THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLICE DECENTRALIZATION AND VIOLENT AND PROPERTY CRIMES FOR MADISON, WISCONSIN

by

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“To Angela Jo, whose patience, impatience, support, and yes, chiding, all led to the successful completion of this program.”

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INTRODUCTION

Has the physical decentralization of the City of Madison, WI, Police Department (M.P.D.) over the last 15 years reduced violent crime and/or reduced property crime in the City of Madison? It is the purpose of this field project to answer this question.

Since at least the 1970s, numerous law enforcement agencies, experts, and citizens throughout the United States and the world adopted 'community policing' as their operating paradigm. While community policing involves numerous strategies and techniques, a necessary component of any community policing effort involves relationship building between the law enforcement organization and the community they serve (Goldstein, 1990). The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) states, "Community policing represents a shift from reactive, incident-driven police service to a proactive, problem-solving approach" (NIJ, 1995). While many strategies exist within the aegis of community policing, implementation usually involves making police personnel both accessible to the community and in close geographic proximity to the citizenry they serve (Bureau of Justice Assistance [BJA], 1994). One frequently utilized method to achieve accessibility and proximity is physical decentralization—eliminating a single, large police station and creating instead several smaller 'district' stations that are spread throughout the jurisdiction/municipality in question (Kenney and McNamara, 1999).

In Madison, WI, the drive toward decentralization began in 1987 with the creation of Experimental Police District (E.P.D.) on the south side of the city. The small, semi-autonomous station was intentionally placed in a dense, economically disadvantaged

urban area with a reputation for violence, drug activity, prostitution, and various quality of life concerns. Decentralization did not continue until 1995, with the building of the North Police District; by 2006, decentralization was complete: West (2001), the new South (2003), and East (2006). The Central district continues to operate out of the City County Building, located in downtown Madison.

Decentralization has improved community accessibility to the police, and has increased interaction between the police and citizens; barriers of distance and unfamiliarity dissolve with propinquity. In addition to being closer to the people, each district station has a community room (usually the largest room in the district) available free of charge to citizen groups and organizations. Each district also assigns personnel to act as liaisons to neighborhood associations, and it is the expectation that officers and commanders be familiar with stakeholders in the community, including residents, alders, and business owners. But has decentralization—and the increased interaction it entails—manifested reductions in crime? For this project, crime is defined in two categories: first, violent crime—homicide, sexual assault, and armed robbery; second, property crime—specifically burglary. I selected these crimes for two reasons. First, all are felonies—and each has significant impact on the physical and/or psychological life of the victim and the ripples from these crimes affect the entire community. Second, these crimes are on the rise in Madison. Since 2006, Madison has experienced a number of high-profile homicides and robberies, with 'average citizens' being the victim of crimes that were normally reserved for people engaged in crime themselves. In October of 2007, the Capital Times Newspaper reported that such crimes represent a significant

concern to Madisonians, “Residents from across the city flooded meetings on crime this summer and fall, complaining that they felt less safe than in the past” (Schneider, 2007, para. 3). Violence is not the only concern--burglaries have surged since 2006, climbing more than 26% in 2007 alone, and responsible for pushing the overall crime rate up 5.5% (“Annual Report,” 2007). Concerns over crimes against persons and property have begun to resonate with the people of Madison, who are becoming more vocal in their expectations that the police deal with rising crime trends.

THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Since their inception, police organizations have focused on effecting and improving public safety; the issue is how to best accomplish this important end given finite resources. Starting in the 1970s, law enforcement agencies reorganized. The theory behind the new structure was known as community policing (Goldstein, 1990). The majority of police agencies today embrace and/or practice at least some aspects of community policing in order to improve public attitude to law enforcement, decrease conflict between citizens and the police, and reduce crime rates (Patterson, 2008). While community policing has several tenets, chief among these is the need to change existing police structures and decentralize the hierarchy of authority within the organization and to physically decentralize—place police districts into the neighborhoods/areas that they serve (Wycoff and Skogan, 1994). In an online interview with PBS' POV, Wesley Skogan stated, "Community policing has several key characteristics. First is organization decentralization: pushing...to geographical units, precincts, or districts" (2004, para. 1). As noted by Maguire and Shin (2003), "...municipal police organizations in the USA experienced significant decreases in centralization...consistent with the structural reform agendas of community policing advocates". For the City of Madison Police Department, which embraced community policing in 1977 under Chief David Cooper, this has meant creating police district stations, one for each quadrant of the city, with a fifth, central, at the hub. Each district is replete with its own patrol division, command staff, investigative services bureau, administrative personnel, armories, evidence collection rooms, and

