preschool programs.

In the late 1990s the state of New Jersey designated Oakhollow as an Abbott District. The district is not controlled by the state as some of New Jersey’s larger cities are, but it receives state funding as well as free daycare and preschool services. According to the administration, after the Abbott designation Oakhollow’s demographic and socioeconomic landscape began to undergo significant changes.

According to officials, there has been a chain-reaction process occurring as a result of demographic change: middle-class families are leaving Oakhollow and moving

to safer, wealthier municipalities nearby with better education systems. Officials stated that such a process leaves the poorer, more vulnerable populations behind. Not only are those from inner cities moving to Oakhollow, but it appears as though native residents are also moving out.

The SROs in Oakhollow also believed that residents from nearby inner cities are moving to Oakhollow, attracted by the district's free preschool system, the availability of Section 8 housing, and moving away from increasing crime in nearby cities. As one of the SROs described:

The more dangerous it becomes in Rosegate and Brookmill, they move out and try to get away from it, especially from Brookmill, you saw all those shootings in Brookmill last year and stuff, a lot of kids came. Every time there's a fire in Rosegate or Brookmill it's just a matter of time before they end up coming here. You could also attribute that to free pre-school, affordable housing, there's a lot of Section 8.

The SROs also stated that a portion of those populations moving from nearby cities are criminals themselves:

A lot of people who are moving here as well are gang members, and their gang members come along with them, and so on and so forth... we are right next to Rosegate and then we have Brookmill which is two towns away, and there's a lot of Section 8 that is available in Oakhollow because a lot of our landlords, most of them don't live in Oakhollow so they rent out to Section 8 because it's free and they're guaranteed their money and most of the people who come from Brookmill and Rosegate are Section 8 and they come from those areas to try to start a new life. Oakhollow is so close to them...

The law enforcement officials asserted that the movement of populations from inner cities to Oakhollow is due to rising crime in urban areas and the availability of government subsidized housing in Oakhollow. However, according to the participants, some of the migrating residents are themselves gang members. The officials explained how those moving to the district from urban areas with gang-affiliations are likely to

bring other gang-affiliated associates, family members, or friends with them, or convince them to move.

Whether gang presence in Oakhollow is homegrown or imported is debatable. While all officials interviewed in Oakhollow believe that the gang presence there is an “imported” phenomenon, some have recounted instances of gang formation in the town and the schools. Such circumstances are questionable, however, because those living in town who formed a gang may have moved from an inner city. The real question is whether individuals who have grown up in Oakhollow are more prone to gang-related behavior or to joining gangs because of the town’s proximity to Oakhollow or Brookmill. One of the SROs provided an example of how proximity to disadvantage influences gang-related activity in town:

...We had Black Friday at Discount Commodities and we had people from Rosegate or Brookmill coming to Discount Commodities and they see a girl with a blue streak in her hair and they try to ask her things, whether she’s a gang member, they tried to fight her and then they fought each other and five of them got arrested or something like that. But the problem comes from Rosegate or Brookmill, not in Oakhollow.

Using an example of a gang-related event that occurred in town, the SRO explained that the gang “problem” comes from Rosegate or Brookmill and does not emerge from individuals in Oakhollow.

Members of the middle school administration echoed the SROs with regard to whether gang-affiliated youth are “imported” or “homegrown.” One administrator said:

... Gang members and wannabes in the schools are mostly students who come from Brookmill, Rosegate, and the Bronx. Their families are affiliated with gangs, they are influenced by street culture, and the student brings their experiences and demeanor with them into Oakhollow’s schools. These families move to Oakhollow as a stepping-stone to something better and to start a new life in a place that is safer but still is affordable.

The same administrator then went on to describe how proximity to disadvantaged areas may influence gang-related behavior among Oakhollow youth:

The students here are very aware of gangs and types of gangs that are out there, mainly because of our proximity to Rosegate and Brookmill and the large gang problems there. I would even say proximity is more of an influence than the media because being near Rosegate and Brookmill and the students having classmates from these areas provides a more official and credible first-hand experience of street culture and gangs. There is nothing more influential than experiencing the real deal...

Thus, according to this respondent, youth who are gang-affiliated are more likely to come from other places while youth who are influenced and aware of gangs are more likely to be from Oakhollow. It seems, according to the interviewees, that youth from Oakhollow, while they are influenced by being among gang-affiliated transfer students, are also likely to have come in contact with gang members first-hand, who according to the administrator are far more influential than rap and “gangsta” culture communicated through the media and music. Students from Oakhollow may come in contact with street culture and gangs by visiting family or friends in places like Rosegate.

There remains, however, a fuzzy boundary between homegrown gang-related activity and imported activity. One of the SROs described how a middle school student became associated with a gang: “I have an 8th grader who’s supposedly part of the Slayers, his cousin lives in Rosegate and his cousin brought him into it, and he’s walking around with his backpack with this bandana and everything like that, but you know that rarely comes along.” In this situation, a student’s family member from Rosegate influenced him to become affiliated with a gang, thus emphasizing the potential effects of proximity to disadvantaged areas on gang presence in nearby areas. However, the influence of disadvantaged areas on gang presence elsewhere does not suggest that

simply being “near” disadvantage will somehow make individuals prone to gang affiliation. The “influence” of one place on another is probably most reliant on social networks of family and friends and thus having gang-affiliated individuals within those networks. Transfer students, on the other hand, may “import” gang-related behavior or street culture into places like Oakhollow and might influence youth that have grown up in Oakhollow. This possibility is similar to the middle school administrator’s perspective that many students in Oakhollow schools are aware of gangs but usually do not become affiliated.

Middle school administrators described how females are more enthralled by gangs than males in the school. They said that since many of the students in the school have knowledge about gangs from family members or friends, students sometimes threaten their peers with retaliation from gang members whom they know. Although the administration stated that only a small number of students in the school partake in this type of behavior, they emphasized that such activity it is not uncommon.

As an example of what may have been a homegrown criminal group, the SROs in the district recalled how a wannabe gang formed in Oakhollow high school a few years prior to the interview. The “gang” called themselves the Lunatics and claimed to be an offshoot of the Demons gang. Some of the Lunatics had ties to the Demons and eventually some of them became official Demons members. The Lunatics were involved mainly in street robberies as well as violence in the high school. Some of these youth were transfer students while others were from Oakhollow. Oakhollow police department’s gang specialist explained:

Some of the stuff we’re seeing in the schools are homegrown, they’re not part of any one super gang, they’re home-grown groups and as they get older some of

these people are recruited into a super gang, the Demons, the Tigers, Blasters, we have a couple Spiders, but they're not a lot of trouble. In the schools, they're not too bad as far as numbers, we haven't done an official count in the while, but the numbers are relatively low and most of the kids are part of these homegrown neighborhood-type gangs. The last group they had a problem with, they were doing street robberies and stuff of that nature, some of those kids have grown up into super gangs but for the most part they've stayed intact with that clique.

The SROs later explained that the Lunatics had disbanded and some members joined a set of the Demons gang from Rosegate and others moved to a legitimate lifestyle, working in town businesses. The SROs have not, however, seen any groups as organized as the Lunatics since they disbanded.

Additionally, the SROs insisted that gang presence in Oakhollow's schools decreased because of the opening of an alternative school in Fairvale 2 years prior to the interview. The new school serves students from surrounding areas who have behavioral problems or are struggling academically. Students who misbehave on a regular basis or are suspended on numerous occasions undergo a special evaluation that determines whether they should be sent to the alternative school. A number of youth from Oakhollow schools now attend the alternative school, and according to the SROs, more than half of the students sent to the alternative school identify themselves as gang members. The gang specialist stated that even with the opening of the alternative school, at any one time there is likely to be around 20 or 25 students in the high school who exhibit signs of gang affiliation and that the high school has a more intense gang presence compared to the other schools.

According to the respondents, most gang presence in Oakhollow is in the neighborhoods rather than the schools. This is because most gang members are parolees out of prison who are in their 20s or 30s and a lot of them return to gangbanging. This

phenomenon still affects the schools because often the parolees are family members of students in Oakhollow schools, and thus influence those children. The police department gang specialist keeps track of gang members in Oakhollow and reported that there were over 200 members living in town at the time of the interview. He said that the majority of the gang members are affiliated with the Demons but there is also a presence of Reapers, Tigers, Blasters, and Slayers.

Gang presence in Oakhollow's schools and neighborhoods reported by officials is corroborated by the 2010 Street Gang Survey by the New Jersey State Police, which reported a high presence of gangs in Oakhollow's schools and neighborhoods compared to other municipalities in New Jersey. Because gang members in town are affiliated with several gangs, there is a constant threat of potentially violent conflict. However, the gang specialist explained that Oakhollow "has been lucky thus far" and has not experienced any serious gang-related violence. Most of the gang members are spread across the town, are not organized, and do not have designated territories. Sometimes gang graffiti appears and one gang crosses out or writes over another gang's graffiti, but this is mostly on the border with Rosegate and involves gangs in Rosegate. Some gang members from Oakhollow were involved in a gang-related homicide in Eastfall in the mid 2000s but thus far Oakhollow has not experienced gang-related violence.

Although Oakhollow has escaped gang-related violence, the presence of urban culture among students is substantial. According to officials, urban culture has been spreading from what was perceived as mainly an African American phenomenon to all types of students of different races and ethnicities in the diverse school district. An SRO recalled seeing many white youth in town wearing backwards hats, skinny jeans, baggy

jeans that hang below their waist, and talking in street slang. The administrators at the middle school have observed urban culture among their students as well. They suggested that the media produces a perception of what is “cool” for youth, and currently rap, hip-hop, and street culture are “cool.” Therefore, many of the students try to associate with rap and street culture. Students have spoken to the middle school principal in street slang and some parents have directly informed the principal that “this is the way we talk and this is how my kid talks too.” Urban culture is evident, the administrators explained, in the way the students speak, through their tattoos, and in the ways they behave.

The opportunity to display urban culture through clothes, however, has been diminished with the implementation of school uniforms in the district 4 years prior to the interview. Administrators at the middle school said that before the school uniform policy was adopted they would see students wearing baggy pants and oversized clothes. Sometimes a small group of students would start wearing the same colors, especially if particular individuals had connections to gangs. The uniforms prevent the students from wearing particular colors and gang affiliated paraphernalia. Contrariwise, staff can no longer identify gang wannabes because it is harder for students to display signs of affiliation. However, one of the vice principals who had formerly worked in the high school recalled that he saw students wear different colored shirts underneath their uniforms, hang a colored rag out of their pocket, or wear colored shoe laces.

Although officials feel confident that the combination of SROs, security personnel, faculty presence in the hallways, and surveillance cameras help maintain a safe environment in Oakhollow schools, violence and gang prevention programs have also been implemented throughout the district’s schools. SROs and security guards are

the security persons on school grounds. Administrators at the middle school praised the students' rapport with the SROs and believe that students are very comfortable talking to administrators, faculty, and law enforcement personnel in confidence. On many occasions, the administrators described how students alert staff or SROs of violent incidents that will occur or have already transpired. The SROs described a similar situation: they said there have been numerous occasions where students tell them that there is going to be a fight and they are able to step in before the incident occurs. They also said that particular faculty members are able to form trusting relationships with students. The SROs maintain an efficient and friendly working relationship with faculty and administrators.

Programs implemented to prevent drug abuse, violence, and gangs in Oakhollow schools are Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.), "Youth Leadership" as well as assemblies such as "Stared Straight", put on by the county Sheriff's department, which is an offshoot of the trademarked "Scared Straight" program. The SROs recalled how the district once had more antiviolence programs but the SRO staff was cut in half just a few years prior to the interview. The D.A.R.E. program is for 5th graders and in the middle school there is a program called Youth Leadership. The SROs said that they start their involvement with students at the youngest age possible. In pre-school the SROs implement a program called "community helpers day," where officials bring police, fire, and hospital personnel to the schools. The officers then explained how they fingerprint each student in kindergarten for safety purposes and for their records.

The SROs also host a program for 7th and 8th graders called G.R.E.A.T., which is a nationally based program intended for middle and elementary schools. The program provides a classroom curriculum for police officers to teach youth about delinquency, violence, and gang prevention. Officers must be trained in order to teach the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum. The SROs wanted to take a proactive approach because they described how a “gang wannabe mentality” started to emerge among middle school students and they wanted to prevent the problem from spreading by “getting ahead of the curve.” G.R.E.A.T. is about a 10-week program and offers students interactive lessons and assemblies that cover gang awareness and prevention by teaching students to realize alternative, positive choices.

In addition to these prevention programs, the county just implemented a criminal computerized system where records are entered and kept about each complaint filed against a student. One of the SROs explained that, for example, if a student in the district gets arrested for shoplifting in another municipality, a juvenile complaint is filed against the student by the County Prosecutor’s Office and the police in Oakhollow will receive an email of the complaint. The complaint shows the officer that filed the complaint, the date, location, the type of offense, and so on. When a student receives their first complaint, the SRO is able to create a new file for a student. This procedure was implemented primarily to connect the community with the schools. When SROs are dealing with student disciplinary problems, for example, they are able to check their complaint backgrounds.

In summary, according to the views and experiences of community stakeholders in Oakhollow, the schools are mostly safe with occasional physical altercations. Gang

presence is low in the middle school but moderate in the high school, where a homegrown gang had formed in the past. Although officials generally described gang presence in the schools as “imported” from inner cities, some accounts from SROs indicated the formation of homegrown gangs in the schools and on the community’s streets. The police department’s gang specialist maintained that most of the gang members living in town had come from other places and had not grown up in Oakhollow, although there are some problems with “imported” gang members recruiting Oakhollow youth.

Those interviewed believe that Oakhollow’s close spatial proximity to Rosegate and Brookmill influences gang-related behavior among students who have grown up in Oakhollow, though chiefly through relatives and friends who reside in one of those cities. The combination of social networks and a high volume of transfer students from inner cities are believed to have made Oakhollow youth “enthralled” with ghetto culture and gangs. And although there are some homegrown groups that form in the hallways of Oakhollow’s schools and on the streets, these groups almost always have been wannabe gangs whose members eventually disband or join real street gangs from Rosegate.

The changing demographic landscape in Oakhollow seems to have generated fear among some of its residents, such as the middle school administrators. According to the officials, community change since the early 1990s has already driven whiter, wealthier populations out of town while poorer minorities are left behind and continue to migrate from inner cities. What once might have been a safer, more stable community may now be crumbling at the hands of residential transiency, loss of community pride, increasing poverty, and a general air of uncertainty, distrust, and “imported” cultures. There was a

consistent overarching tone of nostalgia among the officials interviewed in Oakhollow, generally of how the town has seen better days.

5.5 Lorview

Lorview is an inner-ring suburb located just adjacent to and east of Brookmill, a moderately sized city with high levels of poor minority populations, violent crime, and gang presence. Lorview's population is about half as dense as Oakhollow's at just over 7,000 people per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The town's built landscape is more suburban than any of the other three communities studied but its proximity to Brookmill makes it the closest community to highly disadvantaged neighborhoods (a 2.91 mile drive from the center of town to the nearest highly disadvantaged neighborhood). Much of Lorview's population is within a 5 to 10 minute drive to the nearest highly disadvantaged neighborhood, which is in Brookmill.

According to district officials, proximity to Brookmill has a considerable impact on youth in Lorview. As in Oakhollow, officials in Lorview also reported that substantial demographic changes have occurred in town and that gang wannabes have a larger presence than gang members in the schools. The school district criminal investigator/registrar stated that at any one point in time there may be two or three "true" gang members in Lorview's schools and that roughly 5 percent of youth in the middle school exhibit signs of gang wannabe behavior. The larger percentage of wannabes in the middle school than in the other schools, he said, is because students in this age group are trying to prove who they are. The high school principal reported that to the best of his knowledge, there were no gang members in the high school at the time of the interview

and his conclusions were based on frequent contact with the County Prosecutor's Office Gang Unit.

The Lorview school district criminal investigator explained gang-related activity among students in the high school:

They don't exercise it within this building... they try not to show their colors. We do get them every once in a while trying to do their hand gestures or hand signs, but we address it the best we can and we also do notify local police departments to watch these students because they're showing or expressing signs of gang-related behavior.

Sometimes students take photos showing themselves flashing gang signs. About 4 years prior to the interview, a group of students had taken a picture of themselves in front of a Lorview elementary school flashing Demon gang signs. The purpose of the picture was to intimidate another student or group of students. The students posted the picture on a social media website and eventually real Demons gang members from Brookmill saw the picture posted on the Internet. The district criminal investigator recounted what occurred after the Demons gang members from Brookmill saw the photograph:

What happened was true gangs saw it posted online and came here for retaliation, teach these little kids, 'hey you say you're a Demon, we'll beat you.' We sat down and talked with them and told the kids... and now the kids are running scared because now they just found out that the true Demons from Brookmill are saying 'hey you want to say you're us? We'll beat you down. Ok, no matter what age you are, you don't do that. You want to be a Demon member? You join the group and come in the right way. You're not going to pretend you are because we don't deal with pretenders.' So it was a very big lesson learned, so they all came running with their tails between their legs... we had to use our gang intervention unit, sit there [with Demons members from Brookmill] and say 'look, these are just punk kids, you need to stay away from us, and you won't have it any more, not to disrespect your group, but these are just young kids, they're wannabes, and through education, and through word of mouth with these kids, we try to help them.' So, you definitely do have the wannabes, the kids that try to walk the walk, try to do the hand signs, and we try to educate them right away to stop it right away but there's always going to be the wannabes until something happens, when you confront them and they have no idea what they're talking about.

As reported, this particular event not only demonstrates gang wannabe presence in Lorview schools but also suggests the impact that proximity to disadvantage can have when wannabes make themselves more broadly known.

The district criminal investigator and officials from the county gang unit explained to the students in the photograph that participating in gang-related behavior is a dangerous pursuit, mostly because of possible consequences if real gang members find out. After the students realized that they had angered actual gang members from Brookmill, the investigator recalled how terrified they were. Luckily the investigator and other law enforcement personnel were able to intervene and remediate the situation. In another scenario, the Demons members might have inflicted harm on these students for portraying an association that they did not officially have. In this case, Lorview's proximity to Brookmill may have "suppressed" further gang-related behavior among a group of students.

The investigator talked more about how he believed proximity to Brookmill and students' social ties may influence gang-related behavior and street culture among students. He explained, "...We have a big proximity to Brookmill. Again, it's a big metropolitan-type area, so they know they have every gang member under the sun because of the diverse community that Brookmill is. They have it there, so yes it's literally a stones-throw away from Lorview." Because the municipality is so close to Brookmill, many students in Lorview have family and friends that live there and thus visit Brookmill on a regular basis.

Over the 6 years that the district criminal investigator/registrar has been in the position, the official indicated that gang presence has increased among youth in the

district. He believes that the recent economic downturn has had a significant effect on the potential for youth involvement with gangs:

...Unfortunately it's also the environment of the families... the people that are moving into this town... there are a lot of single-parent homes, so these students are looking for something that they're not getting at home, or that unfortunately mom or dad is working one or two jobs, sometimes three jobs, and cannot provide the guidance for the student as much as they should... and that's always the thing with gangs, gangs tell you 'we will be the family that you don't have, we're the ones who are going to take care of you and watch after you.'

In addition to the influence of gang culture on social media, video games, or from social ties in Brookmill, the economic hardship that has affected the numerous lower- and middle-class families in Lorview in recent years has caused parents to spend more time at jobs instead of providing guidance to their children, serving as role models, and taking the time to identify potential signs of gang associations.

Another way in which youth in Lorview may be exposed to gangs is through social networks. The investigator spoke about various ways in which youth in Lorview may be exposed to inner city phenomena:

...We do have friends hanging out with other friends, taking a trip for relatives and cousins that live in the Brookmill area, their Friday night or Saturday night clubs, who's the DJ, who's the rapper, and you find more and more kids are hanging out with them... there's that social thing... they go hang out with their friends in Brookmill, falsifying documentation and they do go to clubs in other areas as well... wherever they can get into these clubs that allow them in. Now you have these suburban children exposed, whether it's through friends or through relatives, and then they bring it back with them electronically. So now, you'd be surprised who's listening to rap, even the way they talk, they do their schoolwork, they have that street talk in their work. When they talk to you they talk to you in street talk.

The investigator explained how a Lorview student may go to a club in Brookmill or Rosegate where a rapper performed live and record video of the event on his or her phone, and then share it with friends. Youth born and raised in suburban Lorview may

then take a liking to styles of music associated with inner cities. This is another way in which urban areas may influence youth in nearby locations. The investigator acknowledged the significant influences of television, websites, video games, and movies, but emphasized how experiences in disadvantaged neighborhoods, whether with family, friends, or in entertainment venues, can be portrayed in Lorview schools through talking or writing with “street slang,” listening to music shared through inner city social networks, or imitating gangs.

The district criminal investigator described the widespread nature of street culture among students in Lorview. He stated, “...the Macedonian students are rapping down the hallway, and they’re singing the rap songs that are done by black groups or whatever the case may be, because that’s just their type of music...” Cultural attributes of urban environments may be communicated through rap music and students of all races and ethnicities in Lorview listen to rap and hip-hop. The investigator also described various gang associations he has encountered among students: “...I would say you probably have an equal amount of representation, whether it’s the Slammers, the Demons, the Reapers... you even have your gangs now that are coming into your Asian or your Indian communities and we’re so diverse in this town that I would say that you pretty much have them all.” According to the investigator gang involvement also has no racial or ethnic boundaries in Lorview.

