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# A Socio-Spatial Analysis of Race and Crime in New Orleans

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## ABSTRACT

The relationship of residential segregation with neighborhood crime has been well established with many studies finding segregation was positively associated with neighborhood crime. Research has begun to explore the importance of neighborhood community for the relationship of segregation with crime, but few studies were able to incorporate explicit measures of social capital. The current study engages with this limitation by examining the relationship of segregation with violent crime in post-Katrina New Orleans controlling for neighborhood social capital (or what we term collective resources). Results suggest collective resources related to social trust and civic engagement can be protective against violent crime, but we find very limited evidence that such resources mediate the relationship of segregation with crime.

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## Introduction

Racial residential segregation in the United States has declined over the past 40 years, but segregation continues to have important implications for the distribution of social problems within cities (Brown and Weil 2020; Light and Thomas 2019; Peterson and Krivo 2010). Many predominantly Black neighborhoods remain characterized by poverty, low educational attainment, poor infrastructure, and high unemployment (Florida 2017; Krivo, Peterson, and Kuhl 2009; Sampson 2012). Such neighborhoods also often featured elevated levels of crime and violence (Krivo, Peterson, and Kuhl 2009; Light and Thomas 2019; Sampson 2012). Despite several decades of research, it remains unclear how segregation intersects with crime. Some studies reported a positive association, (Dean et al. 2018; Eitle 2009; Kang 2016; Light and Thomas 2019) while others reported a negative association (Beaulieu and Continelli 2011; Kling, Ludwig, and Katz 2005; Krivo et al. 2015). These conflicting findings necessitate further inquiry into the relationship of neighborhood segregation with crime.

Examination of the importance of local community characteristics may help explain the divergent findings of previous research about the relationship of segregation with crime. Several studies documented the potential for strong local community to act as a protective factor against crime and delinquency even in areas characterized by structural disadvantages such as those found in segregated neighborhoods (Peterson, Krivo, and Browning 2006; Sampson 2012; Wilcox, Cullen, and Feldmeyer 2018). Local community has been defined and measured in many ways, so the current study uses the term “collective resources” as an umbrella term that encompasses measures associated with the broadly defined concept of social capital and several theoretical frameworks including collective efficacy, the systemic model of crime and the social distance model. Examining collective resources also allows the current study to connect with the much broader research on local communities (Gibbons, Barton, and Reling 2020; Hipp 2016; Kim and Kawachi 2006; Putnam 2000). For the purposes of the current study, collective resources refer to the ability of people to work together or cooperate which can be measured through social networks, social trust, civic engagement, and

community organizations (Barton et al. 2020; Weil 2020; Weil et al. 2021; Weil, Rackin, and Maddox 2018).

Recent research found that collective resources including greater social trust and civic engagement among residents were associated with lower levels of neighborhood crime because these characteristics encouraged social solidarity in ways that inhibited crime (Sampson 2012; Weil et al., 2021; Valasik et al., 2017). Other resources such as communal socialization, peer group influence and the types of institutions available within neighborhoods were also put forward as possible reasons for the contradictory findings of research on the relationship of segregation with crime because these resources help residents to overcome challenges associated with living in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Barton et al. 2017; Brown and Weil 2020; Light and Thomas 2019; Pattillo 2005). The importance of these characteristics for neighborhood crime has been challenging to assess because of the rarity of neighborhood level data about collective resources (Light and Thomas 2019; Sampson 2012).

The current study contributes to research about the relationship of racial residential segregation with crime by examining the mediating influence of four measures of collective resources on the relationship of segregation with neighborhood violence in New Orleans. The dataset used in this study combines information from a large ( $n = 7000$ ) survey of Hurricane Katrina survivors with crime data collected from the New Orleans Police Department and tract level census information. The survey data include four measures of collective resources: social trust, bonding networks, bridging networks, and civic engagement. Assessing the importance of four measures of collective resources allows for a more nuanced assessment of the importance of local community for the relationship of segregation with crime.