squad cars. While not entirely autonomous, each district station is capable of meeting most of the law enforcement needs of the surrounding community (in Madison, each police district encompasses an area with approximately 30,000 to 75,000 residents).

Has physical decentralization improved public safety? A review of the literature concerning police decentralization reveals several major themes.

Theme Number One

Decentralization of police agencies enhances employee satisfaction with their agency and improves the public's perception/satisfaction of the police. Wycoff and Skogan (1994) argue that decentralization improves employee job satisfaction and community satisfaction with the accessibility and accountability of their local law enforcement officers. Vito and Kunselman (2000) buttress this view; they posit that decentralization leads to increased morale among citizens and officers. Gregory and MacLachlan's (1999) findings also support this theme—decentralization increases employee satisfaction. According to the National Institute of Justice, police executives "overwhelmingly endorsed the concept of community policing and were sanguine about the benefit of increased officer satisfaction and greater positive public attitude towards the police" (NIJ, 1995, p. 2).

Theme Number Two

Decentralization better serves the community because it improves cooperation, interaction, and accountability. Bennett and Murphy (2005) wrote that decentralization "increases individual ownership, responsibility, and raises accountability of the officers, resulting in better service" (p. 2). Jesilow and Parsons (2000) argue that decentralization leads to increased neighborhood control, resulting in the re-establishment of trust between communities and the police. Willard (2001) argues that decentralization is politically attractive in that it gives greater local control and decision-making authority to the community. In addition, Walker (1993) states that decentralization is a goal of community policing because it better serves the community by putting the focus on neighborhoods and community input. For example, the strategic plan of the Grand Rapids Police Department states "decentralized deployment...allows the community to hold the officers directly accountable, at the same time that officers can hold the community accountable for shouldering its fair share of the work and responsibility" ("Back to the Future," n.d.). Finally, the Madison Police Department's own mission statement includes the tenet "policing in partnership with the community".

Theme Number Three

Decentralization is unproven. In other words, there is little proof that decentralization makes for better police agencies (or improves public safety). Mastrofski and Ritti (2001) argue that changes such as decentralization are pursued for political reasons, and that data demonstrating the actual merits of decentralization is quite limited.

Green and Taylor (1988) argue that "studies of impact of community policing show little consistency and methodological deficiencies" (p. 21). Indeed, Jesilow and Parsons (2000) state "that measuring the effectiveness of community policing is problematic" (p. 109). Kenney and McNamara (1999) discuss pitfalls sometimes associated with decentralization, stating that "decentralization is useful under some circumstances" especially with regards to larger cities, but for smaller cities, those under 250,000 (and Madison has a population of approximately 220,000), "it is not clear if decentralization is effective" (p. 179). [Some at M.P.D argue that decentralization has actually reduced the ability to coordinate effective responses to crime trends because information and personnel are dispersed, making information sharing and team problem solving more challenging. Addressing citywide trends is more difficult when law enforcement itself is not centralized]. Others suggest differences in implementation hampers effective assessment of decentralization efforts across the country. Patterson (2008) argues that limited implementation "can aggravate organizational conflict...and lead to resentment" (p. 3) rather than combat crime. Further, there are differences in the means and degree of decentralization. Some organizations rely on police sub-stations—very small, limited locations where officers can congregate or be close by—but as Allen and Stone (1996) point out, these stations lack the resources and dedicated liaison officers that full-fledged districts offer. Other communities where data might be obtained have only begun to decentralize, or have limited decentralization to one or two stations, perhaps akin to Madison's original foray with the experimental police district. All of these factors create

real questions in the proven worth of decentralization or even the ability to extrapolate benefits (or costs) associated with decentralization from one community to another.