As in Oakhollow, students who transfer to Lorview schools from inner city neighborhoods are perceived by the district criminal investigator to bring their culture with them and influence youth who were born and raised in Lorview. Since the criminal investigator is also the district registrar, he has come in contact with numerous illegal

registrations when fraudulent school registration documents are submitted to the Lorview school district with false Lorview addresses. The criminal investigator described illegal registrations in the district:

...You'll find that we do have a very big problem here with out-of-district people coming into this school, which is obviously a criminal offense, because in the state of New Jersey, where your domicile is, is where you have to be educated, so if the child is not domiciled here and is educated here, then there's a theft of services... so hypothetically if they're living in the town of Brookmill and fraudulently came up with an address in Lorview, and they're being educated in Lorview, the county or state sets the guidelines of the value of education, and the value of education in Lorview is over \$1000 a month to educate a child of regular needs. So if it took 3 or 4 months for us to find out that the child is not living here, they're already \$5,000 - \$6,000 in debt for theft of that money from Lorview. So then I criminally charge them with regards to that and bring them into court.

The investigator reported that he has made several arrests and parents end up serving jail time for sending their children to another district's schools. He said that illegal registrations are such a large problem in Lorview because of the town's close proximity to inner cities and due to the presence of many Lorview residents who have family members in Brookmill and thus try to help other family members receive a better education. These students, he said, bring the inner city into Lorview's schools, exposing other students to urban culture or gang-related behavior.

In addition to illegally attending Lorview schools, many youth from nearby inner cities are moving to Lorview and legitimately attending the town's schools. The high school principal echoed the reports of Oakhollow middle school administrators with regard to neighborhood changes:

...There's a demographic shift going on, people are leaving the urban areas and moving to here and Fairvale... seems to be kind of that first step out and then there's ties still back there. There's family ties, there's cousins, there's uncles, and now that element is kind of being brought over, even though they're not living there, eventually they come and they see and they'll suddenly say, I can move to live in this part but are still connected to what's going on back in the urban area.

The principal described not only how families from inner cities are making their first step out of poverty and crime by coming to a place like Lorview, but also how they carry their social ties with them. When a family moves to Lorview from Brookmill, they are still connected to family and friends in Brookmill. Based on some of the family's positive experiences in Lorview, other parts of the family living in Brookmill may follow suit and move.

For those families from Brookmill looking to provide their children with a better education, a safer environment, and higher quality affordable housing through legitimate means, the community's welcoming, diverse, and bustling atmosphere is an ideal first step out of the ghetto. The criminal investigator, however, perceived affordable housing in Lorview to be rather problematic:

This town is kind of unique as opposed to some of the other towns within the county. It's obvious we do have a problem, and our problem is coming from a neighboring town, Brookmill. Our biggest issue here is, we have a very large apartment complex within Lorview that's several blocks large. This was an old golf course that was turned into a housing project-type thing. And they run to meet mostly on Section 8, which is state aid, so you're getting the people from Brookmill when they're looking for a home they can come here and live away from the issues that are in Brookmill and still have a home at an affordable rate. And 80% of their rent is being paid for the state and county... Unfortunately when they have such a large complex, it's a business, they have to rent these apartments, whenever they get a rent come in, a rent comes in. That's your problem. That's your influx of your gang members and your families. Now you also have family and friends that are coming to visit their family and friends that are now living in Lorview. Some people do it for the right reason, they want their kids... they don't want to have the exposure that's going on, the violence that's going on inside the hallways of Brookmill...

The investigator elucidated that while many movers are hardworking families trying to provide a better life for their children, others are affiliated with gangs and have a negative impact on the town. Individuals such as gang members can easily get into subsidized

housing because most of the time, as the investigator stated, units are rented out to whomever applies.

The high school principal believes that students in the district from other areas use their associations as a way to boost social status:

We're getting more and more students either from Brookmill or Rosegate or the larger cities around and they tend to want to still associate with being from there, as a status kind of issue. They may not have been involved in anything going on in those areas, but just that association, well I'm from Brookmill, and it's supposed to mean something, they're street smart, they're this or that. Students go back there and you know, they'll tweet about it or talk about it, about different places they've gone there... I think that it's more of a status thing than anything else. I think that does contribute to some of the wannabe stuff that happens here.

In other words, transfer students use their place of origin as a means to boost their social status in a new school environment where they may stand out as opposed to blending in with the study body that they originated from. The principal added that while youth born and raised in Lorview may visit family or friends in Brookmill, most are probably not comfortable with going to Brookmill. However, the principal explained that youth from Lorview are more likely to be aware of "where not to go" in Brookmill (the city's less desirable neighborhoods with high crime, gang presence, and poverty) than youth in municipalities further away.

Youth from Lorview and other areas who attend the district's schools exhibited characteristics of urban culture prior to the implementation of a school uniform policy in 2010. Rather than being purely a reaction to dress code abuse, the principal stated that the uniform policy was established to "set an educational tone and mindset" among the students. Having been employed in the district for some time, the criminal investigator recalled students' dress in the high school prior to the uniform policy:

Over 2 years ago... you saw the urban culture, you saw it, whether it was through rap videos or just going to the mall and seeing what is the latest or hippest to be worn, whether it was the Jordan sneakers... the kids would walk funny in their shoes... wear their baggy pants... again, depends on who likes what, the type of brand name type shirts and sweaters that were worn and how they were worn, pants down to their knees and their underwear is showing and what not. So yes...we had a lot of it. Where do they get it from? It could be anything from watching the famous rappers on MTV, and on the videos, on websites, the games, but your biggest thing is that... Even with uniforms, they can have a bandana of the color of their gang hanging out there. We see it, we confiscate the bandanas immediately, or we give them the opportunity to tuck it back in their pocket. So again, that was always a big gang identifier, was just the bandanas whether it was red, black, yellow, whatever the case may be. That's why we have a strict policy with regards to outer garments, because like we said, certain gangs just go with certain [sports] teams because of their colors.

The investigator added that even in gym class the students must wear the same clothing in order to make it difficult for them to identify with fashion trends or gangs. The principal acknowledged that the school uniforms have fostered a more intensified academic ambience among the students and the investigator reported that dress code abuse and signs of gang association have lessened greatly. Characteristics of urban culture, however, do not exclusively stem from transfer students from inner cities. As described by the investigator, students also learn of these styles through the globalization and mass consumption of rap and hip-hop culture as well as latest fashion trends.

To combat dress code abuse and to set an educational tone, Lorview has school uniforms. With regard to substance abuse, violence, and gang membership mitigation, the district implements the D.A.R.E. program, anti-violence assemblies, guest speakers, and programs from the County Prosecutor's office. The anti-violence assemblies occur multiple times per year and involve tools for positive decision-making, gang awareness, drug awareness, and other teen pressures. Additionally, unlike the rest of the districts, Lorview high school offers an elective course for seniors called "Crime and Punishment,"

the curriculum of which encompasses both the criminal and law enforcement sides of crime.

The Lorview school district hosts a gang awareness seminar once a year, one presentation of which is for students and the other for parents. The criminal investigator said, however, that hardly any parents attend the gang awareness seminar. At the time of the interview the investigator was trying to obtain a program similar to “Scared Straight” for the 2012-2013 school year. As already enacted in Oakhollow schools, the County Prosecutors bring imprisoned gang members into the schools to talk to students with the goal of providing students with a first hand account of consequences associated with gang membership and leading a life of crime.

Despite not having a more intensive gang awareness program as Oakhollow does, the way that administration and law enforcement handled an incident of gang-related behavior in the high school was methodical. The high school principal recounted this particular incident that occurred during the school year in which the interview took place:

We had three students take a picture this year in the back of a classroom on a phone, flashing various, what were reported as gang signs. They Tweeted it, got seen by parents of some other students who called right away asking what was going on. Kids are obviously in the building flashing gang signs, let’s investigate it. Our first point of reference is to call the local police department to talk about what signs they’re showing, because we’ve all had the training but it’s hard to identify what they were doing. It was identified right away, it was related to the Demons, the hand gestures. So, at that point we contacted all the parents of the three kids and let them know what was going on. The police officer wanted to talk to them, he didn’t believe that they were gang members. He called the prosecutor’s office to find out whether they’re known associates of gangs. I mean it was a whole protocol that followed and then he basically had just an educational piece with each of them, alone in the room with us, about gangs and gang life, the wannabe aspect of it that now it’s out there Tweeted and basically said to them, ‘We are located right across the river from Brookmill, what if someone from the Reapers comes and sees that, you posted that this is your school, they could be here after school today looking for you and then what?’ So, it was more of the

educational piece and being informational to them. We haven't had a problem since.

The principal's recollection of how the school and law enforcement officials dealt with students who displayed gang signs demonstrates how having a protocol to go by when dealing with such issues is important. A parent reported the incident, gang signs were identified, background checks on the students were performed, the students' parents were notified, and a police officer talked to the students with administration members about gangs and the potentially dangerous consequences of their actions. The process, from identifying the incident to problem resolution, was straightforward and effective.

Lorview does not have a gang presence to the extent that Oakhollow has in its schools and in town. In fact, officials in Lorview did not report that wannabe gangs have formed during their time in the district, whereas in Oakhollow wannabe gangs have formed both in town and in the schools. The most serious gang-related incident in Lorview was likely the flashing of gang signs, especially those seen by real gang members on social media. That particular example is critical because it demonstrates the importance of more extensive gang awareness programs for students, parents, and faculty. The district had a successful intervention strategy, which involved police officers from the County Prosecutor's office meeting with the gang members from Brookmill who were angered by the photo of Lorview students flashing gang signs.

One of the more noteworthy differences between Oakhollow and Lorview is that despite Lorview's adjacency to Brookmill, a city with a more intense gang presence, higher violent crime rate, and more severely disadvantaged neighborhoods than Rosegate (adjacent to Oakhollow), Oakhollow seems to have a much higher gang presence than Lorview, as revealed from the interviews. Lorview, however, has a higher average crime

rate and a higher average total of violent incidents in its schools (per 1,000 students) than the rest of the communities. This higher level of school violence was corroborated by the high school principal and district criminal investigator, who reported that physical altercations in the high school and middle school occur roughly once or twice a month, vandalism of school property about once a week, while incidents of substance abuse occur roughly once or twice per week. Incidents involving weapons in the districts' schools were estimated by officials to occur roughly twice or three times per year.

The higher rate of mean total violent incidents in Lorview's schools (17.4 per 1,000 students) compared to Clearfield (10.1), Eastfall (7.0), and Oakhollow (5.6) correlates with these town's distances to highly disadvantaged neighborhoods, the order of which is Lorview, Clearfield, Oakhollow, and Eastfall, from closest to farthest (see Table 5.2). In the regression analyses, rate of school district violence was strongly associated with proximity to highly disadvantaged neighborhoods, thus corroborating these associations in the communities studied in Phase II (see Table 4.11).

5.6 Eastfall

Eastfall, adjacent to and just east of Oakhollow, has over 10,500 people per square mile. Of the four communities studied, Eastfall is most similar to Oakhollow. Although Eastfall has a higher concentration of Asians, it is similar to Oakhollow because it shares nearly the same concentrations of poverty, population under 18, renter occupied housing units, residential transience, and population density. Eastfall and Oakhollow have the highest concentrations of these demographic characteristics of the four communities studied. In Eastfall, the school district's middle school principal was interviewed, as well as the district's SRO and the police department's gang specialist.

According to the respondents, there has been an elevated presence of gangs and youth exhibiting gang-related behavior in Eastfall for some time. The gang specialist reported that after the number of gang members residing in the town rose to about 25 in the mid 2000s, the number dropped to about 10 by the time of the interview in 2012. The decrease in gang members living in town was due to the incarceration of over a dozen Tigers gang members in the mid to late 2000s after a gang-related homicide in Eastfall. Many of the members incarcerated resided in Eastfall and Oakhollow and other Tigers members left the municipality after the incident. One student in Eastfall schools, while not an official gang member, was indirectly involved in the event. The homicide occurred as the result of an order from a leader of the Tigers in the city of Rosegate to seek revenge on two young men who had harmed a higher-ranking Tigers member days earlier in Norburn. The young men were located by a group of Tigers members on a street in Eastfall. After a confrontation, one of the sought-after men was shot multiple times and died a short time later. The homicide victim was a teenager from a nearby municipality.

A short time later, the Tigers leader “put a hit out” for a participant in the Eastfall homicide who was not a Tigers member, fearing that the individual might talk to police. The sought-after person was driven to Brookmill by Tigers members and was violently assaulted until the members thought the victim had died. Although this particular victim survived an attack by the Tigers, such events provide a snapshot of a time in the mid 2000s when there was elevated Tigers gang activity in and around Eastfall, which led to a violent gang-related crime in town that left many residents in shock, according to the gang specialist.

The homicide was not the only gang-related incident to occur in Eastfall. Just a year prior to the interview, the gang specialist recalled a violent gang-related altercation at a restaurant:

We had a supposed Reaper last summer, we had an incident at the Sizzle Stop, a riot in the middle of the day at about 5:30 maybe. Families there eating... there was a fight that escalated, it started in the park, alleged kids claim to be Reaper, over a girl member that was a Reaper. They got into an argument in a park, they leave, police come, they got kicked out, it spills over to the Sizzle Stop. There's a real Reaper who gets some of his friends, comes with about 10 or 11 people, goes to Sizzle Stop and they see the kid sitting in Sizzle Stop. A fight breaks out, highchairs are being swung at people. Meanwhile there are kids and it's the middle of the afternoon. Highchairs are being swung, firsts are flying, there's trays, people getting hit with trays in the middle of the day, and it wound up being a big incident, one kid had to get his eye stitched, he fractured his orbital socket. So, it was pretty substantial.

The entire incident was captured on the restaurant's surveillance cameras. Police were able to identify one of the young gang members because earlier in the year he was caught on a surveillance camera tagging a building in town. The Reaper member crossed out a Demon tag and sprayed Reaper symbols on the wall.

The gang specialist also recalled a "gang" that had formed in Eastfall called the Outlaws, not too long before the interviews were conducted. He explained that the gang was trying to claim that they were a sub-group, or "set" of a major gang:

We had this one set they were called Outlaws, like a home-grown gang, they were called the Outlaws, and they pretty much got squashed by another group from Rosegate, a set of the Demons. They didn't want them interfering with them because they were claiming that they were part of the Demons and so on and so forth. They pretty much were, from what I understand, threatened and pretty much shut down and disbanded their organization. Nothing came of it, but that was the word on the street and then after that you didn't hear anything from them.

The specialist emphasized that members of this homegrown group were Demons gang wannabes. The Outlaws, however, caught the attention of a real set of the Demons gang in Rosegate, which is two municipalities west of Eastfall. The specialist said the set did

not want the Outlaws meddling with their business, so they threatened the group and the Outlaws swiftly disbanded. In this case, similar to the incident in Lorview, the influence of nearby gangs in disadvantaged areas thwarted an instance of gang-related activity in Eastfall. Although the students in Lorview that documented themselves flashing gang signs were not members of an organized gang, the situation is still similar to the Outlaws; after real gang members from Brookmill discovered the photograph of students from Lorview flashing gang signs and authorities stepped in to mediate, there was no further gang-related behavior among those youth. In both events, proximity to disadvantage resulted in the suppression of gang-related behavior.

Officials indicated that there is less of a gang presence in Eastfall schools than in the municipality. The middle school principal reported that there were no gang members in the school at the time of the interview. The school district's SRO reported there was a small gang presence in the high school:

I can say that we've probably had a couple of low-level gang members... Blasters, a self-proclaimed Demon, we had a known Reaper in the high school, but we've never had any gang problem in the school. Meaning, we never had, these kids are Demon members and there's 4 of them, they're Demon members and they're students and they rule the school. We haven't had that. We don't have that.

The SRO did not recall any gang-related incidents occurring in Eastfall schools during his 6 years in the district. Similar to the level of gang presence reported by the school district criminal investigator in Lorview, the Eastfall SRO estimated that at any one time there were probably a couple low-level (not outwardly expressive) gang members in the schools, particularly in the high school.

Officials reported that gang wannabes were much more pervasive than gang members in Eastfall schools. The middle school principal recalled:

I've seen kids putting symbols... when they doodled or put things on their notebooks and stuff like that, which I know are gang symbols, such as for the Tigers. I've seen kids flashing what are signs to each other, which is a symbol of gangs. I think some kids act in certain ways because they're emulating gangs. The way they walk, the way they talk, the way they act, music they listen to, their emulating that. I've also seen the way some of them dress outside of school and they're, again, emulating that gang-type of attire.

In the community, the principal has seen youth altercations that resemble a "gang mentality" where, for example, fights are four-on-one. The youth in town seem to have a mentality that "if you fight me, you fight all my friends," the principal said, or "I have a problem with you, I'm going to get my friends together and we're going to take care of you." The principal, however, has not seen these kinds of activities in the middle school and had observed students drawing gang-related symbols and flashing hand signs as the only indicators of gang affiliation.

The Eastfall SRO also stated that wannabes are a larger problem than gangs. He said, "Our gang issue here is wannabes. Our gang issue here is a bunch of kids that think they're gang members but if they ever got G-Checked, if they ever got checked by a real gang member, they'd have a problem. They'd have a legit' problem." The officer's main concern about wannabes in Eastfall is what may happen should they encounter real gang members outside the schools. The SRO explained:

If you're claiming to be a Demon, and, I might not even be from Eastfall, I might be from Rosegate and I just happen to walk into the Sizzle Stop to get a hamburger and I see you in there 'reppin' our colors, I might just walk up to you and say, "Yo homie, who you reppin?" And if you don't have the right answer, you might have a problem. You might have a serious problem. And we tell these kids that. If you ever run into somebody, you're walking in the mall and a legit member comes up to you and G-checks you, you better have the right answers, if you don't have the right answers you have yourself a problem.

The officer believes that people have two views about wannabes. One is that wannabes are not real gang members and they are nothing to worry about. The other is that

wannabes eventually become what they emulate. Echoing the middle school principal's argument, the SRO noted that "I wanted to be a police officer, I'm a police officer... There are a lot of wannabes, but wannabes end up making something of themselves." The SRO believes that like any profession, most gang wannabes will keep pursuing gang membership until they become members.

Possible influences of proximity to disadvantage were suggested by some of the gang-related incidents in Eastfall that respondents described. Although the town is adjacent to Norburn, which has one moderately disadvantaged neighborhood, officials in Eastfall believe that the cities of Rosegate and Brookmill have the most negative influence on youth in town. The middle school principal believes that proximity affects students but mainly because of the high levels of residential transiency in town and thus the high volume of youth from other areas transferring in and out of the schools. The principal described how students who transfer from inner city schools bring their culture with them, which influences other students.

The middle school principal believes that Brookmill has the most substantial negative influence on students in Eastfall schools. The principal explained:

... We had three kids who transferred here from Brookmill last year and they were problem students, not problem students as far as gangs and violence goes, as much as they were problem students because they were disaffected from school. It just upset the normal flow of our school because they were truant, they were in class not doing work, coming to class late, disrupting classes, involved in a lot of peer conflict, maybe some bullying situations, not to the point where they were necessarily breaking the laws or committing acts of violence on anybody. They made themselves very quickly noticeable to everybody in the school. At the end of the school year we had a girl who transferred in from Highmont... She just came in so angry. Never got physical with anyone, nothing like that, but she was just a very angry girl and had serious anger management issues as far as yelling, screaming, cursing, and was definitely oppositional and defiant, especially to any kind of authority and things like that. So, we have our share from different places,

we've had kids come from out of state. I find that kids who go through our school system, who are here from the time they're young are better. Less problems.

The principal has experienced first-hand the disruption that some transfer students from urban areas have caused and explained that he believes students born, raised, and schooled in Eastfall are better behaved.

The gang specialist of the Eastfall police department believes that the area with the most negative influence on Eastfall is Rosegate. The specialist said that most gang members that are in town are from other places and are not homegrown:

[Gang members are] transplants or they initiated from another town. Edgecliff has a big gang presence, I know Reapers have their meetings in the Edgecliff area. That's where their set's out of. And Demons from our area, you have a Demons gang set, that's what a few of [the members] are from here, which is from Rosegate, and they are just moving to Eastfall or they were from Eastfall and they pick up this set in Rosegate and then get the big homies from there...

The gang specialist emphasized that nearby places such as Rosegate and Edgecliff are primary sources of the town's gang presence. Eastfall borders Norburn and is close to Edgecliff, and Vallea, all of which are also known to have a gang presence according to the 2010 New Jersey State Police Street Gang Survey.

Although officials in Eastfall acknowledged the town's proximity to urban areas as an influence on students, the SRO made a convincing argument that the media is much more powerful as an influence:

...If there are two transfers from Brookmill that come into our high school, are those kids going to influence some kids? I'm sure they will, but they're not influencing nearly 1,000 kids. The bigger avenue is what they watch on TV, what kind of music they listen to, how much they get away with at home. And what I've learned from the administrators in the school is that the bad kids gravitate to the bad kids. If I'm that type of kid now that's in Eastfall that wears my pants down and listens to heavy gangsta rap, and you transfer in, sooner or later we're going to meet up, because you're my kind and I'm your kind.