## Literature review

Residential segregation can be broadly described as the extent to which two or more groups live separately from each other in different parts of the urban environment (Massey and Tannen, 2015). Racial segregation has long been part of the American society, perpetuating inequality and limiting racial socialization. Recent research indicates people are increasingly willing to live in diversity, with many segregated neighborhoods experiencing increased racial heterogeneity due to factors such as increased immigration and gentrification (Massey and Denton, 2018). Despite this increased willingness to live in diverse neighborhoods, many neighborhoods continue to be residentially segregated because of discrimination toward immigrants and minorities from financial institutions, realtors, and federal laws in the housing market, restricting their access to certain neighborhoods (South et al., 2011). The issue of “white flight” in areas with an increasing number of minorities or immigrants also contributes to the persistence of residential segregation in the face of increasing racial heterogeneity within neighborhoods (South et al., 2011; Pais et al., 2009).

Despite recent declines, segregation in the United States remains an important problem of its own and because of its association with other social problems including crime (Florida 2017; Gibbons et al. 2020; Kang 2016). Racial segregation maintains racial inequality through the sorting of racial minorities into separate neighborhoods from other racial groups (Peterson and Krivo 2010). The adverse effects of racial segregation were most evident in predominantly black neighborhoods where many residents were of lower socioeconomic status (Light and Thomas 2019). Research has reported that such neighborhoods were frequently characterized by concentrated disadvantage (Iceland and Hernandez 2017), greater reliance on public assistance (Massey 2020), greater unemployment (Popescu et al. 2018) and poor health outcomes (Gibbons and Yang 2014), making them more likely to feature higher levels of violence due to insufficient resources for crime prevention (Barton, Rizzuto, and Valasik 2020; Becker 2016; Dean et al. 2018; Eitle 2009; Hipp 2010; Kang 2016; Light and Thomas 2019; Massey and Denton 1993; Peterson and Krivo 2010). These characteristics may further mediate the relationship of segregation with crime because segregation encourages the spatial concentration of racial and ethnic minorities into economically disadvantaged areas (Light and Thomas 2019; Peterson and Krivo 2010; Phillips 2002; Sampson, 1985).

Two theoretical frameworks that help explain the relationship of segregation with violent crime are the social disorganization framework and the social distance model (Browning et al. 2017; Light and Thomas 2019; Peterson and Krivo 2010). The social disorganization framework predicts higher crime in neighborhoods characterized by greater concentrations of socioeconomic disadvantage, racial/ethnic heterogeneity, and low residential stability because these structural characteristics hinder the development of collective resources and decrease the probability that residents will participate in local social organizations or have the resources required to engage with local social problems (Barton and Gruner 2016; Peterson and Krivo 1993; Sampson 2012; Wilcox, Cullen, and Feldmeyer 2018).

Residential segregation has important implications for this framework because it has historically involved the sorting of individuals into neighborhoods by race and socio-economic status. Specifically, racial, and ethnic minorities were more likely to be sorted into lower socio-economic neighborhoods that were more likely to feature elevated levels of crime and other social problems (Barton and Gruner 2016; Barton, Rizzuto, and Valasik 2020; Sampson 2012; Wilcox, Cullen, and Feldmeyer 2018). Studies have consistently demonstrated that residential segregation increased socioeconomic disadvantage through the perpetuation of unequal access to resources and community networks (Massey and Denton 1993; Peterson and Krivo 2010). Communities with fewer resources were found to be less able to engage in crime prevention activities (Sampson 2012; Wilcox, Cullen, and Feldmeyer 2018). The development of communal resources has become more complicated in recent years because many low income segregated neighborhoods feature lower rates of residential stability and more racial or ethnic heterogeneity with increased immigration and gentrification (Brown-Saracino, 2017; Gibbons, Barton and Brault, 2018). Segregated areas with racial/ethnic heterogeneity and low rates of residential stability were found to feature lower rates of social cohesion needed for communal crime prevention activities (Jones & Dantzler, 2021). Therefore, segregation contributes to neighborhood crime through the perpetuation of poverty, low residential stability, ethnic heterogeneity, which in turn limits the development of collective resources that can be used to control neighborhood crime (Massey and Denton 1993; Peterson, Krivo, and Browning 2006; Sampson 2012).