Theme Number Four

This theme encapsulates the various factors that are known to affect crime rates. The F.B.I. lists the following as "factors that are known to affect the volume and type of crime occurring from place to place" ("Crime Factors," 2004, para. 7):

1. Population, especially youth population; as population increases, so will crime, and youth population increases have a negative and disproportional affect on crime rates. This is supported by Morgan who states "males between the ages of 15-24 (are) the most crime-prone group" (2002, p. 1). Enders (2007) noted that crime rates tend to rise as populations rise. Thus high-school age populations (late teens) do impact crime rates. For this project, it is not possible to track overall population by police district. However, enrollment figures of the high schools are available. In Madison, there are four high schools: East (located in the North district); West (located in the south district); LaFollette (located in the East district), and Memorial (located in the West district). There are no high schools in the central district—although Central abuts with the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus and is home to thousands of students. Data is available to track high school populations over time in the districts.

2. Stability of population, i.e. commuting patterns, transient factors. While such information may be available on a citywide or regional basis, it is not tracked within districts or areas within the City of Madison.
3. Economic conditions including poverty and unemployment. Allen and Stone (1996) suggest that poverty is a driving factor in property crime, and that as economic conditions worsen, property crime rates may be expected to rise; this sentiment is echoed by Niskanen (1994) who wrote that "crime rates are affected by demographic conditions" (p. 1). Unemployment is another factor in generating crime; according to Chapman (2002), there is a "strong positive relationship between criminal activity and long-term unemployment" (p. 19). Median income, poverty rates, and unemployment are not tracked by district within the City of Madison, thus data relating to any specific area is not available.
4. Cultural, educational, and religious characteristics. Niskanen (1994) reports, "crime rates are also affected by demographic and cultural conditions. For example, the violent crime rate increases with the share of births to single mothers" (p. 1). Chapman (2002) notes that graduating from education impacts crime rates: "criminal activity is negatively associated with high school completions, and positively associated with high school non-completion rates" (p. 3). The Madison Metropolitan School District tracks graduation rates by year per high school, thus data is available to account for this factor. "Crime depends on where people live" according to Williams and

Ashby (2006), arguing that neighborhood location is the biggest predictor of crime and crime rates (p. 215). Macro-social conditions of culture, education, and religion do not lend themselves to be analyzed by police district. Trends are further blurred when the polices of the Madison Metropolitan School District result in students from one district of the city being bussed or schooled in another district. Finally, neighborhoods—rich or poor—may cross police district boundaries. Nevertheless, police districts encompass a geographic area in Madison. No two districts are equal in size, and each has unique issues and characteristics—for example, North has the airport, South has three of four area hospitals, and Central is home to 40,000 college students.

5. Size/resources of law enforcement. Bedkober and Billante (2004) both observe that as the number of police officers increases, crime tends to decrease. In a similar vein, Johnson (2006) reported that as Federal resources to local law enforcement agencies have retrenched, violent crime rates have increased across the country. Mulhausen (2001) reported that a per-capita increase of one dollar in police funding results in a "reduction in violent crime of almost 16.2 incidents per 100,000" (p. 10). Morgan (2002) reports simply "more police do deter crime" (p. 2). Staffing levels at the MPD per district per year are available and accounted for herein, as are law enforcement expenditures per 1000 population (via the G.R.E.A.T. database).