The SRO described the likelihood of a transfer student from an urban area influencing students in Eastfall versus what the students watch on television, what music they listen to, and so on. Students from Eastfall who act tough, embrace urban culture, and listen to rap music are likely to gravitate toward the transfer student from Brookmill who embraces the same type of culture.

The SRO believes that proximity to Rosegate, Brookmill, and Oakhollow has had a significant impact on the town's population composition. He stated that Eastfall's white population is probably the minority, which is an accurate observation according to census data. Hispanic or Latino residents, coupled with Asian, black, and residents of some other race, make up roughly 60 percent of the town's total population. The same composition of racial and ethnic groups in Oakhollow make up about 52 percent of the town's population while in Lorview and Clearfield they are 43 percent and 33 percent of the population, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010). Eastfall has the highest minority population among all communities studied.

Having lived in Eastfall all his life, the SRO described why he believes a demographic shift is occurring in town:

...The demographics have changed tremendously. We have a lot of Spanish, African American, Indian, we're kind of, I would probably say the Italians and the Irish are probably the minorities, and I think it's that, a little bit of that coming in, has changed our culture. Being so close to Brookmill and Rosegate, even Oakhollow, a lot of people that we deal with when you look at how they ended up, how they came to Eastfall, they moved. They moved from an inner city. They moved from Brookmill or they moved from Rosegate or they moved from Oakhollow or Norburn or Highmont. That's the majority, and it just kept going and kept going and kept going. We have apartment buildings in town, so it's lower income. And that's what they look for.

The SRO believes most inner city residents tend to move to rental buildings and apartment complexes in Eastfall that offer affordable or subsidized housing. Lorview and

Oakhollow have similar apartment complexes and officials in those municipalities shared the same perception as the SRO in Eastfall, which is that inner city residents are attracted to these developments because of their affordability.

The principal of the middle school also grew up in Eastfall and recalled how the vast majority of the population used to be white. The principal described in detail how the history of development in the town has shaped recent demographic change:

[Town residents] bought lots of land, two, three, four lots of land all in one area and built one house. That's where they lived, then when they're kids grew up, they're building a two-family house next door, they lived there. Then they built another two-family house, Aunt and Uncle lived there, built another... Now you got four two-family houses in a row all owned by the same family. Those generations have turned over. They've passed on. Those houses have been left to their children. Their children are no longer living in those homes but they own those homes and they're renting them out. When they're renting out those apartments, you can rent it out to someone that you know or you can choose who you want to rent it to and you get \$1,400 for your apartment, or somebody comes to you and says here's a voucher from the Federal Government, we're going to give you \$2,100 for this apartment and you're going to get the check in the mail on the first of every month. You don't live in the town, you're not vested in the town, what would you do? Take the \$2,100. And that's how I think a lot of people have found their way here.

The principal pointed out how the town has gone from a family-oriented place with land owners that built multiple, multi-unit housing for families to a place where younger generations are renting out units in these buildings, a lot of times for low-income families. Government subsidized housing is very enticing for landowners who rent housing units because they receive a guaranteed check from the government at the same time every month.

As Lorview and Oakhollow do, Eastfall serves as a "first step" out of the inner city. Affordable housing, safety, and a better education are the main attractors. The SRO recounted experiences with parents that had moved from an inner city:

I've heard this from the parents who get involved once they have no choice, but, 'I moved here from Brookmill to give you a better life and this is how you're acting?' ... A lot of times, they're like, 'I got to get my child out of here. What can I afford? I can afford Eastfall. I can afford, even Oakhollow' ... but Oakhollow and Eastfall are very similar in a lot of ways. But that's the thing, and I've heard that numerous times or I've heard a parent tell me, 'Sergeant, I left Brookmill to get my son out of this element, and he's doing this again, what do I do, can you help me?'

According to the SRO's account, inner city parents who move to Eastfall to remove their children from high levels of violence, gang presence, and pervasive street culture often find that their children behave in similar ways in Eastfall. As other officials have pointed out, students from urban areas often use their associations with gangs or street culture to boost their social status among a majority of students that don't share such associations.

Associations with gangs and street culture, however, are difficult to display through clothing in Eastfall because the district has had a school uniform policy for 4 years. Similar to officials' accounts in other districts, officials in Eastfall recalled seeing characteristics of urban culture among students in the district prior to the uniform policy. The district SRO stated that the display of urban culture in the schools was probably one of the "larger" issues. He explained: "The clothing was probably the biggest thing, kids wear their pants well below their waste, baggy clothes, triple X shirts... they're only 15 and they're wearing shirts that a 300-pound man should be wearing." The middle school principal described how the same phenomenon occurred prior to the uniform policy but praised the policy not only for eliminating dress code abuse but also for lessening discipline referrals. On the streets of Eastfall, however, there is a pronounced presence of urban culture among youth, according to the gang specialist. The specialist said that females in the town are highly influenced and awe-struck by urban culture and he

believes that if a small number of females embrace the culture, it spreads quickly to friends as well.

According to the officials interviewed in Eastfall, violence and gang presence in the district's schools are at low levels and gang wannabes tend to have a stronger presence. Gangs and gang-related activity have an elevated presence on the streets of Eastfall but, as the gang specialist explained, if a person walked down the streets of Eastfall, he or she probably would not encounter any gang-related activity. Gang-related incidents are rare in the town but the specialist indicated that at the time of the interview, gang presence and gang-related activity was on the increase again. Violent altercations in the schools are also rare but tend to come in waves. According to the SRO, clusters of violent incidents are the result of multiple revenge fights that stemmed from one altercation.

The Eastfall police department's gang specialist believes that gang wannabes are one of the most serious problems in Eastfall. He explained that gang wannabes are prone to encountering confirmed gang members who call them out on their lack of real membership. Such encounters may lead to violent confrontations. Because the Eastfall SRO strongly believes that wannabes put themselves in danger and will eventually become gang members, he strongly emphasized the following:

A wannabe needs to be educated because you didn't lose him yet so maybe you can educate him, but you know what it reverts back to? It reverts back to the parents. No sense in me calling a kid in during the day in school as the SRO and educating him on the threats of gangs and the dangers of gangs when he can go home and he can go out until 11, 12, 1, 2:00 in the morning, or he can go home and his mom and dad are affiliated with gangs.

Although Eastfall SRO firmly believes that most disciplinary and gang related issues could be traced back to parenting, he explained how wannabes need to be educated about the consequences of joining gangs because they have not yet become official members.

The influence of parenting and social media on violent incidents between students was intensely discussed during the interview with the SRO. This officer believes that social media and parenting influence gang-related behavior and urban culture among students more than does proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods. The SRO recalled multiple violent incidences, suicide threats, and bullying that have taken place on social media websites or stemmed from an incident on social media. Parents, he argued, need to talk with their children, monitor their activities both online and offline, and be strict disciplinarians. He recalled recent incidents where criminal complaints had been filed against students who become involved in violent altercations (due to a Zero Tolerance policy) and the parents almost always come to the defense of their children. The SRO stated that most children are not intimidated by the threat of the school calling their parents because of an incident in school. Most children, he said, respond with: “If you’re gonna call home, call home.” He added that parents always want to see video proof from the school’s surveillance system that their child was “in the wrong.”

Communication between parents and children is key to curbing gang involvement and violent behavior. Parents should not depend on school staff, officials, and prevention programs to teach their children discipline. The SRO explained:

I’ve had parents come up to me and ask me to do stuff, and I’ll give you an example, a parent will come up to me and say ‘Oh hey Detective, I meant to ask you, I don’t know if my son’s doing the right thing, you ever do anything with gangs, do you ever talk to the kids about gangs?’ And I’ll say, ‘Ma’am, did your son let you know that I just did an assembly in the high school last week on gangs?’... ‘Oh no he didn’t tell me’... ‘He didn’t tell you but did you ask? Did

you ask?’ I have three children. They come home and every night, I do mean every night, we ask ‘What went on today, what did you do today?’ My wife goes through their planner, my wife goes through their book bags, ‘You got to study, what’s this?’ Are there other parents that do that? Absolutely. Are there good amounts that don’t? Absolutely. And it’s always battling the parents.

The SRO emphasized that asking questions and keeping a watchful eye on children’s activities is an effective way to identify gang involvement among children. Parents must be wary of the types of clothes their children are wearing, if there are certain colors they won’t wear, or if they throw up hand signs in the mall, the parent needs to be aware about indicators of gang affiliations. The SRO hosts programs that educate parents about gangs, but such gang awareness education is provided under the guise of a “prom safety” seminar, which involves an ultimatum to attract the attendance of parents: If the student wishes to attend the prom, his or her parents must attend the seminar. In addition to prom safety material, the officer includes gang and drug awareness information in the presentation as a means to communicate these topics to parents while he has their undivided attention. If an ultimatum such as this were implemented in Lorview where officials provide a gang awareness seminar to parents, it is highly likely that more attendance would result.

Similar to the ways in which parents must establish an active and trusting relationship with their children, the SRO pointed out how he maintains good rapport with students in the district:

We build relationships with students with SROs just like teachers, guidance counselors and everything. I’ll get a kid that’ll knock on the door, ‘Officer, there might be a fight after school today.’ They tell me and then I go to the vice principal, I have great relationships with all the administrators in the school, and that’s a plus... we definitely work together, we definitely pick each others’ brains and combat what we need to combat, so it’s awesome.

Having a trustworthy relationship with the students can help to eliminate disputes that turn physical. Good rapport with students can also help to alleviate social media conflicts. The SRO recalled how a group of students once informed him about verbal abuse by another student on social media. From that information, the officer was then able to track the situation on social media and resolve the problem. Being an SRO for an entire district, however, can be an overwhelming task. The SRO reported that the district is likely to have an additional SRO for the 2012-2013 school year.

Although there are no programs in the school system dedicated solely to gang awareness or prevention, violence, drug, and gang prevention is mostly wrapped into the D.A.R.E. program as well as an extensive anti-bullying and violence program that has been incorporated at all grade levels. The school district has implemented the P.B.S. (Positive Behavior Support) program in all schools, which rewards students for good behavior and for following the rules. During Respect Week, which is mandated across all New Jersey school districts in the beginning of October, activities and seminars geared toward prevention of bullying and intimidation are implemented. During this week, the SRO brings in county and state prisoners to the middle and high school as a scare tactic to make the students aware of the consequences of gang membership, drug abuse, and various crimes. The principal of the middle school said that this program is called G.A.P. (Gang Alternatives Program), where prisoners talk to the students about why they should avoid gangs.

Unlike Lorview or Oakhollow, Eastfall is not adjacent to a highly populated city with moderate or high levels of concentrated disadvantage. Eastfall, however, is adjacent to Oakhollow and Norburn, which both contain one moderately disadvantaged

neighborhood. Proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods seems to have the most influence on youth in Eastfall through the movement of families from cities such as Rosegate, Brookmill, and Norburn, who send their children to Eastfall schools. While such students may influence some Eastfall youth to partake in gang-related activities or embrace urban culture, according to the respondents in Eastfall some of the most far-reaching influences are the media, Internet, television, video games, and movies.

Although recollections of the spike in gang-related activity during the mid 2000s gives the impression of an intense gang presence in Eastfall, the teenager who was murdered was not from Eastfall but happened to be found by gang members on an Eastfall street, which could have occurred in any municipality. Despite the difference in the number of resident gang members in Oakhollow and Eastfall, according to the gangs specialist of each district, officials in Oakhollow stated that “they have been lucky” to have no violent gang-related incidents in town. Officials in Oakhollow mentioned how the Eastfall gang-related homicide involved some gang members from their town, yet acknowledged that such an incident could have happened in any location.

Similarly to the other towns, all officials in Eastfall mentioned how the town has changed demographically and is still changing. While not stating it outright, officials mentioned demographic change as a possible causal factor behind urban culture and gang activity in the schools and on the streets. Like in the other communities studied, officials emphasized how apartment complexes and affordable housing in Eastfall attract inner city residents to the town as their first step out of the ghetto. The officials also mentioned that gang members in town are mostly individuals from nearby urban environments.

Although officials in Eastfall expressed the influences of proximity to disadvantage on students in the municipality's schools, most seem to believe that other factors have a more substantial impact on gang-related behavior and urban culture among youth. The SRO strongly indicated that parenting and social media were substantial influences on gang-related behavior and urban culture among youth in the district but the gang specialist reported that proximity to Rosegate was the most influential factor. Contrasted with Oakhollow, Eastfall and Lorview have a relatively small gang presence. However, spikes in gang activity on the streets of Eastfall as well as the presence of gang wannabes in the schools calls for a more comprehensive approach to gang prevention geared toward youth, such as the G.R.E.A.T. program implemented for Oakhollow middle school students.

5.7 Clearfield

Clearfield is another densely populated suburban community and is located about four to five municipalities south of Oakhollow and Eastfall. The town's population density is about 4,500 people per square mile but roughly half of its land area is not developable due to wetlands. A more accurate estimate of Clearfield's population density on its developable land is about 8,000 people per square mile. Clearfield is located at almost equal distance between the city of Rosegate to the northwest and the city of Highmont to the southwest. Among the four communities studied, Clearfield is the furthest road distance to moderately or highly disadvantaged neighborhoods. However, when just measuring distance to the highly disadvantaged neighborhoods, Clearfield is second closest because of its short drive to the highly disadvantaged city of Highmont. The town

is adjacent to Fairvale in its extreme northwest corner, which contains about two moderately disadvantaged neighborhoods.

In Clearfield the researcher interviewed the high school principal, vice principal, and one of the district's SROs. Although both the SRO and principal reported that there were no gang members among students in the school district at the time of the interview, the SRO recalled that there was an elevated gang presence around 2010. The SRO explained:

Clearfield has experienced individuals that have been associated with gangs. And we have and we do know for a fact that surrounding towns and towns even further north of us have also experienced students that have been somewhat connected to different gangs. We've had different students that were connected with the Demons. We've had different students that were connected with the Slammers. And we had also some students that were with the Reapers. Before, we had a problem with possible recruiting, where a student would come in and possibly share information about their [association] with a gang from other inner cities prior to them moving into Clearfield. We hope that parents probably moved them into Clearfield for a better, safer way of life.

The SRO emphasized that all of these gang-affiliated youth were transfer students from urban areas. He stated that there were no "homegrown" gangs or gang-affiliated students in Clearfield. Gang presence in the district, he reported, is a more recent phenomenon, only having emerged about 4 years prior to the time of the interview.

The SRO stated that sometimes entire families from inner cities moving to the district were affiliated with gangs and their children who attended Clearfield's schools were also affiliated. He described how the presence of gang members in the schools decreased from 2010 to 2012:

...We were able to identify all of them in the past. We actually went in and interviewed them and had teams from the New Jersey State Police come in and assist us with it, and we feel confident at this point that they have been relocated by their parents. Unfortunately, once their parents realized what their children were doing as well as the assistance and help we tried to give them to get that

child away from that, certain children decided they did not want to get away from [gangs], at which point those parents voluntarily removed the child out of this school system to make sure that no other child's safety was compromised in any way.

The officer applauded the good intelligence that the district has about individuals with possible gang affiliations in the community as well as the productive relationship that the district has with the County Prosecutor's Office and their Gang Unit. He reported that there have not been any gang-affiliated students in the district since the elevated presence in 2010.

The principal of the high school had previously worked in an urban school district in southern New Jersey and has experience with street gangs. The principal has undergone gang training at the State Prosecutor's office as well as at a County Prosecutor's Office in past positions at schools. From the principal's perspective, there is not a gang presence among students in the high school. The principal stated that, "[The students] don't understand that if I drop them off in the middle of Highmont, they wouldn't survive. This is nothing like an urban city or an impoverished area where gangs are, for the most part, families for these people." In other words, the principal believes that Clearfield youth are far removed from gangs and urban culture. At the time of the interview it was the principal's second year in the district and she had not experienced the elevated gang presence that the SRO had encountered in 2010.

In addition to a low gang presence, gang members in the community or in the schools would stand out because of the overwhelming absence of gang activity, said the vice principal. He stated that, as a gang member in Clearfield, "...you would be the sore thumb and you would draw a lot of attention to yourself, so I think that whatever does exist is probably... more underground." Likewise, both the principal and vice principal

agreed that there is not a presence of gang wannabes in the high school. The principal added that there are groups of “wannabe tough kids and cliques that come and go,” but such individuals and groups do not exhibit gang-related behavior. The vice principal reported that cliques emerge and dissipate from time to time and sometimes students associate a name with a clique, but he has not seen any activity associated with street gangs. He explained that “nowadays you put a group of kids together and the first thing people say is it’s a gang, 15 to 20 years ago it was a clique...” This is a more critical perspective of what constitutes gang-related behavior and what does not.

The SRO, however, believes that there is a presence of gang wannabes in Clearfield schools. The officer described various ways in which he has encountered gang-related characteristics among students:

...We experience that to date... and we have no problem communicating because we want all of our residents to know as we identify certain students that take an interest in possible gang activity or want to try to experience it in some way. You’re going to first probably see them dressing as if certain members may dress that belong to certain gangs. You may see the students that in the past had come to our schools and they were wearing certain colors. Shirts that might be red, certain shirts that may be blue. They may be wearing certain hats, and hats that are turned with their bill to the left or to the right, and that all has identifying characteristics of gangs. We’ve had a lot of instances where they start drawing symbols, not only on their own personal paperwork, but they may start writing it on the books or on school property. If that’s identified, our job is to identify it very quickly, and a lot of times this is where our camera system helps us, you find out who placed those symbols on our property, identify those students, get those students in, we immediately get them in for evaluation counseling, and if needed, if we need to actually, we put them in an exclusion program.

The officer added that if a multitude of remedial activities do not seem to work or if the student exhibiting gang-related behavior is not cooperative, he or she is then placed in exclusion, whereby the student is banned from being among other students until his or her gang affiliation has been fully investigated.

The SRO recalled that all gang-affiliated students in the past were from other municipalities. Similar to what officials said in the other communities studied, he believes that populations from inner cities are moving to places like Clearfield for a better life:

...Parents are realizing that their children are being placed in harm's way, they might have experienced something where someone was harmed or threatened to be harmed and they realized at this point that for the safety and welfare of their family that it was time to relocate. And again, Clearfield is no different than any other town, we're opened up to anyone that wishes to come here, and reside here in a lawful way, to attend our schools...

Such a perception is an overriding theme in interviews conducted in all four communities. While it is difficult to determine whether there is widespread movement of families from inner cities to nearby towns in this area of New Jersey, these communities are located in an area of dense suburban municipalities where housing costs are lower compared to many other suburban communities in the same county and region (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011).

Officials described how gang presence in Clearfield is not homegrown. The SRO described the roots of gang presence in the schools and community:

This was something that was brought from another environment, whether it was from another inner city that is close to us... We're finding that we do live very close to Highmont, we live very close to Rosegate, we live very close to Southton, and we're finding that, and those are just a few that unfortunately have their hands filled with a higher levels of gang activity, and... becoming a situation such as Highmont, they did have a rise of homicides that they were concerned about with gang activity. The mayor there has worked very diligently with the Attorney General's office as well as other law enforcement agencies. Their law enforcement has received assistance to help aid them in dealing with the elevated gang activity that they've experienced over the last 2 years.

The SRO believes that the safety of Clearfield's streets as well as its good education system attracts families from more disadvantaged cities nearby. Part of the lifestyle that

populations from nearby urban areas bring, however, is related to gangs. Those born and raised in Clearfield have not experienced street gangs before and the low crime, middle-class, suburban nature of the population does not lend itself to gang formation. However, when families move to the town from high crime, poverty-stricken cities and have had frequent encounters or involvement with gangs, a lifestyle endemic to the city is brought to the suburbs.

The vice principal also stated that populations from urban areas are moving to Clearfield. Based on his own family's experience, he stated: "...Really its just history repeating itself. I mean, my family, my mother grew up in the Bronx and my father grew up in Southton. They met, they moved here to Clearfield when the town was early on in its existence and a lot of other people made those same travels." The vice principal explained that the process of how his parents moved to Clearfield from inner cities resembles a similar trend among inner city residents in the 21st century. Those that currently live in disadvantaged areas are also looking to provide a better life for their children.

The SRO described how changes in the district's population have become most amplified in the past 4 of his 10 years (since about 2008) as an SRO in Clearfield:

I would say that for about half of my tenure here, we've started to see the influx of residents that are now moving from the inner cities that are becoming very overcrowded and also are experiencing a higher level of gang activity. They're realizing that the time for them to leave is now before their family gets harmed in any way, and they now are moving into our more suburban areas, which Clearfield is, and that's what we're now seeing. So we're adjusting to it. We realize that these people have been raised and lived in different environments that have gang activities, and we're now going to also have to deal with that as they move from that area to our townships.

The SRO emphasized how those moving from inner cities have grown up in different social and physical environments and have likely been exposed to higher levels of crime and gang activity than suburban municipalities. Clearfield schools, he said, have to adjust to an influx of students with different behavioral traits, cultural backgrounds, and possible associations with criminal activity and gangs

Although many of the transfer students come from Rosegate, the SRO firmly believes the municipality that poses the largest threat to the safety of Clearfield and its youth is Highmont. The officer explained further:

The closest location that we feel is giving us more concern for the safety and welfare of all, not only the students but the community itself and the children... would probably have to be the City of Highmont. If you take the highway, you're at Highmont in less than 2 miles. In 2 miles you're in the City of Highmont. In the City of Highmont, we're going to see the gang activity, which we talked about, but the biggest activity is the drug activity. Now there is a concern that... it's a very easy source for someone that wants to experience drugs or has a drug habit, to be able to go and in a very short drive, which I would say within 5 minutes they're in the City of Highmont, they could at that point buy, purchase their drugs that they may be addicted to, and they could in turn bring those drugs back into Clearfield in another 5 minutes and now we have a problem which we have to try to hopefully identify. Where are those drugs, who brought those drugs in, and hopefully get them off the street before they get into our community and into our schools.