The importance of collective resources for neighborhood violence more broadly has sometimes produced mixed results (Bellair and Browning 2010; Sampson 2012; Weil et al., 2019). This is in part because social networks associated with increased collective efficacy might also protect criminals from punishment (Bellair and Browning 2010; Browning, Feinberg, and Dietz, 2004; Warner 2007). Bonding social networks tend to emphasize local social resources and connections (Brown & Weil, 2019), while communities with more “bridging” forms of social solidarity can reduce crime by connecting individuals with resources such as contacts and job opportunities that decrease the benefits of engaging in crime (Grannovetter 1973). Pro-social/anti-crime collective resources were more likely to be present in affluent neighborhoods, especially white affluent neighborhoods (Anderson, 2015; Peterson, Krivo, and Browning 2006; Sampson 2012) which also tended to feature lower levels of crime (Beaulieu and Continelli 2011; Hipp 2007).

The social distance model also helps to explain the relationship of segregation with crime (Blau 1977; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1987). Social distance refers to differences in statuses between members of society due to factors such as race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, age, and social background (Hipp and Perrin 2009). Social distance within neighborhoods has been associated with fewer interactions and a decreased potential for the development of collective resources (Brown-Saracino, 2017; Sampson 2012; Weil et al., 2019). Research found social distance was a major contributor to the relationship between residential segregation and crime because fewer interactions and fewer collective resources have been linked to lower levels of informal social control and crime prevention activities (Sampson 2012; Weil et al., 2019). Some research suggests higher crime rates in segregated neighborhoods characterized by racial heterogeneity was a function of social distance among neighborhoods residents (Hipp, Tita, and Boggess 2009). Massey and Denton (1993) found that people of different races and ethnicities were less likely to share communal interests, giving them little reason for coming together and developing communal resources that aid crime prevention. For example, Blacks were found to be most likely to attribute neighborhood problems to inequality and lack of opportunity, while whites attributed this to group culture and personal choices (Bobo 2004;

Krysan 2008; Schuman et al. 1997; Young 1991). This created challenges for the development of mutual solutions to communal problems. Blacks were more likely to emphasize structural explanations, such as limited opportunities or discrimination while whites were more likely to blame blacks themselves for unequal social conditions and opposed some structural solutions that could reduce or eliminate them (Bobo 2004; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Schuman et al. 1997).

Further, segregation may enhance such views. Quillian and Pager (2001) found that whites view crime as a greater problem in areas with more young black males, and Gilliam, Valentino, and Beckmann (2002) show that whites who live in more homogeneous white areas offer explanations of crime that emphasize the role of law enforcement and favor more punitive crime policies. Shifting to the neighborhood level, such differences often limit interactions among neighborhood residents encouraging social distance (Blau 1977; Brown-Saracino, 2017; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1987). The decreased potential for interaction among neighborhood residents has important implications for local community because such interactions are necessary for the development of collective resources and social control (Ansari 2013; Barton and Gruner 2016; Barton, Rizzuto, and Valasik 2020; Sampson 2012; Weil et al., 2019).

In summary, scholars have studied the importance of segregation for crime for several decades, with some studies reporting a positive association (Dean et al. 2018; Eitle 2009; Kang 2016; Light and Thomas 2019; Massey and Denton 1993) and others reporting the relationship of segregation with crime was moderated by other neighborhood characteristics (Krivo and Peterson, 2000; Phillips 2002; Sampson, 1985). Specifically, segregation was more likely to be positively associated with violence in disadvantaged neighborhoods and negatively associated with violence in more affluent neighborhoods. Several theories help to explain the relationship of segregation with crime, but the most frequently used frameworks were the social disorganization/collective efficacy framework and the social distance model. Each of these frameworks provide a unique explanation for why segregation was potentially important for crime, but the common theme was segregation's implications for interactions among neighborhood residents. Despite this focus on interactions, research on the relationship of segregation with crime has yet to explicitly assess the importance of collective resources. The collective resource measures used in the current study are guided by the social disorganization/collective efficacy and social distance models, but this study is not intended as a test of either theoretical framework. Instead, our aim is to explore how collective resources related to social disorganization/collective efficacy and social distance relate with neighborhood violent crime.