6. Structure of other components of criminal justice system (i.e. prosecutorial/correctional). Niskanen (1994) reports that "an increase in police appears to have…a roughly proportionate negative effect on the actual rate of property crime" (p. 1). Morgan (2002) asserts that court decisions increasing the rights of the accused and the obligations of the accusers have, as Justice Byron White wrote is his dissention from Miranda, "a corrosive effect on the criminal law as an effective device to prevent crime" (p. 2). In Dane county, no new district attorneys have been hired since the 1980's, despite significant growths in population, crimes, and law enforcement. However, these factors are not applicable as variables as corrections and prosecution of crimes are done on a county or statewide basis, and are not divided along police district boundaries, thus it is not possible to account for these variables for this project.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Does physical decentralization accomplish a key mission of the police, namely reducing violent and property crimes? One reason this question is relevant is that it is not directly addressed in the literature. Although Wycoff and Skogan looked at fear of crime, as well as burglary and vandalism rates, the data was culled from citizen surveys and perceptions, and not from formal police records; nor did it review violent crimes. Also, while many studies show that a community may have an improved perception of the police and that officers may be happier, there is no evidence that these factors—which *may* increase productivity, accountability, information sharing, cooperation, and trust—have a measurable impact on crime rates. Another case for relevancy is timing—Madison is currently facing waves of violent and property crimes at rates which have not been seen in a generation or more. Combating these crimes is at the forefront of many citizens' (and M.P.D.'s) consciousness. What is addressed in the literature regarding crime rates are the numbers of officers (and corollary agencies such as corrections), police budgets (crime prevention programs, number of officers, specialized units i.e. gang task force), geography (climate, urbanization, density), and population (age and demographic issues). Thus this study differs from the literature review on a number of levels—its focus is solely on the Madison Police Department, and on violent crime as well as property crime. Also, rather than examining perceptions, using survey data, or potentially subjective factors (e.g. political considerations), it focuses on crime data. Finally, it answers a very specific question about the impact of one aspect of community

policing—decentralization—on a specific factor (violent crime and property crime) that impacts people's lives.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Null Hypothesis

The physical decentralization of the Madison Police Department into five police stations (North, South, East, Central, and West) has no effect on the violent crime rate or the property crime rate. The alternative hypothesis is that the physical decentralization has a positive effect on the rate of violent crime i.e. reduces the rate; and a positive effect on the rate of property crime, also reducing the rate of property crime.

OPERATIONALIZATION

To measure if police decentralization has had a positive effect on the violent crime rate/property crime rate in Madison, it is necessary to control for some other factors—both at the district level and citywide—that may also influence the crime rate. These factors were selected based on the literature review and data availability, as well as my professional experience as a police officer and native of the City of Madison. Citywide, I controlled for police spending per 1000 population (the more money spent on police, the lower the crime rate) and population (as population increases, crime rates may also increase). District factors included the number of officers per district per year per 1000 population (the presence of more officers may also reduce the crime rate); I also looked at the proportion of the district population of high school age over time, as the literature states that youths commit crime at a disproportional rate (and I can account for this data by police district).

My dependent variables are the violent crime (homicide, armed robbery, and sexual assault) rate and property crime (burglary) rate. I examined these both in terms of per 1000 population, and the data was collected by district.

My independent variable is decentralization that eventually occurred for each district; given the hypothesis, the variable decentralization needs to be examined. I chose a bivariate regression analysis to assess the relationship between decentralization and the violent and property crime rate in the City of Madison. I therefore used a ‘dummy

variable' (decentralization=1, non-decentralization=0) in order to measure the effects of this variable over time.

In addition to the dependent and independent variables, there are three control or exogenous variables I account for in the multiple regression analyses: the number of law enforcement personnel per district per 1000 population; and the per 1000 population spending on law enforcement in the City of Madison. 2006 was also controlled for; in 2006, North, East, and Central experienced their highest number of violent crimes during the entire period reviewed. 2006 experienced the highest number of violent crimes of any year studied (2006 saw 469 violent crimes; the average over the time frame was 365, and the mean was 349), and the second highest number of property crimes. A fourth variable, high school population per 1000 population per district was examined but ultimately not used in the analyses. When high school population was controlled for in the multiple regression analyses, it significantly distorted the results. For example, including the high school data skewed the 'district' co-efficient for violent crime rate from -.477 to .003 and for property crime rate from -.311 to .642. For additional information see Appendix B.