In addition to gang activity, the officer suggested that illegal drug markets in surrounding cities are very active and there are neighborhoods where open-air drug sales are a normal attribute of the environment. Like other suburban towns in New Jersey that are close to inner cities, there is a concern that suburban youth who wish to try drugs or who have drug habits are able to access them within a matter of minutes. After the drugs are purchased and brought back to the suburbs, there are also risks posed to those whom the drugs are shared with.

The principal, however, believes that Rosegate is the biggest concern for overall safety of Clearfield and its students because the highest number of transfer students tend to be from there. The vice principal explained that the perceptions of students arriving from urban districts are the biggest concern. He suggested that when individuals from urban environments move into town, they use their place of origin as a social status tool. He explained:

You mention Highmont or Brookmill or Southton and right away, that's a perception. So when you have a new kid that moves into the school, into the community and they're moving from Brookmill or Highmont or Southon, right away, I think some of our kids automatically assume "oh they're a tough kid" and then some of those kids pick up on that. These kids try to use that to their advantage because it gives them, you know, "street cred." So, I think, though there's probably a small portion of it that's true, a lot of it is perceived and a lot of it is basically created by what people think when you mention those towns... that's what they envision... they envision gangs and everything else.

The negative perception of nearby cities has created a negative perception of the students who come from them. When students from nearby cities transfer into a suburban district like Clearfield, people associate the perception of the place with the students and assume they are street smart, tough, lower class, a minority, delinquent, and perhaps associated with gangs. The vice principal articulated though, that such perceptions are only true for a small number of transfer students because a majority have not been involved with crime or gangs.

In addition to perceptions of newcomers from urban areas, the vice principal also described how certain individuals tend to stand out in Clearfield because of its low minority population:

I think that certain people stand out in the community because they're different. Where, if those people were in a more urban community... they would blend in. Plus if there's a difference in ethnicity, that's going to stand out too because you know, though Clearfield is becoming more diverse, it's still more middle class

white, so people who are different stand out. You know what I'm saying? Minorities stand out in town... Like if I'm walking down the street, people aren't going to pay much attention to me... If I were African American or Hispanic, they probably would because that's not the norm in the town. So right away then, that to me, that brings their eye to that person and now, well ok, 'his pants are hanging a little low' or 'his hat is sideways' or 'she got this tattoo'... That's going to stand out in this community as opposed to if that were in Brookmill...

Clearfield's population consists of about one-third minority residents, the lowest of the communities studied, and this low proportion is also likely why Clearfield experienced the largest percent increases in Hispanic or Latino, black, and foreign-born populations from 2000 to 2010. Unlike in Eastfall and Oakhollow, Clearfield is still a majority white community and minorities stand out in both the community and the schools. Clearfield also has the lowest violent crime rate, percentage of the population under 18, percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch, as well as percentage foreign-born residents and female householders with children of the four communities. He added that in addition to minority groups standing out in Clearfield, those who embrace urban culture also stand out in a community where such styles of dress are not typical.

Transfer students from urban municipalities are common in Clearfield, but discussions with officials indicated that transfer students are not as prevalent in Clearfield as the other communities. According to officials, some transfer students have had gang affiliations, have been involved in violent incidents, and participate in street culture. The high school principal recalled one incident that involved a transfer student and occurred during the school year of the interview:

We had a situation this year where we had a student who transferred into us from Rosegate. We were well aware of his past. He didn't hang out with our kids and still went back to that area. We kind of had an idea, just from what the former school told us, as well as what our SROs found out, that he was involved in organized activity, but no specific gang. And he brought one of his friends here and one of our kids, outside the school, wound up getting physically attacked over

an iPod. They were arrested and so forth. We did the investigation within the school...we found it all stems back from his former town that he came from. So when kids move into us, we do a lot of digging. Calling principals, calling guidance counselors, our police departments speak with each other and that's what I think really helps out a lot, especially when you're a smaller town. If somebody comes in and they're a sore thumb and they stick out... you can tell that they're... I won't say an outsider but someone that's not the typical...

The student's past seemed to involve experience with gangs and by the way in which the principal described him, he likely did not fit in with the general student body. The principal's description of how the school deals with transfer students highlights the apprehension, caution, and careful steps that are taken when students transfer to the district, especially if they are from urban areas. Both the SRO's account of how school and law enforcement officials dealt with gang affiliated students and the principal's account of the in-depth investigation into the transfer student's past highlights the intensity of the disciplinary system and concerns about students from outside the district.

With regard to urban culture, the SRO felt that the school district was too relaxed with the student dress code and as a result many students began abusing the dress code. He stated that even though it is always better to be proactive then reactive, in this case the administration reacted to the problem and implemented a school uniform policy at the start of 2011. According to the SRO, the uniform policy effectively thwarted dress code abuse, display of urban culture, and signs of gang affiliation. Before the uniform policy, the principal recalled how some students would walk in a way that resembles a "hobo shuffle," wear sideways hats, and baggy pants. Like his previous statement, the vice principal added that the students who embrace urban culture, even by tweaking their school uniforms, tend to be perceived as "not to mess with." He suggested that "some kids are smart enough to use [urban culture] to develop their status."

The SRO explained that the school uniform policy has greatly helped law enforcement identify students in the community when they are on patrol. The uniforms, he said, make it easier for faculty, law enforcement, and residents alike to identify students, outsiders and students from other districts. The SRO described the situation in the schools prior to the uniform policy:

It was a little bit easier for certain individuals from certain areas to blend in with our children because some of our children were beginning to have characteristics of wannabes... they kind of snuck under the radar and we really knew that... if we're going to allow Clearfield to become like so many other towns that kind of lost their guard and dropped their guard on security and safety and education, that we could fall pretty to the same. So, at that point we came in with our full uniform code for the whole district... that's what helped us in curtailing the problems that we've had.

The SRO noted that school uniforms have improved school safety, have made it easier to identify outsiders, and have made it difficult for students to exhibit characteristics of urban culture and gangs.

The vice principal believes that the media also encourages students to embrace urban culture, whether they are from Clearfield or elsewhere:

I think a lot of things that are going on in the media promote this. I mean, think about it, the music that the kids listen to, all the rap music is all centered around gang attitude. It's getting street credit and that type of stuff so that's the way they act. Issues that you deal with, kids who are wearing their pants a certain way or their shirt's a certain way, all of that stuff comes from what they see in the media. Is it stuff that gangs do? Sure, but I think that the people in that arena, in the rap world, in Hollywood, have mimicked stuff that gangs do because it gives them credit. And then, the kids mimic what they see in the media. They're wearing their hats sideways, well that's because they're watching some NFL football player or some NBA star or some rap star doing that. They wear their clothes a certain way because that's what they see.

Similar to the Eastfall SRO's perspective, the vice principal suggested that the media has a direct influence on a wide audience. Students from Clearfield that have not encountered

urban culture in real life may be wearing baggy jeans because they saw the styles popularized in a rap music video on television.

In addition to students showing gang affiliations and aspects of urban culture before the uniform policy, the principal said that the school was less safe prior to the start of her position, which was 2 years before the interview. She stated: “For people in the community that had kids [in the high school] prior to me coming here, this was what parents would call ‘hell on Earth.’” The principal said the district superintendent has called her “the cleaner” because she makes sure things are in order and has improved school safety over the last 2 years. Like in the other communities, Clearview implements D.A.R.E. as a way to reach the students on drug and gang awareness and violence prevention. There are two SROs assigned to the school district and the high school has a “Drop In Center” where students can confidentially talk to a counselor. The principal said that there is a lot of communication between officials, community members, parents, and faculty.

The principal takes a teamwork approach to running the school and believes that although there is a hierarchy within the administration, she believes everyone should be treated at the same level and work as a team. So far, she said, this has proven to be successful. The principal emphasized her point by recalling how an administration operated in a high school she worked in prior to Clearfield:

The principal, the vice principal, the discipline was handed down differently. You get regular detention, I get a Saturday detention, we both did the same thing. There’s was a lot of inconsistencies that took place there with that. That’s where the administrative team has to work together and put these things together... they were on their own little islands, and I believe that’s how it worked prior to me coming here was that the principal did the principal things, the vice principal did discipline. I want the vice principal to know curriculum just like I want to know about discipline. In your larger districts, that is the problem... I might have... 9th

graders every year, I do their discipline, so when they become 10th graders, you don't know what they did as 9th graders. So, and even districts that do that with guidance counselors, well how do know what kind of kid he was, what kind of problems? There's no sequential pattern that happens, and it happens in a lot of those districts.

The principal said that, prior to her employment the administration at the high school did not work together, which resulted in disciplinary inconsistencies between administrators. Additionally, often in larger districts there will be a vice principal for each grade. In that case, each vice principal is assigned a grade that he or she is responsible for. For example, the "vice principal of 10th grade" has new students each year and as a result is assigned an entirely new class of students every year. Such a system, the principal stressed, causes academic, disciplinary, and guidance inconsistencies between students.

The vice principal stated that, "our policy here in the district is one of education, treatment, and support. It's not punitive. That's not the first step. So we get involved in a lot of things as a school that other schools don't get involved in." The vice principal was referring to services such as the Drop In Center and how the administration and law enforcement have created a remedial disciplinary process rather than a Zero Tolerance system. Like the principal, the vice principal also emphasized how communication between law enforcement, faculty, and administration is critical to maintain safety.

With regard to official programs, the SRO reported that there are seven D.A.R.E. police officers that implement D.A.R.E. programs for the district's students, which provide yearlong activities and presentations that supply students with tools to steer clear of drugs, gangs, alcohol, and violence. There are 5th grade and 7th grade D.A.R.E. programs as well as an 8th grade police academy where participating students receive more information on anti-gang and anti-drug measures as well as direct exposure to daily

procedures of police officers. The district has also just created a police academy for high school students. Although gang prevention is wrapped into D.A.R.E. programs and the police academies, law enforcement schedule a visit of prisoners to the schools with cooperation from the County Prosecutor's Office, which commonly include prisoners who are active gang members. Similar to the other communities, the prisoners tell the students to make the right choices based on the consequences they face from making poor choices in the past.

Overall, from the interviews, it seems that Clearfield's greater distance from disadvantaged neighborhoods and lower frequency of transfer students compared to the other communities has greatly limited Clearfield youths' exposure to gangs and urban culture. Since Clearfield also has markedly lower concentrations of minority populations and poverty than the other communities, perhaps these characteristics are associated with the lower presence of gangs and gang wannabes as communicated by community stakeholders. Since Clearfield has seen the largest percent increases in total population, black residents, Hispanic or Latino residents, and foreign-born residents, the community may be in a later stage of demographic change than communities such as Eastfall and Oakhollow. Clearfield is most similar to Lorview in its population density as well as its demographic, socioeconomic, and housing characteristics. The difference, however, is Lorview's location adjacent to Brookmill, a sizable city with highly and moderately disadvantaged neighborhoods. This difference may explain the higher number of gang-related incidents and presence of gang wannabes in Lorview's schools compared to Clearfield.

5.8 Concluding Remarks

Interviews with community stakeholders in four densely populated suburban communities in northern New Jersey revealed accounts of their experiences with school-age youth, discussions about their perceptions of locations and social processes, as well as factual information about aspects of the school districts. Officials in all communities had negative perceptions of nearby urban areas such as Brookmill, Rosegate, and Highmont. These three cities were most consistently mentioned as influences on student safety, gang presence in the schools and community, and involvement with urban culture. The most influential aspects of proximity to disadvantaged areas were: transfer students from urban areas, immigration of residents from urban areas, and connections to family and friends in urban areas. Many of the officials used “imported,” “transplant,” “influx,” “brought from another environment,” and “moving into,” to describe the sources of gang presence or urban culture among youth in the communities.

Concerns about demographic changes seemed to go hand-in-hand with concerns about safety and making adjustments to meet the needs of an increased number of low-income and minority residents. In conversations with officials, gang presence, urban culture, and decreased safety were often coterminous with transfer students and demographic change. After talking about increases in minority populations and residential transiency in the community, the middle school administrators who were lifelong Oakhollow residents recalled how they felt less safe on the streets in 2012 than in the early 1990s. In Lorview the criminal investigator stated that inner city residents are moving to a large apartment complex in town, which is where he believed most of the gang activity in the community could be traced to. In Eastfall the gang specialist said that

most gang members residing in town live in government subsidized housing and are from other areas. In Clearfield gang presence in the schools was communicated as a recent phenomenon brought into the district exclusively by an increasing number of transfer students from inner cities, as stated by the SRO.

Contrariwise, school administrators and law enforcement personnel in Oakhollow and Eastfall recalled instances of homegrown gangs. According to the officials in Oakhollow, homegrown gangs have formed in the high school and in the community, while in Eastfall the gang specialist recalled a homegrown gang that had formed in the community. Officials stated that these groups were wannabe gangs even though the Lunatics that formed in Oakhollow high school were involved in crimes such as street robberies. The Lunatics, while claiming to be a set of the Demons gang, however, eventually disbanded, some joining an official Demons gang set in Rosegate and others leaving gang life altogether. The Outlaws gang that formed on the streets of Eastfall seemed to be less serious than the Lunatics, especially because they weren't involved in much crime other than vandalism and because they were threatened and disbanded by a set of the Demons gang from Rosegate.

The dynamics of proximity to disadvantage and gang presence in the communities suggests that gang-affiliated individuals in the schools or in the neighborhood are "transplants" from inner cities while gang wannabes are likely to have grown up in the community. Officials nearly always talked about gang presence as an "extracommunity" phenomenon instead of an internally-generated phenomenon. Many officials showed concern about the potential influences of gang-affiliated transfer on native students. Such influences, though, may also stem from social networks that reach into the inner city.

Visiting family or friends in Brookmill may expose a Lorview student to gang activity or street culture. Transfer students and those that move from inner cities to the communities were said to maintain their connections to the inner city with the possibility of convincing others from urban areas to migrate. Some officials stated that such a process may bring more gang-affiliated youth to the districts.

Proximity to disadvantage had some positive effects on the presence of gang wannabes in the communities. In Lorview, irritated Demons gang members from Brookmill nearly came in contact with high school youth who had posted a picture of themselves flashing Demons gang hand signs, earning them a harsh reminder from gangs and law enforcement regarding the seriousness of participating in gang-related behavior without real affiliations. In Eastfall a homegrown gang that claimed to be a set of the Demons was disbanded by a real Demons gang set in Rosegate. Thus in these cases proximity to disadvantaged areas with real gangs eliminated some instances of wannabe gang activity in nearby areas.

Each community studied has undergone changes since 1990. Black and Hispanic or Latino populations in Oakhollow and Eastfall changed more dramatically from 1990 to 2000 than from 2000 to 2010, and perhaps Clearfield and Lorview will follow suit but at a later time. Some neighborhood characteristics will likely determine whether Clearfield and Lorview reach similar concentrations of minority populations and poverty as Oakhollow and Eastfall. For example, renter occupied housing is more attractive to lower income families and both Oakhollow and Eastfall's housing stock consist of over 50 percent renter occupied units, whereas Clearfield and Lorview have 42 percent occupied housing units or less (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990; 2000; 2006-2010). Also, officials in

Oakhollow and Eastfall indicated a substantial presence of government subsidized housing in their communities, which also provide attractive living options for low income families moving from inner cities. All communities have at least one large, low-rise apartment complex that spans multiple city blocks and is either public or affordable housing, except for Clearfield.

Concerns about community change often brought out feelings of nostalgia in discussions with officials as they explained the demographics, family values, and disciplinary climate of the past. Such nostalgic moments were very noticeable among officials in Oakhollow and Eastfall, again suggesting that more substantial neighborhood change has already occurred in these places compared to Lorview and Clearfield. The diversity of racial and ethnic groups was often celebrated by officials as some of the best characteristics of their schools and town. In other instances though, diversity was cited as a challenge because of language barriers and imported elements such as gang affiliations or street culture. School uniforms, while mostly eliminating the visibility of street culture and gang affiliations, often cited for the decreasing number of disciplinary referrals, also make it more difficult for officials to identify gang-affiliated students. The benefits of school uniforms, however, seem to outweigh the disadvantages and most officials praised them.

5.9 Phase II Research Limitations

The four communities studied do not constitute a representative sample of municipalities in state of New Jersey. The goal was to create a snapshot of what is happening in one area of the state and therefore the results of the qualitative research are not generalizable. And although each participant signed a consent form that guarantees the anonymity of

individuals, schools, districts, municipalities, and counties, not every participant may have felt comfortable enough to be completely truthful or to reveal the full story. The interviews relied heavily on the assumption that due to the guarantee of anonymity, the interviewee, in turn, will reveal as much information as possible. In the research field there is a well-known tendency of school administrators and public officials to deny the presence of gangs in the schools (McEvoy, 1990; Naber et al., 2006). However, the value of obtaining a ground level perspective on these issues in comparison without relying entirely on secondary data is unmatched.

Much of the information gathered from the interviews are perceptions and recollections of student behavior, phenomena that may influence student behavior, what students are communicating through their clothing styles, as well as the “mentality” of students. While much information was collected about officials’ own personal experiences, encounters, and perceptions of disadvantaged neighborhoods, many of the interview questions addressed student-based phenomena. Therefore, what officials believe to be reasons behind a student portraying gang-related behavior, for example, might not accurately indicate how the student really feels or what he or she has experienced. Interviews with school administrators and law enforcement officials are meant to paint a picture of what may be occurring among students. Although most of the officials interviewed are in the presence of students on a daily basis and provided recollections of events, they cannot comprehensively depict why students might join a gang, emulate gang-related behavior, wear baggy pants, talk in street slang, or how students may be influenced by proximity to disadvantage or transfer students from urban areas.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Findings of this dissertation's research overlap literature in multiple fields, including urban studies, criminology, sociology, geography, and education. From the effects of demographic composition to perceptions of transfer students as well as school uniform policies and neighborhood stigmatization, the findings paint a complex picture of the influences of and the interrelations and tensions between race and ethnicity, residential transiency, perceptions of people and places, youth social status, levels of gang involvement, cultural affiliations, proximity to inner cities, and alterations to the traditional American suburb. Findings of the dissertation are discussed in four sections: 1) the influence of neighborhood and school-level demographic characteristics on crime, gang presence, and school violence, 2) demographic changes in rural and suburban areas of New Jersey and community stakeholder's perceptions of neighborhood change, 3) the impacts of proximity to disadvantaged areas on crime, gang presence, and school violence, and 4) youth participation in gang involvement and urban culture.

6.1 Influence of Community Composition and School-Based Characteristics on Gang Presence, Crime, and School Violence

Results of the regression analyses indicated that gang presence, crime, and school violence are strongly associated with neighborhood demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, as well as school-based characteristics, at the ecological level. Sets of logistic regression models analyzed neighborhood and school-level predictors of, 1) gang presence and severity of gang presence in municipalities and, 2) gang presence and

severity of gang presence in municipality schools. Research in criminology support the findings that gang presence and severity of gang presence in New Jersey municipalities are strongly associated with percent black population and percent Hispanic or Latino population (Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993; Hill et al., 1999; Schwartz, 1989; Winfree et al., 1994), percent below poverty level (Bowker and Klein, 1983; 1993; Hagedorn, 1988; Hill et al., 1999; Klein, 1995; Moore, 1991; Schwartz, 1989; Vigil, 1988; Winfree et al., 1994), and residential transiency (Fagan, 1996; Miller, 2001; Thrasher, 1927). Total average student enrollment and percent of students receiving free lunch in municipality schools strongly predicted gang presence and severity of gang presence in municipalities but there is no such research on “school characteristic – neighborhood gang presence” relationships.

Influences of minority populations, poverty, residential transiency, as well as school characteristics on gang presence in New Jersey municipalities indicates the that elements of disadvantage play a role in the formation of delinquent groups such as gangs. Simply experiencing higher percentages of minority populations or poverty in a New Jersey municipality indicates higher likelihood that there is a gang presence, and also points to higher likelihood of a more severe gang presence. Such findings indicate that gang prevention initiatives should target the most at-risk municipalities for gang presence, such as those with high levels of poverty, minority populations, and population change. These results also echo that of Shaw and McKay’ (1943) study because although these researchers investigated neighborhood effects on juvenile delinquency, they also discovered the formation of delinquent subcultures in the communities they studied, which Thrasher (1927) had explored much more intensely.

The extent to which “school” characteristics independently predict gang presence in municipalities, however, is debatable because of these variables’ strong ties to similar municipality-based variables. For example, average total student enrollment in municipalities is highly correlated with municipality total population and percent of students receiving free lunch in municipality schools is highly correlated with percent of those in poverty in municipalities. Nonetheless, the effects of school characteristics on neighborhood gang presence deserve further research. Also, the percentage of vacant housing units predicted no gang presence in municipalities as well as lower severity of gang presence in municipalities. These relationships are, perhaps, the opposite of what might be commonly predicted, as vacant housing units have been shown to increase disorder and fear of crime (Brunton-Smith and Sturgis, 2011; Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004; Skogan, 1986; 1990). Further research is needed on the influence of neighborhood characteristics such as vacant housing on gang presence.