## Hypotheses

We explore the importance of collective resources for the relationship of racial residential segregation with violent crime by assessing three hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 1:** *Given the tenets of the social disorganization/collective efficacy perspective, we hypothesize that violent crimes will be more common in neighborhoods characterized by greater segregation, greater concentrations of disadvantage, and lower levels of residential stability.*

**Hypothesis 2:** *The social disorganization/collective resources perspective predicts that the relationship of neighborhood structural characteristics with crime will be mediated by local community characteristics. Therefore, our second hypothesis predicts that the relationship of our neighborhood structural characteristics with violent crimes will not be significantly associated with variation in violent crime types after controlling for collective resources.*

**Hypothesis 3:** *Given the tenets of the social distance model, our third hypothesis is that violent crimes will be less common in neighborhoods with more social trust, lower where external bonds are stronger, higher where within group bonding social networks are stronger, and lower in neighborhoods with stronger civic engagement.*

## Study area

The current study examines the relationship of racial residential segregation with violence in New Orleans, Louisiana. New Orleans provides a unique site for a case study for this study for three reasons. First, New Orleans has a long history with residential segregation (Stern 2018). For example, New Orleans was one of the major cities in the US that adopted racial zoning laws in the early 1900s that were explicitly designed to keep black residents out of predominantly white neighborhoods (Seicshnaydre et al. 2018). City officials have engaged with segregation since then, but this issue remained problematic during the period leading up to Hurricane Katrina in August of 2005 (Frey and Myers 2005). Several sources documented the potential for more affluent, often white, neighborhoods to recover more quickly during the rebuilding of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina (Gray 2020). Racial inequality and segregation not only persisted in the post-Katrina period, but were exacerbated in some neighborhoods (Weil, et al., 2021).

New Orleans also provides an ideal case study for the current study because of its notoriety as one of the most violent cities in the United States overall and Louisiana specifically (Vargas 2020). Statistics published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2013) show that New Orleans was the most violent city in Louisiana during the study period we assess. Further recent studies about neighborhood correlates of violence in New Orleans reported a strong correlation of neighborhood disadvantage with violent crime (Barton, Rizzuto, and Valasik 2020; Doucet and Lee 2015; Weil et al. 2021).

We also chose to focus on New Orleans because of the availability of data about collective resources. Examination of the importance of collective resources for violent crime has been largely limited to larger cities such as Chicago or for larger units of analysis such as counties due to the availability of data (Doucet and Lee 2015; Peterson, Krivo, and Browning 2006; Prelog 2016; Sampson 2012). Our data allowed us to examine the importance of collective resources for the relationship of segregation with crime in New Orleans at the tract level. This data is described in more detail in the data sources section.

## Data sources

Crime data was collected from the New Orleans Police Department. The raw data included geographic information on incidents of aggravated assault, homicide, and robbery that occurred between January 1, 2000, and December 31, 2014 (Weil et al., 2021). The current study only draws upon data from 2006–2010 because of its timing in relation to hurricane Katrina and because survey data were collected from 2006 to 2011. Incidents were geocoded and aggregated to Census 2010 boundaries to determine tract-level counts of each crime type per year. We accounted for annual fluctuations in crime by computing five-year rates of overall violent crime, assault, homicide, and robbery for the years 2006–2010. This window was chosen to be consistent with the 2006–2010 Five-Year American Community Survey data that we used for our control variables. We chose not to include sexual assault in our measure of overall violent crime or to examine variation in sexual assaults because of concerns about how these incidents were recorded (Daley and Martin 2014).

Our measures of collective resources and residential damage were collected as part of a large survey of post-Katrina survivors. We conducted a large ( $N = 7000$ ) survey of Hurricane Katrina survivors in Greater New Orleans beginning in June 2006, with most data collected from mid-2007 to April 2011, which measured collective resources, damage, and other factors in depth. The analyses in this manuscript only include respondents located in Orleans Parish (i.e., the City of New Orleans;  $N = 4025$ ). The sample was representative of the population living in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, both demographically and geographically by neighborhood. The data do not deviate greatly from the joint age – gender–race/ethnic distributions for each parish (county) as reported in census population estimates for the year of the interview and we weighted our sample according to these census estimates. We were not able to sample the pre-storm population or track evacuees wherever they went, but eighteen percent of respondents were still evacuees at the time of their interview. The

evacuee sample was demographically diverse and lived in neighborhoods throughout New Orleans before the storm, but we had no sampling frame with which to compare our evacuee sample.