RESULTS

What is the impact of police decentralization on the property crime and violent crime rates in the City of Madison? Before answering these questions, a brief biographical note is in order. The Madison Police Department (M.P.D.) hired me in 1997; over the last 12 years, I worked in the North ('98-99 and '07-present), West ('00-'01), and South ('02-'04) police districts. I also frequently responded to calls and issues in the Central and East districts as well—in fact, problems often occur across district boundaries or impact multiple areas simultaneously. I have experience as a patrol officer, a neighborhood officer, a patrol sergeant, and a community policing team sergeant. In addition, I spent 3 years as a police trainer. I grew up in Madison and attended the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Thus I have experience and knowledge that, along with my research, is applicable for interpreting the results of my analyses.

The first model I employed examined the relationship solely between decentralization and violent crime rate per 1000 population and property crime rate per 1000 population. Police districts in Madison were all built in/near areas with significant problems and high population density (in Madison all of the stations are within ½ mile of some major problem areas). Is having a district station—in and of itself—a means to reduce the above mentioned crime rates? My bivariate regression findings show that there is not a statistically significant relationship between decentralization and violent crime rates or property crime rates. As the models themselves were not statistically significant (the F-value for property crimes per 1000 population was .035 and the F-value for violent

crimes per 1000 population was .795), a more fully specified model was required. Utilizing district stations—at least without controlling for other variables—does not affect crime rates. Thus, at first blush, the null hypothesis is accepted.

The more fully specified model includes exogenous variables mentioned in the operationalization section: the number of officers per 1000 population and law enforcement expenditures per 1000 population—the literature review strongly suggests that the number of officers and money spent on law enforcement impact violent and property crime rates. Year 2006 experienced a spike in crime—particularly violent crime—throughout the City of Madison. Although this may not represent an outlier, 2006 was an unusual year and reflects a change in the norm that might skew the overall results; therefore I include it among the exogenous variables. In order to account for geography (which the literature also suggests is significant), I opted to account for each district by running multiple analyses for each district, twice (one for property crimes and one for violent crimes). To more accurately measure the effect of decentralization at M.P.D. I ran separate regressions using either violent crime per 1000 population or property crime per 1000 population as the dependent variables. The following independent variables were controlled for: 2006, district, officers per 1000, and dollars spent on law enforcement per 1000. F-values for all the models showed statistical significance and R-values for all the regressions were also statistically significant, see Appendix A for a summary of the results.

The results from the multiple regression analyses were different from the bivariate analyses in several important and interesting ways. The results of the relationship

between decentralization and property crimes per 1000 population and violent crimes per 1000 population were not identical (even though the same independent variable and control variables were used) and shall be examined separately below.

Using property crimes per 1000 population as the dependent variable in the multiple regressions revealed uniform results. Regardless of district, when accounting for the other independent variables in the more fully specified model, decentralization reduces the rate of property crime and has a statistically significant relationship. Thus for property crime rate per 1000 population, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The building of police stations in Madison has reduced the rate of property crime per 1000 population over the period studied in this project. However, the strength of the relationship was not the same across districts.

There are several explanations as to why decentralization of the M.P.D. reduced the property crime rate across all districts. First, decentralization increases the amount of time officers spend in their areas of assignments (beats). When I worked West in 2000, the West station was not yet built. Travel time from the Central station (where West was based out of until it decentralized) was anywhere from 10-30 minutes each way, depending on weather, traffic and beat location. Thus upwards of 1 hour of an 8-hour shift was spent commuting. Prior to decentralization, I spent less time out on patrol, I was less visible, and therefore less likely to deter or catch suspects. In addition to allowing officers to spend more time in their beats, decentralization may increase response time to calls. A nearby police station housing numerous officers means a faster response time for incidents happening at the start of the shift, and it means that additional

resources like detectives and backup officers are closer. Further stations may act as a physically observable deterrent. Finally, the literature states that decentralization leads to increased community-police interaction. People living in blighted areas are often fearful or distrustful of the police, a fact bolstered by my own experiences at M.P.D. Increased interaction leads to increased trust and diminished fear—this may result in people providing information to police on potential targets and possible suspects. Trust leads to communication, and communication to information. This information allows for more efficient and effective policing.