Research also supports findings of the logistic regression analyses that showed percentage black and percentage Hispanic or Latino residents as significant predictors of gang presence in municipality schools (Curry et al., 2002; Howell, 2000; Lahey et al., 1999). Since racial and ethnic characteristics of municipalities are highly correlated with racial and ethnic characteristics of municipality schools, it is also possible to conclude that percent black and Hispanic or Latino students in municipality schools also predict gang presence in municipality schools. Also, very little research supports the strong association between gang presence in municipality schools and average total enrollment in municipality schools (Robers et al., 2012), and there is very little research that has explored municipality poverty and percent of students receiving free lunch as predictors

of gang presence in municipality schools, which the logistic regression analyses indicate. Poverty and income, however, have been shown to indicate gang involvement among youth (Bowker and Klein, 1983; 1993; Hagedorn, 1988; Hill et al., 1999; Klein, 1995; Moore, 1991; Schwartz, 1989; Vigil, 1988; Winfree et al., 1994). Since municipality poverty and percent of students receiving free lunch are highly correlated (students are qualified to receive free lunch based on their family's income level), however, their impact on gang presence in schools is likely similar.

Based on the analyses, severity of gang presence in schools was almost completely absent of significant predictors. The only significant predictor was percent Hispanic or Latino population in Model 1. With a relatively small sample size and little data to effectively construct a more robust severity of gang presence in municipality schools (SGPMS) index, results of logistic regression analyses of the predictors of SGPMS must be interpreted with caution. Since most research has investigated gang presence instead of severity of gang presence in schools, perhaps predictors of levels of gang involvement among school age youth need further assessment. Regardless, overall findings of significant predictors of gang presence in New Jersey municipalities and schools highlighted the importance of the ecological approach taken by Park (1925) and Shaw and McKay (1943) and its potential for use in gang research, especially for investigating neighborhood-level effects on gang presence.

Characteristics that comprise the core elements of concentrated disadvantage such as poverty, unemployment, and black population were strong predictors of municipality crime rate, violent crime rate, and rate of school violence. Studies that investigated the effects of concentrated disadvantage on neighborhood crime, notably the work of Robert

Sampson and his colleagues as well as research by Ruth Peterson and Lauren Krivo, support these findings (Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012). Other research on the effects of school size and student poverty on school violence also support the quantitative findings (Bakioglu, 2009; Chen and Weikart, 2008; Klonsky, 2002; Laub and Lauritsen, 1998).

Results of multiple regression analyses that investigated the predictors of crime rate and violent crime rate in municipalities paralleled those of research on the effects of global constructs of concentrated disadvantage on crime and violent crime (Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997; Sampson and Graif, 2009; Tita and Greenbaum, 2009). In other words, crime rate and violent crime rate were strongly associated with predictor variables such as percent black population, percent of population under 18, percent in poverty, and percent unemployed. Additionally, homicides were included in the violent crime rate measure in the regression analyses and research has shown that neighborhood disadvantage also predicts higher homicide rates (Hannon, 2005; Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003; MacDonald and Gover, 2005; Morenoff et al., 2001).

Some research supports the association between average crime rate and percent vacant housing units (Skogan, 1986; 1990), which was the strongest predictor of average crime rate in New Jersey municipalities. Research also supports the findings of the multiple regression analyses that indicated connections between average crime rate and poverty, but especially average violent crime rate and poverty (Flango and Sherbenou, 1976; Ludwig et al., 2001; Neapolitan, 1992; Patterson, 1991). Percent black population and percentage of those in poverty were strong predictors of average violent crime rate in

municipalities, which is supported by major studies that have investigated the influence of neighborhood disadvantage on violent crime (Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997).

Because percent vacant housing units was such a strong predictor of average violent crime rate at the ecological level in New Jersey, and there is such little research on this relationship, more studies need to explore relationships between these phenomena. Since the major influence of vacant housing units in a community on crime is likely to be through increased fear of crime among residents (Brunton-Smith and Sturgis, 2011; Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004; Skogan, 1986; 1990), the ways in which the presence of vacant housing units in neighborhoods instigates the breakdown of informal social controls through increased fear of crime needs further investigation. Although neighborhood crime has been linked to greater numbers of abandoned buildings (Spelman, 1993), further exploration needs to consider whether vacant housing increases violent crime and gang presence because it may increase drug sales and drug use in an area and could serve as weapons stashes, drug stash houses, or places to conduct gang-related activity or violence.

Investigation into the relationships between neighborhood disadvantage and crime as mediated by collective efficacy, social cohesion, or informal social control was beyond the scope of this dissertation. Residential transiency, however, can be considered an indicator of these mediating factors (Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997; Sampson and Graif, 2009; Sampson and Groves, 1989). Residential transiency, called “percent who moved to municipality in 2000 or later” in this dissertation, was not found as a significant predictor of crime rate or violent crime rate.

Such results are inversely related to those of early Chicago School researchers, notably from Shaw and McKay's (1943) study, as well as other more recent research (Bursik, 1986; Kirck and Laub, 2010), which found that high rates of neighborhood delinquency were tied to high levels of neighborhood transition. Instead, minority population, vacant housing units, poverty, and school characteristics significantly predicted municipality crime rates.

Violent crime in the community was also associated with average student enrollment and percentage of students receiving free lunch in municipality schools, but such relationships have not been explored in criminological or education research. However, school size is closely associated with the size of the municipality population and as explained earlier, student poverty is highly correlated with municipality poverty. Student poverty was shown to predict violent crime in municipalities most likely because of its strong connection with municipality poverty, which by itself is a substantial predictor of neighborhood crime (Flango and Sherbenou, 1976; Ludwig et al., 2001; Neapolitan, 1992; Patterson, 1991). Findings that indicated predictors of crime rate and violent crime rate in New Jersey municipalities reinforce the important roles that elements of neighborhood disadvantage play in neighborhood crime. These results, however, analyzed predictors of crime at the city level, so conclusions about "neighborhood effects" that this dissertation's research make are based on the larger, more ecological scale of municipalities instead of census tracts, which are more representative of neighborhoods.

Results of multiple regression analyses that investigated predictors of average rate of violence in municipality schools indicated a strong relationship between school

violence and percentage of students receiving free lunch (Carlson, 2006; Chen and Weikart, 2008). Anderson et al. (1998) and Laub and Lauritsen (1998) indicated that poverty as a neighborhood characteristic, along with population change, was connected to school violence, but the regression results do not pinpoint neighborhood poverty as a significant predictor of school violence. Also, school size was negatively associated with rate of school violence, thus countering research that has demonstrated that increased school size leads to more school violence (Bakioglu, 2009; Chen, 2008; Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools, 2005; Ferris and West, 2004; Klonsky, 2002; Leung and Ferris, 2008). However, most studies investigate school size in relation to total incidents of violence in school as opposed to rate of school violence. When school size was statistically explored as a predictor of total incidents of violence in municipality schools (instead of rate of school violence), the correlation was very strong.

Although the average rate of violence in municipality schools was not related to total student enrollment in municipalities, the average total amount of violence in municipality schools was related to total student enrollment in New Jersey municipalities, which is supported by prior research (Bakioglu, 2009; Chen, 2008; Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools, 2005; Ferris and West, 2004; Klonsky, 2002; Leung and Ferris, 2008). Logically, this relationship makes sense: the greater number of students in a municipality's schools, the greater likelihood of more total incidents of violence. Additionally, residential transiency was a significant predictor of rate of school violence in one regression model, a finding supported by previous research (Laub and Lauritsen, 1998; Welsh et al., 2000). Although there is little statistical power between rate of school violence and neighborhood-level predictors, researchers have emphasized

the importance of the relationships between communities and schools (Bowen and Richman 2002; Gottfredson 2001) and have demonstrated links between school violence and community characteristics (Bowen and Van Dorn, 2002; Chen, 2008; Hellman, 1986; Menacker et al., 1990; Nash, 2002; Welsh et al., 2000).

In the last model of the multiple regression analyses that explored predictors of rate of violence in municipality schools, percent Hispanic or Latino population was found to significantly predict lower rates of school violence in municipalities. Research on such a phenomenon is nonexistent and an explanation for this is difficult to attain. However, the same relationship occurred in the multiple regression analyses that investigated predictors of average crime rate; percent Hispanic or Latino populations in municipalities significantly predicted lower average crime rate of municipalities. These relationships might be because of the high levels of integration between white and Hispanic or Latino populations in communities, and because majority white population in neighborhoods is associated with lower crime rates (Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012). Because white and Hispanic or Latino populations are likely to be integrated in neighborhoods and black populations are more likely to be highly segregated from these populations, the likelihood that percent Hispanic or Latino populations predicts lower crime rate and rate of violence in municipality schools becomes greater.

The strong link between rate of school violence and percent of students receiving free lunch indicates that further research must address this relationship. Since percent of students receiving free lunch is highly related to neighborhood poverty, however, such a school-based characteristic crosses over as a neighborhood factor. Neighborhood poverty has been known to increase neighborhood crime and is a major component of

neighborhood disadvantage. Research has shown links between community crime and school violence, although this dissertation did not address such a relationship (Hoffmann and Johnson, 2000; Limbos and Casteel, 2008). Further research needs to investigate the community crime – school violence relationship.

The dissertation's research showed that neighborhood influences on rate of violence in municipality schools are weak. Total school district enrollment and students receiving free lunch, however, were powerful predictors of rate of violence in municipality schools. Such findings call for smaller school size and bring to light the problems that students may encounter as a result of poverty. Thus, percentage of students receiving free school lunch has the potential to affect violence with other students at school, involvement with drugs, vandalism, and weapons. Rate of school violence was measured as total average number of incidents in municipality schools per 1,000 students, which included vandalism, substance abuse, violence, and weapons incidents. Problems at home, academic stress, lack of social capital, and other factors that might result from lower socioeconomic status could potentially influence student behavior in schools.

The results of the regression analyses also emphasize the importance of research that takes the ecological approach. As Robert Sampson and his colleagues have demonstrated, as well as research by Ruth Peterson and Lauren Krivo, the importance of neighborhood effects on crime, violent crime, and collective efficacy seem to impact populations far beyond the effects of individual, psychological, familial, or peer characteristics. The shift in research from individual to neighborhood effects on crime also needs to occur for gang involvement. Much research has investigated individual, family, and peer effects on gang involvement but there remains a dearth of research that

explores neighborhood structural influences on gang presence. As demonstrated by the regression analyses, neighborhood effects matter when investigating predictors of gang presence at the ecological level of the community. Research in criminology and sociology must continue to advance the investigation of neighborhood effects on crime and gang involvement with rigorous quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies.

6.2 Community Change and Community Safety

Maps and charts of demographic and socioeconomic change between 2000 and 2010 across New Jersey illustrated considerable mean percent increases in total population, those whose income is below poverty level, those who are unemployed, female householders with children, foreign-born populations, as well as black, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino populations in rural and suburban municipalities and schools across New Jersey. With the exception of an increase in foreign-born populations in urban centers exceeding that of urban suburbs, percent increases in the aforementioned demographic and socioeconomic characteristics in rural areas, rural centers, suburban areas, and urban suburbs exceeded that of urban centers in each instance. These results are similar to reports of national demographic and socioeconomic trends between 2000 to 2010 that showed increasing minority populations and poverty in suburban and rural communities and schools (Drier, 2004; Evans, 2007; Freeman, 2010; Kneebone, 2010; Kneebone and Berube, 2013; Press, 2007; Robers et al., 2012). Similar trends were demonstrated as early as the 1970s (Masotti and Hadden, 1973; Muller, 1976).

Mean percent changes in students receiving free lunch also experienced large increases in all community types except urban centers. In schools throughout the U.S., more and more students are applying for and are eligible to receive free or reduced

lunches. Dillon (2011) demonstrated that students on subsidized lunches increased from 18 million in the 2006-2007 school year to 21 million in the 2010-2011 school year. Students and families that were not previously eligible for such programs are now becoming eligible. Dillon (2011) indicated that many formerly middle-class families who have moved down the socioeconomic ladder request that schools conceal the fact that their children are receiving free or reduced lunches.

Maps and charts also indicated increases in crime rates in rural and suburban areas between 2005 and 2010 in New Jersey while crime rates in urban areas fell. Various studies and reports have demonstrated the emergence of gang presence and more serious crime problems in suburban environments (Kneebone and Raphael, 2011; Moriarty and Fleming, 1990; National Drug Intelligence Center, 2008; 2009). Concentrated disadvantage has also been increasing in its traditional setting, the central city, as well as in suburban communities (Cooke, 2010; Kneebone, 2011; Lichter et al., 2012). Since trends in the U.S. are reflective of trends in New Jersey municipalities, and because violent crime and gang presence are strongly associated with elements of neighborhood disadvantage, one may well predict a continued rise in crime and gang presence in those rural and suburban communities in New Jersey that are experiencing increases in disadvantage. Suburban neighborhoods may be ill equipped for these changes.

Interviews with officials in each of the four communities studied indicated perceptions of demographic change and decreased community safety. The ecological terms invasion, succession, and dominance were applied to urban populations by Park (1925) and Zorbaugh (1926), and were used in similar ways in discussions with the community stakeholders, particularly in those communities closest to disadvantaged

neighborhoods. Both the middle school administrators and SROs in Oakhollow, the community closest to disadvantaged neighborhoods, meticulously outlined how the town has changed since the 1990s. Similar to “natural areas” of the city that characterize neighborhoods based on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics as posited by Park (1925) and Zorbaugh (1926), officials recalled how the section of town closest to disadvantaged neighborhoods was the first to undergo significant change and became home to higher numbers of minority residents living in poverty than in other parts of town.

The stakeholders’ recollections of community change and changes in safety are reminiscent of Shaw and McKay’s (1943) study, which showed how high population turnover in Chicago’s zone of transition led to higher crime rates and development of delinquent subcultures. School administrators in the municipality closest to disadvantage, who grew up in the community, described how they have experienced correlations between population changes, a decrease in community values, and a marked decrease in neighborhood safety. The zone of transition in Shaw and McKay’s (1943) study was characterized by population invasion and succession, social disorganization, and an absence of informal social controls, similar to the characteristics that community stakeholders recounted in the community closest to disadvantage. Parallels can also be drawn between these stakeholders’ recollections and previous research that has shown strong associations between objective measures of neighborhood crime and residential transiency (Bursik and Webb, 1982, Morenoff and Sampson, 1997; Morenoff et al., 2001; Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Reiss, 1986; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997).

School administrators in the same community also noticed that long-time, middle-class residents are increasingly leaving town for nearby municipalities that offer better education systems and safer neighborhoods. Such observed dynamics between immigration and outmigration in neighborhoods are supported by the more objective, demographic-based research of Cooke (2010), Crowder et al. (2011), and Crowder and South (2008), which have shown that in addition to immigration causing native outmigration, simply being located near minority neighborhoods pushes out white populations. Demographic data confirmed changes occurring in the community studied, where there was a 15 percent decrease in Asian populations, a 4 percent decrease in white populations, as well as a 4 percent increase in renter-occupied housing units between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; 2006-2010).

The communities investigated in Phase II are undergoing different stages of invasion and succession and officials in each location had different perceptions of demographic change. Officials in the community closest to disadvantage exhibited fear of crime, which leads to both psychological and physical withdrawal from neighborhood activities. These officials explained how they and their families often stay at home and try not to venture outside at night, which is a key indicator of withdrawal from community life described by Skogan (1986). Skogan (1986) demonstrated how neighborhood change and fear of crime leads to a breakdown of informal social controls and increased criminal activity, which results in “feedback processes” that perpetuate further neighborhood decline. Such a process may be occurring in Oakhollow, the community closest to disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Skogan (1986) also described how immigration of residents from “crime-exporting” areas that are highly stigmatized generates feelings of discomfort among residents and distrust of newcomers, fueling a breakdown of informal social control. Places can generate feelings of disorder and undesirability (Gieryn, 2000; Molotch et al., 2000; Smith, 1987) and usually contain individuals associated with those feelings (Keene and Padilla, 2010) and physical signs of decline (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004). Officials in Oakhollow, as well as in some other communities studied in Phase II, expressed discomfort with neighborhood changes that were associated with higher numbers of minority residents, gang members, and the start of economic decline.

Intense, nostalgic recollections of how the community “used to be” suggested what are perhaps substantial changes in the social composition of some of the communities studied, such as less involvement in religious and community-based organizations, which are signs of decreasing informal social controls. Residents of communities like Oakhollow may be losing control of what happens on the streets because of fear of new residents from stigmatized, “crime-exporting” places. Skogan’s (1986; 1990) research suggested that despite discomfort of native residents, immigrant populations are likely “win out” and become majority residents. At the time of the dissertation’s research, however, officials in Oakhollow did not express worries over high levels of crime, suggesting that “ordered segmentation” might be taking place, which depicts neighborhoods of residents that avoid contact with and are quietly distrusting of each other (Skogan, 1986).

Also similar to the qualitative research findings, Schuerman and Kobrin (1986) found that neighborhoods experience different stages of decline in their transition to a

high crime neighborhood. Increased minority populations, shifts from single- to multi-family housing, and residential transiency lead to higher crime, physical decline, and further increases in crime and neighborhood disorder (Schuerman and Kobrin, 1986). Some physical deterioration is evident if one took a drive through the streets of Oakhollow. Unkempt properties, some graffiti, and litter are more prevalent in some of the town's neighborhoods than others. Schuerman and Kobrin (1986) demonstrated that increased neighborhood crime immediately follows initial neighborhood decline. Although Oakhollow may not be experiencing high rates of crime yet, the community is likely in the "emerging" stage, in the words of Schuerman and Kobrin (1986), in what may be a transition to a high-crime neighborhood.

Evidence of community change, as indicated by reports on demographic data and scholarly studies alike, is far-reaching and has not only taken place in the communities studied for this dissertation but also across New Jersey and the U.S. Population turnover coupled with increases in poverty may lead to heightened crime, as demonstrated by research, in countless suburban and rural areas around the country. The degree of nostalgia that pervaded much of the conversations with officials in Oakhollow and its neighboring municipality Eastfall revealed that these communities have likely undergone more substantial changes than the others.

Such nostalgia has likely permeated the minds of long-time residents of inner-ring suburban communities throughout metropolitan areas in the U.S. Although many residents are experiencing deepening poverty and demographic change in their communities, new racial or ethnic groups in a community do not "cause" increased crime. Distrust among neighbors, withdrawal from community events and organizations,

and lack of property maintenance lead to decreases in informal social control that mitigate criminal activity. Meaningful and accepting relationships among neighbors would likely lessen the likelihood of criminal activity. Such relationships, however, are difficult to establish when there is a high turnover rate of residents and a continued presence of racism and ethnic discrimination that results in the stereotyping of individuals and families from disadvantaged urban areas who are likely to be minorities.

6.3 Proximity to Disadvantage, School Violence, and Gang Presence

Proximity to highly disadvantaged communities was not a strong predictor of gang presence in schools or municipalities but significantly predicted severity of gang presence in municipalities. Some researchers have found no associations between proximity to disadvantaged communities and gang presence (Zevitz and Takata, 1992) while others have shown loose associations (Grant, 1983; Hardman, 1969). Also, the impact of gang presence in one area on gang presence in another area is severely under-researched (Tita and Greenbaum, 2009). Most urban centers in New Jersey have moderate or high levels of gang presence, according to the severity of gang presence in municipalities (SGPM) index. Although proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods does not predict a gang presence in municipalities, it predicts the severity of gang presence among those municipalities that already have a gang presence. The closer a municipality with a gang presence is to highly disadvantaged neighborhoods, the higher the intensity of that gang presence. Such a finding suggests the need for more research on how gang activity may intensify with closer proximity to inner city neighborhoods.

Findings of the qualitative phase of the dissertation's research indicated the effects of nearness to disadvantaged areas on gang presence in various ways. One of the

most significant findings of the qualitative phase was that the proximity of particular communities to disadvantaged areas helped to dissolve a “gang” and quelled an instance of gang-related activity associated with wannabes. In one community, a homegrown wannabe gang was dissolved by a gang from a nearby city and in another community a gang from a nearby city threatened students from a high school who had flashed gang signs and posted a picture of themselves on social media. In the community closest to disadvantage, a wannabe gang that had formed in the high school later dissolved and some of its members joined a real gang from an adjacent city.

In all three instances, proximity to disadvantage resulted in the elimination of gang-related activity because real gangs from cities with disadvantaged neighborhoods took notice of “wannabe gang” activity in nearby suburban communities. It seems as though real gangs from inner cities do not tolerate wannabe gangs because, as a gang specialist and school district criminal investigator both explained in the interviews, it makes the real gangs look badly and potentially interferes with their illegal business pursuits. In the instance where law enforcement officials met with a city gang to alleviate tensions between the gang and wannabes nearby, the criminal investigator recalled how gang members explained that wannabes must either join the gang or not show signs of affiliation whatsoever. Street gangs do not like gang wannabes. One SRO recalled a young gang wannabe being chased by gang members on the street because his fake gang affiliation was revealed. The wannabe called the police as he was being chased. These examples of how gangs from cities lessened wannabe gang activity in nearby communities are, perhaps, contrary to what are common beliefs that close proximity to an inner city would likely strengthen existing gang-related activity.

Proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods was also a significant predictor of municipality crime rate and, to a lesser extent, municipality violent crime rate. The impact of proximity to disadvantage on crime, however, is under-researched. Only more recent studies by Peterson and Krivo (2010) and Sampson (2012) have aggressively addressed this relationship. More research, however, has demonstrated that proximity to high crime neighborhoods and changing neighborhoods influences crime and victimization in nearby communities (Heitgerd and Bursik, 1987; Morenoff et al. 2001; Sampson and Lauritson, 1990; Tita and Greenbaum, 2009). However, since disadvantaged areas have been linked to violent crime (Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997; Sampson and Graif, 2009; Tita and Greenbaum, 2009), research that investigates the influence of proximity to high crime neighborhoods could also be conceptualized as investigating proximity to disadvantage. This is mainly because disadvantage predicts likelihood of crime, and the presence of crime probably indicates neighborhood disadvantage. This debate, however, is meant for another arena.

At the ecological level, high levels of neighborhood disadvantage around a “focal community,” using terminology similar to that of Peterson and Krivo (2010) and Sampson (2012), are likely to increase levels of crime in the focal community in New Jersey. It is important to note the lack of research that directly addresses how a community’s proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods influences crime, especially because of the implications this has for inner-ring suburbs in highly developed states like New Jersey. Law enforcement must be on higher alert in municipalities where permeable borders allows for potential influences on crime. Such a finding, however, also points to

the alleviation of concentrated disadvantage in inner city neighborhoods not only to better the lives of those who live there, but also to mitigate potential effects on nearby communities.

There is no research that has explored the impact of proximity to disadvantaged areas on rates of school violence, even though the importance of community influences on school violence have been debated (Bowen and Richman 2002; Gottfredson 2001; Hoffman and Johnson, 2000; Welsh et al., 2000). Proximity to disadvantage has a strong relationship to the rate of school violence in New Jersey municipalities according to the regression analyses, a phenomenon that is not simply explained by increased school enrollment in municipalities that are in close proximity to highly populated areas such as cities. In the communities studied the municipality that is closest to highly disadvantaged neighborhoods has the highest rate of violence in municipality schools. The ways in which proximity to disadvantage may influence school violence is not clearly understood based on the ecological analysis. What happens in schools, however, often reflects what is happening in the community (Gottfredson, 2001). Since neighborhood crime has been shown to influence school violence (Hoffmann and Johnson, 2000; Limbos and Casteel, 2008), what goes on outside of the community is also likely to effect what occurs in the schools.

Community stakeholders who were interviewed almost always associated nearby disadvantaged areas with increased crime risk and gang activity in their towns and schools. Such associations are evident in the research of Kefalas (2003), an intensive qualitative study of how proximity to inner city areas affects life in a nearby neighborhood. Residents in a mostly white suburban neighborhood of Chicago believed

any crime or gang presence in the community came from nearby disadvantaged neighborhoods (Kefalas, 2003). Similarly, in a suburban school, Moriarty and Fleming (1990) found gang presence to be an “imported” phenomenon from urban areas, although they stressed that gangs do not “invade” suburban schools or come to recruit new members from there. Most officials interviewed cited transfer students and families moving from inner cities to more affordable suburban towns as the major causes of gang presence in the community or schools. Some officials noted that students from inner cities are typically perceived as associated with gangs, having street smarts, and perhaps previously involved in criminal activities. Research has shown that inner city culture is linked to crime and gangs (Anderson, 1999; Elliot et al., 2009; Harding, 2010; Miller, 1958; Pattillo-McCoy, 1999; Venkatesh, 1997).

While there is little research on the effects of transfer students from urban areas on students in suburban areas, McKenzie (1996) and Moriarty and Fleming (1990) reported that many families move from inner cities to suburban school districts seeking a better life, a phenomenon that nearly all officials interviewed also described. Moriarty and Fleming (1990) reported that transfer students struggle to mesh with the student body and tend to resort back to street culture and gang-related behavior. Transfer students use such associations as a social status tool to gain acceptance among native students who have weak bonds to the school (Moriarty and Fleming, 1990). Students that have weak social bonds are more prone to delinquency (Welsh et al., 1999). School administrators and law enforcement officials alike in nearly all communities had observed transfer students using their associations with inner cities and gang affiliations as a social status tool, a phenomenon also supported by early research (Thrasher, 1927; Miller 1958).

However, it should be noted that youth from urban communities are not always delinquent or underachieving students (Elliott et al., 2006; Welsh et al., 1999; Welsh et al., 2000).

Transfer students may negatively affect native students especially because, as officials noted, transfer students tend to be disconnected from the school and its students. Disconnection from school and antisocial behavior has been linked to gang involvement (Dishion et al., 2005; LeBlanc and Lanctôt, 1998). If native students befriend transfer students that are delinquent or gang members, such peer associations would increase the likelihood of the native student becoming involved with gangs (Bjerregaard and Smith, 1993; Bowker and Klein, 1983; Brownfield et al., 1997; Curry and Spengel, 1992; Esbensen et al., 1993; Gordon et al., 2004; Lahey et al., 1999; Nirdorf, 1988; Sharpe, 2003; Winfree et al., 1994). These associations emphasize the need for integration and acceptance toward transfer students from faculty and students alike. Reverting back to delinquent and gang-related behavior, as officials in the communities had observed among transfer students, may influence native youth to become involved in deviant and gang-related behavior as well.

School administrators and law enforcement personnel in the communities studied for this dissertation expressed their feelings about gang presence and school safety and also in relation to proximity to disadvantaged areas with high crime rates and gang presence. Surveys and interviews of law enforcement personnel and school administrators have been used as a means to ascertain levels of school safety as well as severity of gang presence in both communities and schools (Fox and Lane, 2010; Naber et al., 2006; Oehme, 1997; Quinn and Downs, 1993; Sprague, 2002; Swetnam and Pope,

2001; Takata and Zevitz, 1987). In addition to explaining how transfer students use their urban origins as social status tools, officials described how many transfer students maintain connections to family and friends in their hometown. Many residents of disadvantaged communities have family or friends who are involved with criminal activities (Peterson and Krivo, 2010). Some of the officials recalled that they have encountered transfer students that belonged to “gang families,” where their parents and siblings were gang members or affiliates. Others explained that such families might encourage other family members and friends to follow them in their move to the suburbs.

Lastly, some officials explained that youth attend parties in inner cities with friends or family members where they may become exposed to gang members or gang-related activities. Other officials recalled gang-related incidents occurring in local stores and restaurants that were sparked by gang members from other areas. Such activities may expose youth in suburban areas to gangs. Research has shown that “activity fields,” or the places, behavior settings, and thus other people whom individuals interact with on a daily basis, may affect criminal victimization or involvement (Oberwittler and Wikstrom, 2009; Wikstrom et al., 2010). Peterson and Krivo (2010) suggest that crime is higher in neighborhoods adjacent to disadvantaged areas due to exposure to unconventional role models, conditions that may encourage violence, and other criminogenic forces.

According to interviews with community stakeholders, the main influences of proximity to disadvantage on youth in these communities were transfer students from urban areas, migration of families from cities to suburbs, and the maintenance of familial and friendship ties in urban neighborhoods. Officials often mentioned the presence of government subsidized housing and large apartment complexes as some of the main

attractors of urban families. While it is difficult to decipher whether there is a more widespread movement of families from inner cities to nearby towns in New Jersey, these communities are located in an area of dense suburban municipalities where housing costs are lower compared to many other suburban communities in the same county and region.

Among the communities studied in Phase II of the dissertation, Clearfield had the highest mean home value in 2011 (\$410,000), compared with Lorview (\$395,000), Eastfall (\$390,000), and Oakhollow (\$360,000). Lorview had the highest gross rent (\$1,240), compared with Clearfield (\$1,230), Eastfall (\$1,170), and Oakhollow (\$1,160). Each of these values are lower than the county average mean home value (\$550,000) and mean median gross rent (\$1,500), and most of these values in the communities studied are lower than New Jersey's average mean home value (\$400,300) and lower than the state's mean median gross rent (\$1,250) (Values rounded, U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011). These statistics indicate that the communities studied may be attractive to low-income families not only because of their high percentages of renter-occupied housing but because their gross rent and median home values are markedly lower than county averages. To prevent gang activity, however, police and existing residents need to form meaningful relationships with families from inner cities looking to start a new life.

Conversations about proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods with school administrators and law enforcement personnel provided perspectives and experiences that are otherwise unattainable through more superficial analysis of secondary data. Rather than the presence of gangs simply being a result of close proximity to disadvantage, the relationship is much more complex. Officials described how transfer students, urban to

suburban migration, and maintenance of familial and friendship ties in urban areas are the major influences of proximity to disadvantage on gang presence among youth.

Also not attainable through analysis of secondary data and maps are the ways in which community stakeholders have framed reasons behind the presence of gangs in their communities. Overwhelming descriptions of how gangs are an “imported” phenomenon, even amid possibilities that homegrown gangs comprising native residents could also form (and have possibly formed based on the interviews), highlight how officials perceive gang presence in their communities and schools. Negative stigma of nearby cities coupled with the influx of residents from those negatively stigmatized places has created apprehensiveness among community stakeholders who explained that their community’s location near inner cities has introduced gang affiliated individuals and population change. Although officials seemed to believe that such phenomenon and changes will continue unabated, they also believed that their present prevention measures to curb gang involvement are effective and must continue.

6.4 Gang Involvement and Urban Culture

All school administrators and law enforcement personnel interviewed observed that “gang wannabes” have a larger presence in their schools than gangs or gang members. Officials reported students wearing gang-related apparel, colors, flashing gang signs, participating in gang-related activities, or closely associating with friends that are gang members, as reported by Struyk (2006), but most often not becoming official gang members themselves. The closest to real gang formation, however, were wannabe gangs that formed in two of the communities. Both of these gangs, according to officials, did not have highly organized structures and the most serious crimes they participated in

were acts of vandalism, street robberies, and intimidation, which are typical characteristics of gangs in suburban locations (Monti, 1994; Muehlbauer and Dodder, 1983; Myerhoff and Myerhoff, 1964).

Officials described many types of gang-affiliated youth in their schools and communities: students doodling gang symbols on a notebook, wannabes flashing gang signs and displaying gang-related apparel, organized delinquent groups (with a group name and identity) committing street robberies, and actual gang members. Similarly, gang research has demonstrated that gang membership is often impermanent and varies greatly from marginal, associates, to peripheral members (Alleyne and Wood, 2010; Curry et al., 2002; Decker and Curry, 2000; Egley, 2003; Monti, 1994; Spergel, 1964). Officials considered wannabes at great risk of becoming actual gang members but did not consider them to be dangerous, perceptions of which are not supported by research. Akiyama (2011) and Alleyne and Wood (2010) explained how gang wannabes are dangerous because they need to prove their dedication to a gang, often through violence or crime.

Various levels of gang involvement as reported by officials in this dissertation and in scholarly research emphasized the nuanced nature of gang affiliation. It may also be difficult for many administrators and educators to identify signs of gang involvement among students, namely because not all staff have received gang awareness training (Struyk, 2006). Youth that are gang-marginal, or are on the brink of joining a gang, may need immediate intervention but since level of gang involvement varies greatly and is hard to distinguish, appropriate measures to mitigate such involvement are likely hard to pinpoint. Some officials in the communities studied expressed confusion about what

constitutes a gang. One school administrator explained that people see a group of youth hanging out together and their immediate reaction is “that’s a gang!” Likewise, research in criminology has not yet developed a streamlined definition of gangs, many studies of which have been dedicated to the debate about gang definitions and the consequences of this debate for gang research (Ball and Curry, 1995; Esbensen et al., 2001; Naber et al., 2006; Peterson, 2000; Short, 2001; Winfree et al., 1992; Wood and Alleyne, 2010).

Some of the gang-related activity demonstrated in this dissertation’s research could be classified according to prior research. The wannabe gang that formed on the streets of one of the communities and was disbanded by a real gang was most likely a “community nuisance,” or in Stage III of the gang development process, particularly because this wannabe gang imitated an actual gang and participated in “copy-cat” gang activity (Seng, 1986). According to officials, the wannabe gang’s activities drew attention from both law enforcement and real gangs. From Seng’s (1986) perspective, such a delinquent group might have formed because of spatial proximity to an urban area where gangs are prevalent. In the community closest to disadvantaged neighborhoods, however, a wannabe gang that formed in the high school was likely in Stage IV of the gang development process, or “the antagonists” (Seng, 1986). Accounts from officials revealed that this group was more organized than the group in the other community, and when this wannabe gang disbanded some of them joined an actual gang in the adjacent city (Seng, 1986). From Seng’s (1986) perspective, since the demographics of this community are more closely reflective of a disadvantaged area than other nearby communities, a group of antagonists was likely to form more quickly here than in a more white, middle-class community.

Seng's (1986) perspectives offer a framework for categorizing levels of gang involvement in communities such as suburbs where delinquent groups are often not classifiable as actual gangs but "other" kinds of groups that become involved in various levels of delinquent activities. Such a framework could be applied to communities such as the ones studied in this dissertation. The benefits of classifying deviant groups into "stages" of gang development include the identification of appropriate, targeted intervention measures as well as identification of the appropriate officials to implement such measures. As Seng (1986) mentioned, intervention in Stage III of the gang development process (or earlier, of course) is critical because after Stage IV intervention becomes very challenging and the group is likely to continue on a deviant path toward the most serious stage of delinquent group formation.

To complicate matters further, some officials emphasized how cliques of youth and types of dress are often mistaken for gang-related behavior. Youth participation in urban culture, or forms of dress, music choice, and behavior that emulate inner city youth, are prevalent in each community studied. There is evidence of Pattillo-McCoy's (1999) classifications of youth that are captivated by a "ghetto trance" in the observations recounted by the interview participants. According to Pattillo-McCoy's (1999) research, the students who took photographs of themselves flashing gang signs in one of the communities studied are examples of youth who are "thrilled" by ghetto culture, that is, youth that listen to rap and hip-hop, adopt urban styles of dress, speak in street slang, and are curious about and may emulate gangs.

Officials also stated that many students in this community maintain connections to relatives and friends in the adjacent city. Such students may be "thrilled" by the large

presence of gangs, frequency of shootings, and lifestyles of those that are “consumed” by ghetto culture in the nearby city (Pattillo-McCoy 1999). “Consumed” individuals are actual gang members, drug dealers, hustlers, rappers, or those who fully and completely embrace street culture as a lifestyle (Pattillo-McCoy). Many of the officials also acknowledged the influence of music and the media in encouraging both urban culture and gang-related characteristics among students. Gang culture is fed to youth through music, video games, and movies and is often glamorized (Hagedorn, 2008; Klein, 2006). School-age youth are prone to imitating mass-produced urban culture (McKenzie, 1996).

In the community where some wannabe gang members joined a real gang in a nearby city, these youth have been “consumed” by ghetto culture (Pattillo-McCoy, 1999). The vast majority of youth in the communities studied, however are “marginal” (do not participate in ghetto culture) or “thrilled.” In many discussions, interview participants provided examples of youth rapping in the hallways, flashing gang signs, listening to hip-hop music, or talking in street slang, which are all examples of youth who are “thrilled” by ghetto culture. Very little youth in the communities studied become “consumed” by ghetto culture, as indicated by official’s observations. Wilson (1996) described ghetto culture that Pattillo-McCoy (1999) separated into categories as “ghetto-related” behavior. Wilson (1996) explained that inner city populations adopt cultural attributes in response to the lack of social capital or connection to mainstream society. In the communities studied, however, middle-class white youth may take on characteristics associated with ghetto culture as a resistance to middle-class culture (Kakutani, 1997) and may turn to delinquency as a form of opposition to oppressive middle-class values (Agnew, 1984; Cohen and Short, 1958; Greeley and Casey, 1963; Liazos, 1978). Descriptions of students

by officials are consistent with research that has demonstrated that white populations embrace black, ghetto culture and that associations with such cultural attributes cross all demographic and socioeconomic lines (Daniels, 2007; Fraley, 2009; Kakutani, 1997; Kitwana, 2005; Yousman, 2003).

Youth that are “thrilled” by ghetto culture may also display signs of wannabe gang involvement. Those that are “consumed” by ghetto culture, however, entirely symbolize an oppositional culture taken on by those in social isolation (Anderson, 1999; Massey and Denton, 1993; Pattillo-McCoy, 1999; Wilson, 1987), which may involve gang membership. Although research such as Seng (1986) and Pattillo-McCoy (1999) offer sociological frameworks for investigating levels of gang and ghetto culture involvement among youth, it remains difficult to pinpoint such classifications. For example, a student that listens to hip-hop, may deeply adhere to middle-class morals such as working toward high academic achievement (Agnew, 1984; Marshall, 1973; Schwartz, 1989; Spiller, 1965). Applying gang development and ghetto culture frameworks to student behavior is a challenging prospect, but may lead to the identification of appropriate remedial actions, particularly with regard to gang involvement.

One way to mitigate student display of ghetto culture is through the implementation of school uniforms. Officials in all districts reported that school uniform policies have curtailed the display of urban culture characteristics such as baggy clothing and have eliminated most symbols of gang affiliation such as colored clothing, bandanas, hats, and so on. These findings are consistent with previous research in schools with uniform policies, which have indicated that teachers and administrators observe less

competition in clothing styles between students and a visible reduction of gang affiliation among students (Sher, 1995; Stevenson, 2008; Wade and Stafford, 2003).

However, SROs also stated that uniform policies have made it more difficult to identify gang-affiliated students. Most officials said that students still manipulate their uniforms to show gang affiliation or to associate with particular fashion styles. Such gang suppression as a result of school uniforms as perceived by faculty members (Wade and Staffird, 2003) may be hidden. Displays of gang affiliation are more nuanced, making it difficult for officials to identify gang-involved students. Although students' views on uniforms were not obtained in this dissertation, their perspectives on school uniforms have been largely mixed (Gentile and Imberman, 2012; McGloin, 2009; Stanley, 1996) and compared with faculty members. Since officials in the communities studied reported that it is difficult to identify signs of gang involvement among students due to uniforms, such a perspective might not only downplay the positive effects of such policies but also, as a result, appropriate gang intervention measures may not be implemented on students who need them most.

With regard to levels of gang involvement and urban culture among students in the communities studied, the value of qualitative research is again brought to light. Data from the New Jersey State Police Street Gang Surveys, although valuable, do not communicate the large presence of gang-marginal or gang wannabe youth in communities and schools. Since gang wannabe youth are at great risk for becoming gang members, identification the "severity of gang wannabe problems" in communities would help to focus and fund gang prevention and intervention programs in municipalities that need it most. Surveys that identify gang membership among populations, while certainly

useful, do not address the presence of populations that are involved with gangs in more nuanced and marginal ways. Individuals that show signs of gang involvement, rather than actual members, are at need of targeted prevention strategies that keep such youth from taking the next step toward joining a gang. Methods of identifying such youth in schools and communities, however, remain a challenging task.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS

At the tail end of the largest economic downturn since the Great Depression, the U.S. is slowly recovering from a massive loss of jobs and cuts to public services. The lower- and middle-classes have been hit especially hard by this recession, which has plunged many long-time middle-class families into poverty. The concentration of disadvantage, residential segregation, and income inequality has remained alarmingly high across U.S. cities (Kneebone, 2011; Lichter et al., 2012; Reardon and Bischoff, 2011). Racial inequality also remains stubbornly high with unabated segregation in schools and communities, racialized policy orientations of outdated federal initiatives, as well as deep concentrations of poverty (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

The findings of this dissertation indicate the continued presence of disadvantaged neighborhoods in places such as New Jersey, their impacts on crime and gang presence, their effects on nearby communities, as well as the substantial influences of gangs, hip-hop, and gangsta culture on youth. The effects of hip-hop and gangsta culture on youth have been largely under-researched. The substantial influences that elements of neighborhood disadvantage have on crime and gang presence in communities have deep and wide-reaching policy implications. From effective community policing to increased poverty mitigation measures in suburbs to the restructuring of racialized federal policies, initiatives to curb neighborhood disadvantage, decrease gang involvement, and address continued racial discrimination need implementation. In-depth, mixed-methods studies are needed to explore the nuances of youth gang involvement, how demographic change

influences neighborhood safety, and ways in which proximity to disadvantage influence crime and gang presence in neighborhoods and schools.

7.1 The Enduring Presence of Neighborhood Disadvantage and Implications for Suburbs

The effects of neighborhood disadvantage and proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods on crime rates and gang presence in New Jersey municipalities were pronounced in the mid-late 2000s. Disadvantaged neighborhoods in New Jersey were populated overwhelmingly by black populations in 2010. Similarly, large proportions of characteristics associated with neighborhood disadvantage were concentrated in majority black communities. As a case-in-point of neighborhood segregation and the connections between race, ethnicity, and disadvantage that Sampson (2012) and Peterson and Krivo (2010) have made so strikingly clear, a final set of findings from this dissertation's research shows mean demographic and socioeconomic characteristics in all of New Jersey's census tracts ($n = 1,987$) in 2010. These characteristics are displayed by severity of census tract disadvantage (none-low, moderate, and high) in Table 7.1 (below) and by majority black and Hispanic or Latino census tracts in Table 7.2 (also below). Clear differences in demographic and socioeconomic characteristics emerged across levels of neighborhood disadvantage.