Based on my training, experience, and knowledge, the variation in decentralizations' impact across the districts is due to differences between the districts. One major difference is geographic size. East and South are small districts; West is the largest. Response times increase as distances traveled increase. Also, the larger the district, the more police presence in any given area is diluted, and the less time officers have to forge relationships with citizens who might give them information. Finally, the farther away a victim is from the police station, the less the sheer physical presence of the station has as a deterrent to potential perpetrators.

Another difference is the demographic makeup of a district. Decentralization had the smallest impact on the Central districts property crime rate; Central is unique in that it has 40,000 college students many of whom live in the district. College students can be victims or suspects: college students are notorious for not locking their doors and leaving valuable possessions in plain sight (they also have a bevy of sought after items like laptop computers, mp3 players, and cell phones). On the other hand, students often face intense

financial pressures and because of their ubiquitous use of alcohol (and lack of life experience), often make poor choices. Central district is also the nexus of homeless services for the city, including several homeless shelters; Madison's permanent homeless population contains a large number of people with chronic drug and alcohol problems, a population that is often a perpetrator and victim of crime. Thus the Central districts specific characteristics reduced but did not eliminate the impact of decentralization on property crime rates.

The literature strongly argues that geography/location is a significant factor affecting property crime rates, and it appears that geography—the specific issues of a district—affect the impact of decentralization on property crime rates.

Using violent crimes per 1000 population as the dependent variable in the multiple regressions did not yield a uniform result. When accounting for the other independent variables in the more fully specified model, decentralization mattered in select cases. While decentralization has a statistically significant relationship with the violent crime rate, it may either reduce or increase the rate, depending on the district. West and Central districts had positive relationships, while East, North, and South all had negative relationships. Thus the alternative hypothesis for violent crime cannot be fully accepted. Also, as with property crime rates, the strength of the relationship was not uniform across districts.

The reason why the relationship is not uniform, and why the strength of the relationship varies is again tied to differences between the police districts.

First, each district has different violent crime challenges. For years, Allied Drive represented the most violent and dangerous area of the City of Madison; Allied Drive is located in the West district, and many of the problem people in the South and East districts moved to Allied Drive starting in the late 1990's. (A common effect of increased enforcement and attention is displacement, moving problems from one area to another with the goal that the dislocation weakens the strength and scope of the problem). The West district, specifically (though not exclusively) Allied Drive, suffered from an influx of problem people; this migration may have overwhelmed whatever reductive force decentralization may have had on violent crime rates West. West is also geographically much larger than the other districts (and the most populated). West has the greatest number of neighborhoods, and the greatest number of challenged neighborhoods (labeled high crime and drug areas by the M.P.D. and other city agencies). Violent activity in Madison is more likely to occur in and around challenged neighborhoods. The size of the district and the spread of areas with a propensity for violent crimes mean perhaps a dilution of the potency decentralization has on violent crime rates.

Juxtaposed to West is the East district. As a result of crack-cocaine coming to Madison, Webb-Darbo was the most dangerous neighborhood in the city in the late 1980's. By the late 1990's, police efforts there displaced many problems (many of which went West). East is also far smaller geographically than the West district, with a much smaller population and fewer high crime and drug neighborhoods.

The Central district is also unique, albeit for different reasons. The chronic problems with binge drinking and alcohol consumption by the student body—most of who live or congregate in the Central district—is a major contributing factor for violent crime in the district. During my pre-service academy in 1997, we were instructed that the (over) consumption of alcohol was present in the majority of sexual assaults in the Central district, and the majority of students who were victims of armed robberies were also intoxicated. In addition to alcohol, the presence of so many young people in the Central district increases the violent crime rate—as the literature argues. Central is also densely populated. On any given Saturday night during the school year, there may be anywhere from a few thousand to ten or more thousand students on State Street, a five block long pedestrian only street flanked on both sides by dozens of bars, clubs, and restaurants. Youth, alcohol, and crowds combine to overwhelm whatever positive effect decentralization may have on Central district violent crime.

The impact of decentralization on the violent crime rate in the South district (-.014), while constituting a reduction, may have been higher if not factors specific to the South district. The South district is second in challenged neighborhoods to West. Further, South is flanked by problem neighborhoods patrolled by other jurisdictions—these abut directly to the South district. People from Fitchburg and the Town of Madison walk or drive from their neighborhood and go South; gangs from nearby rival neighborhoods congregate at Penn Park in the South district, long infamous for homicides and shootings (a neighborhood I patrolled for 3 years). Counterbalancing the

influx of problems from surrounding cities is the mutual aid and information sharing between police agencies.

Once again, geography appears to be a factor that affects the significance of crime rates; in the case of violent crime, geography appears to be a significant enough factor to effectively eliminate any reduction in crime rates that decentralization may bring.

CONCLUSIONS

I divide my conclusions into three sections: first, what are some of the issues and limitations inherent in my analysis; second, what are the implications for policy makers; and third, how might this analysis be improved or built upon for future research.

Issues and Limitations

It is important to pause and note some issues regarding the lack of data. The literature clearly indicates that population—in particular youth density—has a significant impact crime rates; as population increases (particularly youth population) so does crime. Further, unemployment and overall poverty are definitely factors affecting crime rates. The City of Madison has information pertaining to the average age, median income, and total city population growth over time; however, the Madison Police Department is districted in a way which is not congruent with any other way the city is districted—not by aldermanic districts, not by census tracts, and not by school zones. [Indeed, there is currently a move at M.P.D. to examine how districts are shaped. Previously, major traffic arteries or geographic barriers were used; however, it is clear that people (who, after all, actually commit the crimes) do not necessarily adhere to such artificial boundaries.] Ultimately, this may lead to districts that are more organic, being neighborhood based rather than traffic based. Therefore, although it would have been very desirable to utilize such data on population and age, it simply was not available in a

form that was malleable to this project; I could only tangentially explore population by looking at high school enrollment figures over time.

Given inherent limitations in time and resources, there are some potential issues and problems with this analysis. Perhaps most confounding is the manner in which different organizations (in this case governmental entities) collect and sort data. Because of differences between census track data and the way the Madison Police Department organizes itself geographically, there was no feasible way to determine population by district (let alone demographic particulars), and using the general population for the entire city over time was not a useful variable. Similarly, per-capita spending on police is only measured by year, and not broken down into the geographical borders of North, South, Central, West, and East. Ultimately, I believe that a better accounting of the above issues would lead to a more rigorous and thorough analysis, although it is unclear whether the addition of such data would alter the acceptance of my hypothesis. Finally, an in-depth analysis of each district's particular characteristics and demographics might also allow for further quantification and identification of other factors that may affect violent and property crime rates. Some examples of 'district specific' information might include the square mileage of a district, and the location of the station within that district (does distance matter?). Another might be crime rates and law enforcement resources in municipalities immediately adjacent to a given district. Another could be the presence of major 'call generators' such as blighted areas or dense student neighborhoods. Identifying these factors that make districts different than one another might lead to better isolation of which factors have a more potent effect on crime rates.