Many of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics displayed in Table 7.1 were included in the index of concentrated disadvantage for New Jersey census tracts used in the research for this dissertation. In Table 7.1 it becomes evident that neighborhoods (census tracts) with high levels of concentrated disadvantage in New Jersey in 2010 were, on average, comprised of majority black residents with low white

and Asian populations. Neighborhoods with high levels of concentrated disadvantage also contained, on average, markedly higher percentages of poverty, unemployment, female householders with children, renter occupied housing units, vacant housing units,

Table 7.1 Mean Percent of Demographic and Socioeconomic Variables by Census Tracts of None-Low, Moderate, and High Concentrated Disadvantage in New Jersey in 2010, n = 1,987

Variable (Mean Percent)	Census Tracts with:		
	None-Low Concentrated Disadvantage (n = 1,614)	Moderate Concentrated Disadvantage (n = 279)	High Concentrated Disadvantage (n = 94)
Percent White	77.41	36.75	13.84
Percent Black	7.69	38.84	68.93
Percent Asian	8.37	3.85	1.51
Percent Hispanic or Latino	12.86	36.72	25.50
Percent Whose Income is Below the Poverty Level	6.29	22.23	35.57
Percent Unemployed	6.90	11.62	21.46
Percent Female Householder with Children	5.08	14.90	26.48
Percent Renter Occupied Housing Units	26.90	64.93	74.49
Percent Vacant Housing Units	7.56	13.20	20.49
Percent Who Moved in, 2000 or Later	50.07	65.84	67.80
Percent Under Age 18	22.44	26.63	32.94
Percent with Less than a high school Education	10.36	25.80	30.68
Median Household Income	\$82,038	\$41,392	\$28,556

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Table 7.2 Mean Percent of Demographic and Socioeconomic Variables by Census Tracts of Minority and Majority Black and Hispanic or Latino Populations in New Jersey in 2010, n = 1,987

Variable (Mean Percent)	Census Tracts that are:			
	<= 50.00 % black (n = 1,793)	> 50.00 % black (n = 194)	<= 50.00 % Hispanic or Latino (n = 1,807)	> 50.00 % Hispanic or Latino (n = 180)
Percent White	74.80	12.26	70.48	50.72
Percent Asian	8.02	1.77	7.86	2.86
Percent Hispanic or Latino	17.05	14.62		
Percent Whose Income is Below the Poverty Level	8.44	23.58	8.72	21.93
Percent Unemployed	7.39	16.18	8.05	10.22
Percent Female Householder with Children	6.26	18.67	6.77	14.55
Percent Renter Occupied Housing Units	31.62	61.03	30.95	70.01
Percent Vacant Housing Units	8.27	15.35	8.80	10.65
Percent Who Moved in, 2000 or Later	52.20	61.59	51.75	66.84
Percent Under Age 18	23.10	27.49	23.21	26.65
Percent with Less than a high school Education	12.57	22.00	11.50	33.47
Median Household Income	\$77,343	\$41,065	\$77,094	\$40,743

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

population under 18, and those with lower than a high school education than neighborhoods with moderate or little to no disadvantage. These demographic and socioeconomic characteristics demonstrate patterns associated with neighborhood

disadvantage. Perhaps most notably, Hispanic or Latino residents are more likely, on average, to live in moderately disadvantaged neighborhoods (36.72 percent) than highly disadvantaged neighborhoods (25.50 percent) in New Jersey, reaffirming this ethnic group's position in between whites and blacks in the racial hierarchy of disadvantage that Peterson and Krivo (2010) demonstrated.

Table 7.2 shows the same demographic and socioeconomic characteristics across New Jersey census tracts, but instead by minority and majority black neighborhoods and minority and majority Hispanic or Latino neighborhoods. ("Majority" neighborhoods are those that have percentages of racial/ethnic populations greater than 50 percent). The other category shows neighborhoods with less than or equal to 50 percent of the same racial/ethnic group. A comparison of white, black, and Hispanic or Latino populations by majority black and majority Hispanic or Latino neighborhoods reveals high levels of neighborhood segregation between whites and blacks and low levels of segregation between whites and Hispanic or Latino populations. Black and Hispanic or Latino populations are also highly segregated in New Jersey's neighborhoods.

Poverty, unemployment, female householders with children, those under age 18, and vacant housing units are, on average, more prevalent in majority black communities than in majority Hispanic or Latino communities. Majority Hispanic or Latino neighborhoods, on average, have higher percentages of renter-occupied housing units, residential transiency, those with less than a high school education, as well as slightly lower median household incomes than majority black neighborhoods. Thus, residential segregation and concentration of disadvantage is most severe in majority black neighborhoods as opposed to majority Hispanic or Latino neighborhoods in New Jersey.

Elements of disadvantage tend to lead to increased risks of violent crime and gang presence, which create stigmatized communities whose physical and social disorder spiral downward in a seemingly endless feedback loop (Peterson and Krivo, 2013; Sampson, 2012; Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004; Schuerman and Kobrin, 1986; Skogan, 1986; 1990; Thornberry et al., 2006). Although crime statistics are missing from these tables, residential segregation and concentration of poverty in majority black communities in New Jersey reinforces the findings of Peterson and Krivo (2010) and Sampson (2012), along with much of their prior work.

In this dissertation's regression analyses, the effects of neighborhood disadvantage on crime in New Jersey municipalities are prominent. Racial segregation and the amplified presence of crime and gangs in New Jersey neighborhoods with high poverty levels and black populations reflect upon how U.S. society has been structured to uphold racial inequality, white privilege, and black subordination. Peterson and Krivo's (2010) large-scale assessment of neighborhoods throughout U.S. cities demonstrated that a society structured in this way has yielded a "racial-spatial divide":

This hierarchy is imprinted in the spatial and social fabric of urban neighborhoods in a pattern that we describe as the racial-spatial divide. This divide is evident in high levels of racial and ethnic segregation, combined with inequalities in a host of critical community resources and disadvantages that result from the separation of unequal groups across neighborhoods. Inequality in the structural conditions of white, African American, Latino, and other communities undergirds the dramatic differentials in crime among these distinct types of areas. From this perspective, differential patterns of crime for ethno-racial groups and neighborhoods do not stem from individual proclivities or a preponderance of "criminals" in an area. Rather, they are the products of structural relations of society. (p. 111)

The results of racialized societal structures are evident in neighborhoods across U.S. metropolitan areas, where violence is 5 times higher in black neighborhoods than in white neighborhoods. For Latino and integrated neighborhoods, violence falls in between that

of black and white neighborhoods, confirming the racial hierarchy of U.S. society. Racialized configurations of disadvantage across U.S. cities have produced undisputable correlations between neighborhood crime rates and the skin color of majority neighborhood residents. Additionally, between 15 and 25 percent of black, Latino, and minority neighborhoods are located in neighborhoods of extreme poverty compared to 1 percent of white neighborhoods. Segregation is also reflected through proximity; white and black communities are almost always located near majority communities of the same race (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

While the concentration of disadvantage and racial segregation has remained largely unchanged throughout U.S. neighborhoods, elements of disadvantage have increased in suburban areas. As indicated by maps and charts produced in this dissertation's research, characteristics of disadvantage most typically associated with inner cities have increased in New Jersey's suburban communities from 2000 to 2010. Crime is also on the rise the state's rural and suburban municipalities, as these areas experienced overall increases in crime rates from 2005 to 2010 while crime rates in urban centers decreased. Likewise, as homicides in U.S. cities fell by 16.7 percent from 2001 to 2010, they rose by 16.9 percent in suburbs during the same time period (McWhirter and Fields, 2012).

In 2008 the greatest proportion of the nation's poor population shifted from cities to suburbs in metropolitan areas. As a result of this socioeconomic shift, policy makers need to change the ways in which public assistance is allotted across the neighborhoods of metropolitan areas. Federal, regional, and local governments, as well as nongovernmental agencies, need to realign strategies and priorities in order to address

growing poverty among suburban populations (Kneebone and Garr, 2010). Suburban schools must also prepare for increasing amounts of students from poverty-stricken families, which many suburban education systems are not adequately prepared for (Freeman, 2010). In addition to poverty, other characteristics typically associated with urban communities such as gangs and hip-hop music are present among suburban youth.

7.2 Gangs, Hip-Hop, and Gangsta Culture

In this dissertation, characteristics of neighborhood disadvantage such as poverty and minority populations significantly predicted gang presence in municipalities and municipality schools in New Jersey. Average total student enrollment in municipality schools and percent of students receiving free lunch also predicted gang presence inside and outside of school. Percent of students receiving free lunch is an indication of disadvantage because it reflects the income of a student's family. Disadvantage has been tied to the beginnings of gang activity in the U.S. In fact, the origins of gangs can be traced to social, economic, and societal hardships pressed upon populations. Klein and Maxson (2006) best described this:

...one can acknowledge that street gangs exist because of the social marginalization of many groups in our society. The combined effects of racism, poverty, inadequate social resources, and barriers to equal opportunities yield a host of social problems, street gangs being one of those. Therefore, thorough change in the very structure of our society – its institutions, its basic values, and its imbalance of power relations – must be taken. Whatever the truth of this statement, it's not about to happen. (p. 262)

Klein and Maxson's (2006) suggestions of larger structural changes in society get to the root of how gangs formed in the U.S. Gangs likely emerged amid the first waves of immigration and the economic hardship, alienation, and discrimination that these newcomers encountered (Howell and Moore, 2010). Street gangs that pervade cities in

the 21st century, however, have their origins in Los Angeles, California, the most common of which are the Bloods and Crips.

The story of how street gangs emerged is the story of how intense residential segregation, racial discrimination, and the concentration of disadvantage effected minority residents in the U.S. Serious black street gangs grew out of organized resistance to white intimidation, bias, and harassment, as well as overwhelming institutional inequality of education, housing, and employment following the massive movement of black populations from the south to western cities such as Los Angeles during the Second Great Migration. In the late 1960s at the end of the civil rights movement, activist groups from different black neighborhoods organized and gravitated into two larger distinct organizations, soon to become the Crips and the Bloods. Emulating territorial and physical attributes of earlier Latino gangs in Los Angeles, the Bloods and Crips established neighborhood turf and wore distinct colors. After the 1960s a wave of Asian and Latin American immigrants arrived in Los Angeles, which led to the growth and intensification of Mexican and Latin American gangs. By the 1970s street gangs were present in most California cities (Howell and Moore, 2010).

In the communities studied in this dissertation, some “gangs” formed in the schools or on the streets, but these gangs sought to emulate existing gangs. In these communities, gangs are not likely to have emerged out of the residential segregation and concentration of disadvantage experienced in Los Angeles during the 1960s and 70s, but rather because of the influential presence of large street gangs in nearby cities as well as the movement of gang-affiliated individuals from inner cities to suburban communities. Although in the 21st century it is likely that economic hardship, racial discrimination, and

segregation have led to the formation of some organized criminal groups in the U.S., a much stronger influence on gang involvement among youth is likely the result of existing, well-established street gangs that have become entrenched in many urban neighborhoods.

In a large qualitative study of 37 gangs in Los Angeles, New York City, and Boston, Jankowski (1991) demonstrated that youth are not likely to become involved with gangs because of broken families, lack of employment opportunity, or elements of “multiple marginality” that Vigil (2006) suggested. Rather, youth join gangs for entertainment, increased chances of making money, participation in social activities that involve drugs and alcohol, a sense of group identity, personal protection, devotion to their community, and resistance to enduring the economic hardship that their parents have weathered. Jankowski (1991) found that, in the majority of circumstances, the question is not whether to start a gang in low-income communities, but whether to join an existing gang.

Although gang members live in the communities studied in this dissertation, officials did not report any organized gang activity and explained how gang members reside in no specific area and reside in places scattered throughout town. Because there are no serious gangs operating in these communities, this is, perhaps, the reason why youth did not join existing gangs but created their own “copy-cat” gangs. The only youth that joined a real gang did so in a nearby inner city that has a well-established gang presence. As a result, the dissertation’s research shows that targeted gang intervention and prevention measures need to target gangs in inner cities, not only to provide gang members with legitimate lifestyles and to improve community safety, but to reduce the

likelihood that copy-cat gangs will form in nearby neighborhoods. According to officials, gang-related activity and wannabe gang formation in the communities studied emulated existing gangs that originated in inner cities. However, these findings do not discount the need for gang awareness and prevention measures in suburban communities, in fact, they point to an increased need for such measures in suburban locations.

In addition to the standard intervention and prevention measures that officials documented as successfully steering youth away from gang involvement, perhaps some of the most effective gang intervention strategies would result from treating gang members as fellow citizens. Because law enforcement, the media, and larger society have criminalized gangs, gang members are isolated from mainstream society. As a result of media coverage, television shows, video games, and movies that communicate gang life as entirely enveloped by relentless violence and involvement in crime, gangs often trigger thoughts of senseless violence, drug sales, and large raucous groups of minority youth that outwardly identify themselves with colors, tattoos, emblems, and hand signs. Most gang members, however, are likely only seldom involved in the violent events that the media relentlessly documents. In fact, some gangs do not participate in violence. Thus, gang involved youth could also be seen as youth that have organized in response to an absence of opportunities for participation in productive behaviors such as after-school activities, sports, community-based events, places to socialize, appropriate adult guidance, and so on.

In an in-depth qualitative investigation of gang members in an urban school district, Garot (2010) concluded that the criminalization and incarceration of gang members is unproductive for society. Rather, officials and communities need to treat

these groups as legitimate organizations and use their formation as an indicator of what neighborhoods might be missing, such as a sports field, as was the case in Garot's (2010) interactions with a gang. As Garot (2010) indicated, gangs are signals that youth are trying to establish identity, community ties, and create productive activities. Instead of criminalizing and socially isolating gang members, communities should approach them as fellow citizens and encourage them to become involved in organized efforts to rehabilitate neighborhoods, build trusting relationships with residents, and gain access to legitimate jobs and recreational activities. However, the overwhelmingly negative associations with gangs needs to be assuaged, which was evident in the need for individual, school, and community anonymity in this dissertation. Without the guaranteed anonymity of interview participants, schools, and municipalities in this dissertation, it might have been challenging for stakeholders to tell the truth about gang presence in their communities, mainly because such officials wish to preserve a positive image of their community in the face of the widespread criminalization of gang members

In many communities, the first step toward mitigating a gang presence is admitting that there is a presence. Some municipalities in New Jersey continue to resist participation in the New Jersey State Police Gang Survey because elected officials continue to disregard a known presence of gangs in their respective communities. The gang specialist in one of the communities studied reacted to a municipality in the state that has consistently denied a gang presence: "I mean, to say that they didn't really have a [gang] problem is kind of ridiculous... we ended up with one of the highest gang presence in the county... because we were truthful." One of the SROs sarcastically shot back, looking at the researcher with an overtly severe face, "Officially, we don't have any

gangs. There are no gangs here.” While such blatant denials of gang presence in places that have a known problem are rightfully deserving of sarcasm and laughter, resistance by community leaders in admitting a gang problem simply enables gang activity to persist and proliferate (Klein and Maxson, 2006; Naber et al., 2006).

In addition to the various ways in which officials described the influences of proximity to disadvantage on gang presence, many officials also believed that hip-hop and gangsta rap influence gang involvement among youth because it glamorizes gangsta culture and so many youth listen to these music genres. In the 21st century, the influence of rap and hip-hop has crossed all racial, ethnic, and class lines and the mass-produced, consumer-oriented music industry has pushed the gangsta image onto a vulnerable audience that has become entranced by it (Hagedorn, 2010). These music genres, however, have not always been this way.

Hip-hop does not have its roots in gangs, violence, and crime, but in an effort to pull youth from the troubles, despair, and destructive behavior that are responses to racism and poverty, as the “godfather of hip-hop” Afrika Bambaataa tried to achieve through a new style of music (Hagedorn, 2010). Hip-hop has its roots in the South Bronx in the early 1970s among black and Latino youth and emerged “as a musical form... it came from the streets, not the studios... it is not based in middle-class experience but in an expression of the dispossessed’s misery and defiance of racism and poverty” (Hagedorn, 2008, p. 94). Similar to the formation of street gangs in Los Angeles, rap and hip-hop is said to have emerged in Bronx neighborhoods where racial segregation, neighborhood decline, and an intense concentration of disadvantage pervaded the lives of

residents. Hip-hop came about as an oppositional identity in the form of culture and was not associated with street gangs (Hagedorn, 2008).

Similarly, Wilson (2009) explained that “ghetto” populations have developed cultural attributes in response to deprivation, discrimination, isolation, and subordination. Culture acts as a strategy to mitigate the detrimental structural forces bestowed upon minority populations. Styles of dress, language, codes, social queues, and behaviors are adaptations, in the words of natural ecology, and are cultural elements that inner city residents create to assuage structural deprivation (Wilson, 2009). Hip-hop and gangsta culture among minority groups could be seen, then, as a cultural mediator of racialized structural and societal forces. “Gangsta rap,” however, emerged as a hard-core form of hip-hop that took oppositional culture to an extreme. West Coast rappers that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s such as Ice-Cube, Snoop Doggy Dogg, and Easy-E were gang-affiliated. Easy-E has been dubbed the “godfather of gangsta rap.” More gang-affiliated rappers soon emerged and filled song lyrics with accounts of violence, gang life, and other hardcore elements of ghetto life. The music industry took advantage of youths’ fascination with gangsta rap and marketed the genre to all audiences (Hagedorn, 2008).

What research has failed to address, however, is the potential impacts of a widespread oppositional identity that is now recognized as a youth cultural phenomenon rather than restricted to poor, urban minorities. Officials that were interviewed as part of this dissertation’s research expressed concern over the influence of rap music on youth. In some cases, officials believed that youth portray gang-related activities specifically

because they listen to gang-influenced rap music. Hagedorn (2010) described the pervasive oppositional nature of hip-hop:

What we are witnessing in hip-hop is the creation of a powerful global identity based on street experiences that are filled with multiple meanings, contradictions, and intense cultural struggle. This “complexity” is not understood by mainstream social science... The insight that street culture reproduces the social relations of society has been convincingly portrayed... But street culture, as these scholars are aware, is not just reproduction but also resistance, and it is those forms of resistance that merit more investigation (pp. 86-89).

Hip-hop has evolved so that boundaries between what were distinct subgenres are now fading and street culture is emerging as a mind set and a means of resistance among youth (Hagedorn, 2010). Gangsta rap, hardcore rap, and hip-hop are often used interchangeably and what has emerged is a general culture of hip-hop characterized by resistance and urban identity.

The origins of streets gangs and gangsta rap point to the deprivation of inner city minority populations, which was created in large part by federal policies and initiatives that catered to white, middle- and upper-class privilege. The effects of concentrated disadvantage reach beyond violent crime and poverty in New Jersey and likely the U.S. More candid and severe oppositional music such as gangsta rap rose out of hip-hop music, which has its origins in disadvantaged neighborhoods just like the emergence of street gangs. Thus, it is important to point out the possibility that the absence of a racialized America might have promoted residential integration and federal policies that catered to all population groups, thus potentially eliminating the need for black and Hispanic youth to culturally respond, in the words of Wilson (2009), to racism, poverty, isolation, and subordination. Since gangsta rap, now more than ever, glamorizes the gangster lifestyle and criminal activities, and since its popularity and reach among all

youth continues unabated, it is not imprudent to question whether violent and gang-related behaviors that are glamorized and mass-produced by the music industry are emulated by youth. This is an under-researched cultural phenomenon that has infiltrated the lives of countless youth and deserves further attention regarding its potential influence on youth misbehavior and gang involvement.

7.3 Policy Implications

Amid the persistence of disadvantage in urban neighborhoods and the presence of gangs in all types of communities in New Jersey and beyond, the deep concentration of disadvantage in countless American cities needs to be aggressively addressed. Disadvantage in black communities has been allowed to flourish since the mid 20th century through the racialized structure of federal policies and society. As skeptical as it sounds, Klein and Maxson (2006) best summarized the likelihood of changes in the unproductive societal structure that pervades the country: “The ‘revolution’ ain’t coming, as those in control of this society don’t want it” (p. 262). Although there are challenging, complicated problems within our society and in efforts to prevent gangs and violence, complex problems need complex preventative measures. The stigmatization of entire cities, the troubles of transfer students from urban areas, perceptions of gangs in suburban communities, and the effects of disadvantage on gangs and crime, as demonstrated in this dissertation’s research, emphasize the need for intensive rehabilitation of the urban core.

While gang and violence prevention and intervention measures are needed in both urban and suburban communities, addressing the needs of disadvantaged populations, rehabilitating neighborhoods, and reinvigorating community social relationships would get to the core of violence and gang problems. In the U.S. there has been a tradition of

federal and local initiatives that have sought the easy way out of improving distressed communities. Instead of continuing the tradition of tearing down, displacing, rebuilding, and leaving behind poor populations, communities need to be refurbished and uplifted. Struggling neighborhoods that have not yet fallen prey to extreme poverty and crime but are showing signs of decline need focused investment and maintenance to prevent such neighborhoods from falling into “hyperdisadvantage.” Both physical and social infrastructure improvements are needed in distressed American cities. Violence prevention and community building should go hand-in-hand. Community building means building social capital into neighborhoods that have been rendered virtually powerless by poverty, crime, and overall disadvantage. Crime prevention and intervention measures that establish social relationships within communities are some of the best starting points for increasing neighborhood safety (Sampson, 2012).