Implications for Policy Makers

Perhaps the most germane conclusion involves the potential implications for policy makers. At a cost of approximately $2 million per station, investing in decentralization is expensive, and not easily undone—politically or economically. While the analysis supports the alternative hypothesis—that decentralization does reduce property crimes sampled for this project (burglary), it does not (uniformly) support decentralizations impact on violent crimes sampled (in some cases it increased the rate, in others it decreased it). Regardless, decentralization's impact (positive or negative) was less than that of other factors such as number of officers per 1000 or geography. Certainly this analysis does not investigate solve rate, how many crimes were prevented by decentralization (or, indeed, if decentralization reduced the rate of increase in crime), or if being closer to the communities meant a faster response and thus perhaps limited injury or damage. Nevertheless—and this is supported by much of the literature—it appears that the impetus behind decentralization is based on factors other than reducing crime. These factors include accountability, interaction, employee and community satisfaction, and police-community relationship building. My own experiences support these arguments. For example, most of my coworkers enjoy working out of a district—not only for the mundane benefits of parking, clean and safe bathrooms, and being able to choose an area that is closer to home for the commute, but also for the opportunity to have the time, resources, and facilities to establish fruitful relationships with citizens—time that might otherwise be spent 'driving around'. While these are laudable factors, does it justify the opportunity cost of building stations as opposed to, say, hiring more

officers (which the literature—and my analysis—suggest is more likely to reduce property crime rates)? The issue is especially pertinent when random, high profile violent crime appears to be on the rise, property crimes are soaring, budgets are tight, and citizens demand that law enforcement address the problem.

Future Paths

The final question is where could this study lead? Already suggested above are refining the data and getting more precise per-capita and population figures based on districts. Additionally, violent-crimes could be broken down into single type i.e. sexual assaults; or additional crime-types might be added such as simple assault and batteries. In addition to burglary, other property crimes such as criminal damage to property or stolen cars might be incorporated. Other data could be tested—other cities, longer time frames—and other variables controlled for (i.e. the poverty rate). New data and iterations aside, this study may lead to a more technical, dispassionate discussion and evaluation about the benefits and costs of the physical decentralization of police departments.

APPENDIX A

Results Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses

	East District: **Violent** Crimes Per 1000 Population	**West** District: **Violent** Crimes Per 1000 Population	**North** District: **Violent** Crimes Per 1000 Population	**Central** District: **Violent** Crimes Per 1000 Population	**South** District: **Violent** Crimes Per 1000 Population	**East** District: **Property** Crimes Per 1000 Population	**West** District: **Property** Crimes Per 1000 Population	**North** District: **Property** Crimes Per 1000 Population	**Central** District: **Property** Crimes Per 1000 Population	**South** District: **Property** Crimes Per 1000 Population
2006	.305	.249	.282	.239	.264	.005***	-.001***	-.011**	-.015**	.010**
Decentr.	-.217	.060	-.112	.170	-.014**	-.151	-.131	-.049**	-.012**	-.183
District	-.490	-.477	.128	.426	.263	.082*	-.311	-.190	.381	.263
Per 1000 Police Officers	.282	.864	.579	.326	.670	.833	.988	.752	.583	.798
Per 1000 Police Spending	.165	.060*	.127	-.004***	.670	.257	.253	.210	.189	.270
R Value	.531	.522	.407	.502	.452	.665	.715	.683	.746	.662
F Value	11.08	10.72	6.72	9.88	8.10	19.45	24.53	21.13	28.74	19.17

APPENDIX B

Summary of Results for West District Multiple Regression Analyses Including High School Graduation Data

	West District Violent Crimes per 1000 Population	West District Violent Crimes per 1000 Population including High School Data	West District Property Crimes per 1000 Population	West District Property Crimes per 1000 Population including High School Data
2006	.249	.321	-.001***	-.64
Decentralization	-.217	.098*	-.131	.189
District	-.477	-.003***	-.311	.642
Per 1000 Police Officers	.864	.189	.988	.122
Per 1000 Police Officer Spending	.060*	.041*	.253	-.135
Per 1000 High School Graduation	NA	.459	NA	-.135
R-value	.522	.483	.715	.606
F-value	10.72	5.77	24.53	9.47

APPENDIX C

Descriptive Statistics

	N	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
Per Capita Police Spending	55	$138.4500	$212.6200	$183.465	$26.6641174
YR__06	55	.00	1.00	.0909	.29013
Per Capita Officers	55	.12	.20	.1562	.03287
Decentralization__dmy	55	.00	1.00	.4909	.50452
Valid N (Listwise)	55				

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