Programs such as Operation Ceasefire, community policing, and prisoner reentry programs are designed to build relationships and trust between criminals, residents, and authorities by building youth-adult relationships, working with residents to identify community problems, and reintegrating previously incarcerated individuals into mainstream society (Sampson, 2012). The U.S. criminal justice system houses some of the most racialized institutions in the U.S. and continues to exasperate the racial divide. Institutions such as these are not likely to change and thus reentry programs offer some of the best prospects for criminals to get off the streets and into a legitimate job and meaningful life (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

While certain interventions and prevention measures are key at the individual level, the most promising improvements in the racial-spatial divide and concentration of

disadvantage and crime are through both local and macro-level approaches. Community policing and Operation Ceasefire foster informal social control at the community level, which mitigates crime and neighborhood disorder. In New Jersey, there are 14 “partner cities” in the “Operation Ceasefire NJ” program, the efforts of which have focused in Newark, Jersey City, Paterson, and Camden (State of New Jersey: Department of Law & Public Safety). Additionally, proximity to disadvantage was shown to predict crime rates and school violence in this dissertation’s research. When crime, especially violent crime, is reduced in one area, it is likely to have a reverberating, positive effect on nearby areas (Peterson and Krivo, 2010; Sampson, 2012). Since “...safety is a fundamental condition for humans to flourish, and, as a result, violence is a leading indicator of a community’s viability over the long run,” (Sampson, 2012, p. 421), improved safety leads to overall community betterment and such positive effects spill over into nearby areas.

In order to most effectively alleviate the consequences of neighborhood disadvantage, entrenched racialized social structures that favor certain racial and ethnic groups must be seriously addressed. Peterson and Krivo (2010) acknowledged that such societal change is unlikely to occur in the near future. In the meantime, however, mitigation strategies to help alleviate the detriments that concentrated disadvantage pose need immediate implementation. Disadvantaged communities need outside investments, allocation of resources from other towns, as well as intervention techniques to help diminish persistent poverty, fix failing education systems, lessen the amount of broken families, encourage home ownership, and provide better access to jobs. Most disadvantaged neighborhoods in New Jersey and the U.S. are where black and Latino populations are the majority of residents (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

Wilson (2009) argued that structural racism needs to be addressed through shifts in political framework. Race-targeted job training, recruitment, and education improvements, as well as more robust affirmative action policies could also chip away at racialized societal norms (Wilson, 2009). Throughout the world, the stratification between social classes and racial/ethnic groups is deepening in both developing and developed countries. Youth organizations and interventions are underfunded and lackluster, especially in urban areas where they are needed most. Concentrated disadvantage squashes aspirations and spurs feelings of hopelessness and skepticism about the future (Tienda and Wilson, 2002).

Other ways of improving the lives of disadvantaged populations include the establishment of viable and sustainable residential environments. Working toward sustainability in neighborhoods fosters intra- and inter-community relationships among organizations and residents and serves to integrate various racial and ethnic groups. Also, there needs to be a balance of opportunity and investment across entire metropolitan regions, which must be treated as single units with interlocking and related parts; each metropolitan area (or part of a large metropolitan area) needs to be served by the same education, employment, infrastructure, economic, and social entities. A regional distribution of resources would balance and decrease overall disadvantage and promote safer environments (Peterson and Krivo, 2010, p. 125). Although the social and societal processes that maintain racism, prejudice, and inequality are not addressed by implementing such actions, these policies would help to alleviate the damage caused by such processes.

Regional policies on economic development and mixed- and affordable-housing are critical in efforts to mitigate neighborhood safety and disadvantage, mainly because such policies and housing initiatives are linked to community leadership and stability. Intervention at the community level, argues Sampson (2012), “is more effective in the long run than targeting individuals. Predicting individual behavior is notoriously difficult and inefficient, whereas I have shown that community social structures are highly patterned over time” (p. 424). Since an individual’s behavior is inextricably tied to his or her environment, interventions at the community level are more promising than at the individual level (Sampson, 2012). Increasing informal social control means the maintenance of order and prevention of crime and gang formation through collective involvement of residents in keeping a watchful eye and authoritative voice toward youth and deviant behavior. Safe communities around the U.S. exhibit signs of residential stability and social cohesion. Bringing back informal social control to communities that have lost it, however, is something that has not yet been accomplished (Klein and Maxson, 2006).

As demonstrated by the regression analyses in this dissertation and through discussions with community stakeholders, neighborhoods grappling with high levels of poverty and that have high concentrations of minority populations are more likely to have a presence of gangs. Gang intervention and prevention measures, however, are challenging endeavors. Effective and wide-reaching gang prevention and suppression models would be complex and would require heavy investment of money, time, and evaluation (Klein and Maxson, 2006). Efforts must start with empirically supported and carefully thought-out goals that can be empirically evaluated. Second, widespread

mitigation will not occur without focused efforts that address gang structures, group characteristics, and neighborhood contexts. Third, the quality of program evaluation must be high and streamlined. Have the proposed goals been reached? Are there empirically proven reductions in gang membership, activity, size, victimization, and so on? Has the community become involved?

Fourth, in addition to addressing gang structure and group development, prevention measures must focus on reducing empirically-proven risk factors for gang membership that plague the most at-risk youth in intensely concentrated measures of gang awareness, prevention, and in the case of membership, identification and suppression (Klein and Maxson, 2006). With regard to the often-complicated nature of preventing violence and gang presence among youth, Klein and Maxson (2006) again best summarized what needs to happen when they candidly explained: “We are no longer satisfied with simplistic approaches to goal setting, programming, or assessing outcomes. The best way to face complexity is just that – face it” (p. 245).

Interviews with school officials and law enforcement personnel revealed that the primary strategies of violence and gang prevention in the schools were through school assemblies, D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), and G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training). At the school-level, research and evaluation have demonstrated that the D.A.R.E. program is a failed drug awareness and resistance initiative that continues to thrive due to its perceived popularity and effectiveness. G.R.E.A.T. was modeled on the D.A.R.E. program and is an example of a “primary prevention” program, which is geared toward widespread audiences of all kinds of youth, both at-risk and not at-risk. As Klein and Maxson (2006) stated, “The fact that

G.R.E.A.T., the gang prevention program, was modeled on a failed program with a positive image is, itself, a study in the application of conventional wisdoms in the face of contrary empirical knowledge” (p. 96). Klein and Maxson (2006) also suggested that G.R.E.A.T. has failed because the content of its lessons are not gang-specific, the curriculum is not based upon empirical findings on gangs, and it does not specifically target youth most at risk of joining gangs. Klein (2011) noted that over 4 years of evaluation, the program has only produced minimally positive effects. A recently revamped G.R.E.A.T. curriculum, however, might show promise (Klein, 2011).

SROs themselves implement the prevention and intervention measures in schools. Studies have found positive associations between the presence of police officers in schools and school violence (Johnson, 1999; White et al., 2002), while other studies show mixed results (Maskaly et al., 2011; Theriot, 2009). SRO programs have been praised for providing role models for youth and for serving as the liaison between what occurs in the community and what occurs in the schools (Mulqueen, 1999; Weiler and Cray, 2011). However, the program has also been criticized for criminalizing student misbehavior as an infraction of the law instead of resolving incidents of misbehavior at the school level, and for lack of proper distinction between the roles of school administration and SROs (Price, 2009; Theriot, 2009; Weiler and Cray, 2011). Little research has assessed the effects of SRO programs on student outcomes (Brown, 2006; Weiler and Cray, 2011).

Gang prevention and intervention efforts in the U.S. have largely failed because established gang data is not applied to program design, curriculum design is based on conventional wisdoms, implementation of proven successful gang control measures is lackluster, and there is a large gap between program curriculum and intended outcomes

(Klein and Maxson, 2006). Miller (2001) arrived at similar conclusions regarding gang reduction efforts in the U.S. Miller (2001) illustrated how the amount of resources dedicated to reducing the gang problem are not in line with the severity of the problem. Furthermore, aside from implementing programs without inclusion of proven empirical attributes and failing to properly evaluating such programs, Miller (2001) suggested that the U.S. lacks an organized effort in gang prevention as well as the willingness to face the consequences and detriments of continued gang proliferation.

Policy makers, local governments, as well as community and educational leaders must organize anti-gang and anti-violence initiatives in a sensitive, well thought out manner based on empirical evidence, targeted at the most at-risk youth, and with prepared, streamlined evaluation procedures. Funding preparations for long-term program maintenance and follow-up of prevention measures are likely to show the most positive outcomes for youth involved in violence and gang activities. Programs such as D.A.R.E. and G.R.E.A.T., while well-intentioned and generating positive experiences for children across the country, need to be reprogrammed and restructured with empirically-based prevention goals that stand the tests of empirically-based evaluations of those goals' outcomes among students.

In addition to experiencing the presence of gangs, suburbs are increasingly in need of resources to help populations in need. The suburban poor are often located in suburbs that have less economic and employment opportunities than suburbs of higher wealth levels. There are more safety net measures for poverty-stricken populations in poor urban communities than in suburban communities. Suburban poor also need access to early childhood programs and special services for youth that middle-class suburban

communities are not accustomed to providing (Kneebone et al., 2011; Kneebone and Garr, 2010). Migrating populations and transfer students are not solely responsible for increasing poverty in suburbs. The economic recession of the late 2000s have plunged many middle-class families into poverty.

As noted by the officials interviewed in all four communities studied, transfer students from urban areas to suburban areas are quite numerous. Seeking a better life for their children, parents are moving from the dangers and ineffective public services of the inner cities to affordable suburbs that offer safety and better education systems. Transfer students, however, often find themselves at odds when transitioning into a new environment and a new group of students. In areas where there are large numbers of students transferring from urban to suburban school districts, regional transition services need to be established to ease the transition of school-age youth and families into new environments. Such services should provide assistance for the location of affordable housing and accessible jobs, introduction to community organizations, the assignment of peer and adult “pals” in schools for smooth integration of transfer students into a new student population, as well as counseling services and informational sessions for transfer students in new schools. Transfer students need to feel welcome instead of alienated, and would be less tempted to resort back to gang-related activity and deviance that was characteristics of the urban communities they came from if they were not estranged and instead assimilated and assisted (McKenzie, 1996; Moriarty and Fleming, 1990).

In conclusion, intervention is needed at all levels, international, national, and local, to mitigate the worsening problems of inner city poverty and the social and physical impairments that it is intimately tied to. Establishing supportive and adequately-

funded social and institutional networks for youth development under the limitations of current economic conditions are key measures that address the roots of informal social control and neighborhood safety. Public agencies, religious organizations, social groups, and individuals alike must work together and in concert to achieve better outcomes for youth (Tienda and Wilson, 2002). In the face of deep and historic racism and white privilege, policy makers need to address the structural and cultural potencies that generate, reinforce, and maintain racial inequality and disadvantage (Wilson, 2009). Overarching solutions to such problems are best summarized in the words of Wilson (2009): “The issue of race and poverty should be framed in such a way that not only is a sense of fairness and justice to combat inequality generated, but also people are made aware that our country would be better off if these problems were seriously addressed and eradicated” (pp. 141-42).

7.4 Further Research

The importance of addressing neighborhood effects on crime and gang presence has not only been demonstrated by the intensive work of Krivo and Peterson (1996), Miller (2008), Park (1925), Peterson and Krivo (2010), Reiss and Tonry (1986), Sampson and Raudenbush, (1997), Sampson (2012), Shaw and McKay (1943), and Skogan (1986; 1990), but also in this dissertation through the ecological and quantitative study of the predictors of crime, gang presence, and school violence in New Jersey. The qualitative phase of this dissertation not only demonstrated the value of obtaining perceptions and experiences of school administrators and law enforcement personnel regarding gang activity among youth, but also revealed how these community stakeholders constructed their perceptions of nearby cities, transfer students, street culture, as well as the sources

of gang presence in school and the community. In future research comparisons of what officials perceive to be the sources of gang activity with how youth actually become involved deserves attention.

Rich and nuanced information gathered from interviews in this dissertation versus the ecological exploration of predictor variables using secondary data points to the need for more in-depth qualitative investigations into reasons behind gang involvement among youth, the complexity of gang involvement, and neighborhood influences on gang activity that Garot (2010), Jankowski (1991), Miller (2001), Thrasher (1927), and Whyte (1943) have conducted. Also in great need are in-depth, comprehensive explorations into the physical and social worlds of disadvantaged communities, their connections to violence, and the influence such communities may have on nearby neighborhoods that Anderson (1999), Kefalas (2003), Miller (1958), Miller (2008), Pattillo-McCoy (1999), Suttles (1968), and Wilson (1996) have intensely explored.

A resurgence of Chicago School-style ecological research since the 1980s and the renewed emphasis on neighborhood effects rather than on individual predictors of crime and violence deserves to be pursued further. Although Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, Roderick McKenzie, Clifford Shaw, and Henry McKay of the Chicago School pioneered the study of neighborhood effects, since the late 1980s Robert Sampson and his colleagues, in concert with other scholars in criminology, have spearheaded new research into neighborhood effects on community safety. These scholars have demonstrated that neighborhood effects are critical to understanding neighborhood crime, even in spatially proximate communities. Such research is now demonstrated most convincingly in a systematic and detailed presentation of all Robert Sampson and colleagues' findings in

The Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect (Sampson, 2012), as well as in Ruth Peterson and Lauren Krivo's *Divergent Social Worlds: Neighborhood Crime and the Racial-Spatial Divide* (Peterson and Krivo, 2010).

There is also a need, however, for further research on the effects of neighborhood disadvantage and neighborhood change on crime and gang presence. In research as early as 1927 by Thrasher, neighborhood change was found to give rise to gang activity. According to findings in this dissertation, proximity to disadvantage seems to stimulate neighborhood change as inner city families migrate to safer neighborhoods with better education systems that are located nearby. There is still limited research, though, on the relationships between neighborhood change and crime (Kirk and Laub, 2010). In this dissertation, officials perceived neighborhood change and the influx of transfer students from urban areas as influential factors behind decreased community safety and increased gang presence in the streets and schools. Such phenomena, however, must be investigated at the level of families and individuals, perhaps documenting the lives of urban families starting a new life in the suburbs, as well as how urban transfer students adjust to suburban environments. In addition to transfer students, proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods was found to be a substantial indicator of violence in municipality schools. There is no research regarding this relationship and such a finding indicates a need for further exploration.

More intensive evaluations of violence and gang prevention measures need to take place in both urban and suburban school districts. Although such programs are implemented similarly in both urban and suburban districts, reasons behind gang presence in urban schools may be different from motivators behind gang presence in

suburban schools. Research needs to target the effectiveness of program intentions on program outcomes. Is there evidence of reduction in gang involvement among students? While such evaluation measures are challenging, they must be comprehensive, mixed-methods, and encompass large sample sizes across various geographies.

Much research has already identified the prime indicators of gang involvement, the most at-risk youth who are likely to join gangs, as well as effective means of mitigating gang-related activity. Implementation of empirically verified prevention and intervention measures targeted at the most at-risk youth needs to occur along with robust evaluation measures that effectively demonstrate positive outcomes. Other actions could be taken with regard to school uniforms and school size. Do school uniforms and school size influence student behavior and gang involvement – and if so, what needs to be done to make sure that school uniforms are more widely implemented and how can officials change school size to decrease disciplinary problems?

While gangs, violence, poverty, minority populations, foreign-born populations, residential transiency, and disadvantage are characteristics that are likely to increase in suburban communities in metropolitan areas throughout the U.S., research needs to not only document such phenomena but investigate the ways in which local suburban governments and schools should change to accommodate demographic and socioeconomic characteristics that the traditional American suburb is not accustomed to experiencing. While it is evident that more safety-net programs, affordable housing, and better access to employment all need attention in suburban communities, comprehensive exploration into the needs of suburban poor is also needed, as there is already ample research on inner city poor.

In-depth, mixed-methods research that investigates the effects proximity to disadvantaged neighborhoods in communities such as Oakhollow, New Jersey need to occur. The influence of proximity to disadvantage seems to go beyond community stakeholders' perceptions of stigmatized neighborhoods and populations. Historical documentation of the community, experiences of long-time residents and newcomers alike, and perspectives of those in religious and community organizations need to be studied to fully understand the dynamics of community stability and community change. The structure of informal social controls and collective efficacy in communities must be better understood in order to comprehend the most effective ways to mitigate neighborhood decline. Ways of mitigating residential transiency, integrating newcomers into community organizations and with residents, as well as having productive activities and meaningful community involvement for youth are not only critical actions for the improvement of community safety, but for the wellbeing of entire communities, the schools within them, and residents – the real ambassadors of neighborhood safety.

APPENDIX
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

On the following pages is the main interview protocol used to interview school administrators and law enforcement officials in this dissertation.

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol: Member of Middle or high school Administration, Faculty, or School Resource Police Officer

Does Proximity Matter? A Geographic Assessment of Violence and Gang Presence in New Jersey School Districts and their Relationships to Disadvantaged Populations

Date: _____

Interviewee: _____ (name)
_____ (title)
_____ (school name)

INTRODUCTION

My name is Brian Engelmann and I am a doctoral candidate in the Joint Ph.D. program in Urban Systems at NJIT. First of all, I would like to thank you for your time today and for allowing me to speak with you in person. My current research involves exploring violence and gangs in suburban schools and their relationships to urban areas.

Could you sign this confidentiality agreement? It outlines how my dissertation committee and I will keep personal and sensitive information completely confidential in my dissertation and any published work that results from this study. Pseudonyms will be used for place names such as schools, districts, municipalities, and counties to keep location anonymous. You should also be aware that you may choose to not respond to any questions you do not feel comfortable answering and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. May I record this interview? If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to ask.

GENERAL

- 1) How long have you been at your current position at this school?**
- 2) What do you believe are the best characteristics of this school?**
- 3) In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing this school?**

SAFETY

4) Are there any police officers in this school?

Probe: If yes: How many officers are usually present?

Probe: If yes: What are the officer(s) responsibilities at this school?

Probe: If no: Are there other law enforcement officers that you know of who deal with youth in the district?

5) Are there security guards in this school?

Probe: If yes: How many guards are usually present?

Probe: If yes: What are the guard(s) responsibilities at this school?

6) How safe do you think this school is overall?

Probe: Why do feel this way?

7) How often does violence occur at this school?

Probe: Do you have any examples of types of violence that most commonly occur here?

Probe: If yes: What do you think are the reasons behind this violence?

GANGS & WANNABES

8) Are there gangs in this school?

Probe: If yes: Could you provide me with any examples of gangs or gang activity in this school?

Probe: If no: Can you explain why there is not a gang presence in this school?

IF NO: PROCEED TO Q. 13

9) How serious is the gang problem in this school?

Probe: Approximately how many gangs are present in the school?

Probe: Approximately how many gang members are present in the school?

Probe: Approximately how long has there been a gang presence here?

Probe: How often does this gang(s) cause violence on school property or have conflicts with other groups?

Probe: Does the gang(s) have a name?

10) Do you know where the gangs might have formed?

Probe: If yes: Did the gang(s) form in the school or elsewhere?

Probe: Is the gang(s) territorial?

11) Do you have any thoughts on how gangs came about here?

Probe: Do you think there any factors outside of this school district that may contribute to the formation of gangs here?

Probe: If respondent says nearby area may contribute: What is the name of this area that you think influences gangs here? Do you have any experience with or examples of how this area influences gangs in this school?

12) Do you think there are gang wannabes in this school?

IF NO: PROCEED TO Q. 13

Probe: Why do you think so?

Probe: Do you have any experiences with or examples of wannabes in this school?

Probe: Is there a large gang wannabe presence in this school?

Probe: Do you have any thoughts on why students in this school want to be in gangs?

URBAN CULTURE & NEARBY AREAS

13) In some schools, despite location outside of cities, students adopt the clothing styles and mannerisms of urban youth. Do you see that happening in this school?

Probe: Can you tell me more about this?

Probe: Do a lot of students adopt these habits?

Probe: Where do you think students get the idea to do this?

Probe: Are there other places nearby that influence them? What are these places?

14) Are there any area(s) nearby that you think have a negative influence on students?

Probe: If Yes: Please explain why you think so.

IF NO: PROCEED TO Q. 15

Probe: What are these areas like?

Probe: Do students go there? What do they do there?

Probe: Do students get into trouble in these areas?

Probe: Are there any police reports or records in the school of these activities?

Probe: Is there anyone else that I can contact that would know of these types of activities among the students in this school?

GENERAL PREVENTION MEASURES

15) ASK ONLY IF OFFICIAL HAS DENIED GANG AND WANNABE PRESENCE IN THE SCHOOL/DISTRICT:

This school district is very close to area(s) of high crime and poverty. Given this situation, how do you explain the lack of gangs and gang wannabes in this school?

16) Is there anything being done to reduce gangs (or in the case of no gangs: prevent the possibility of gang membership) in this school?

Probe: Do you think that the school needs more programs on gang education and prevention?

Probe? Is there anything else that you think should be done to prevent gangs or wannabes in this school?

17) Is there anything being done in the school to prevent or mitigate the potential negative effects of factors external to the school district?

Probe: Are there any community or police initiatives that are the result of concern over nearby communities?

18) Are there any anti-violence measures in this school?

Probe: If yes: How often do anti-violence programs or talks occur here?

Probe: What else does the school or district do to curb violence and student misbehavior?

****If the interviewee is a high-ranking member of the school administration, ask permission to walk around the school to conduct a brief observational study of students as an expert, in order to confirm or identify a presence of gangs, wannabes, or urban culture****

Thank you very much for your assistance in my research. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this study.

END OF INTERVIEW

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