Our sampling and interviewing procedures made it difficult to collect such a large sample quickly, and it took us several years to complete our interviewing, going neighborhood by neighborhood. Our procedures to address the challenges of data collection are described in greater detail elsewhere (Weil 2020; Weil, Rackin, and Maddox 2018); here we summarize a few of the salient features. Telephone interviewing was largely unavailable for several years after the storm because of disruptions in service and because cell phones were not yet in nearly universal usage and cell phone plans still charged by the minute. Thus, we conducted our interviews through community and faith organizations, through the local newspaper, and by face-to-face, door-to-door interviewing. The organization and newspaper interviews were mainly self-administered and carried out either by pencil and paper or online. The door-to-door interviewing was mainly used to address issues of literacy and to balance the demographics of the sample. Our funder required us to use undergraduates from our university for the door-to-door interviewing. Yet this required a four-hour round-trip drive, and the outdoor interviewing conditions were often hot and rainy, so it was difficult to recruit and retain interviewers. As a result, data collection took longer than if we had been permitted to use local interviewers. Because it required such efforts to address the challenges of data collection after a major disaster, our survey is a rare, perhaps unique, data source.

Some of the items used to measure collective resources were replicated directly from Putnam's Social Capital Benchmark Survey (Seminar 2017); however, some items, such as civic engagement, were combined differently in some cases to produce different scales than Putnam used. All survey-based scales were first computed at the individual level, and the resulting indexes were aggregated to the census tract level as tract means. Our tract-level survey scores were then matched with tract-level census controls. There were 176 tracts in Orleans Parish, but our analyses only examined changes in 161 tracts. Tracts were excluded for one or more of the following reasons: tract featured zero population according to census estimates, post-Katrina social survey data were available for fewer than five respondents or information about self-rated physical or mental health were unavailable in the CDC 500 Cities Project data. The tracts included in our analyses averaged 21 respondents for the post-Katrina survey with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 143, which is within a range commonly reported in aggregate neighborhood studies (; Sampson 2012; Steinmetz-Wood et al., 2017; Weil, Rackin, and Maddox 2018).

Our social trust scale was a replication of Putnam's social trust scale (Seminar 2017). This scale was a mean score of: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Most people can be trusted, Can't be too careful;" "How much do you trust the following groups of people? trust them a lot, trust them some, trust them only a little, trust them not at all, does not apply: 'People in your neighborhood,' 'People you work with,' 'People at your church or place of worship,' 'People who work in the stores where you shop.'" This is a replication of Putnam's (2000) social trust scale, and in a validation check, all items load on a single principal components factor.

Our bonding and bridging social networks scales were developed by Weil (Weil, Rackin, and Maddox 2018) and were theoretically grounded in the social capital research (Putnam 2000; Woolcock and Narayan 2000). Our bonding and bridging social network scales are principal components factors from: "About how many family and close friends do you have in each of these groups? (People you're close enough to, that you'd visit each other at home.) About 0–5, About 5–15, About 15–50, About 50–100, About 100 or more." Bonding social networks: "Family and friends who live in your New Orleans neighborhood," "Family and friends of your faith who live in Greater New Orleans," "Family and friends of your race who live in Greater New Orleans." Bridging social networks: "Family and friends who live in a different neighborhood in Greater New Orleans," "Family and friends of a different faith who live in Greater New Orleans," "Family and friends of a different race who live in Greater New Orleans."

We drew upon survey items developed by Putnam (Seminar 2017) to create a unique Civic Engagement scale because Putnam did not develop such a scale. Our Civic Engagement scale is principal

components factor from: “Have you taken part in activities with the following groups and organizations in the past 12 months (Yes, No)? “A neighborhood association, like a block association, a homeowner or tenant association, or a crime watch group;” “A charity or social welfare organization that provides services in such fields as health or service to the needy;” “A professional, trade, farm, or business association;” “About how often have you done the following? (Every week or more often, Almost every week, Once or twice a month, A few times per year, Less often than that, Never)? ‘Attended a club meeting,’ ‘Attended any public meetings in which there was discussion of town or school affairs;” and “In the past twelve months, have you served as an officer or served on a committee of any local club or organization? (Yes, No).” This scale uses items from Putnam’s questionnaire but combines them into a new scale.

Information for our measure of segregation and neighborhood controls were collected from the 2006–2010 American Community Five-Year Surveys using the National Historic Geographic Information Database (NHGIS) (Mason et al. 2019). Segregation has been measured with a variety of indices due to the multidimensional nature of residential segregation. The choice of which index best measures segregation, depends on the purpose of the study, but research suggests the entropy index was the best measure when examining residential segregation in relation to inequality (Del Río and Alonso-Villar 2020; Reardon and Firebaugh 2002). They note, for example, that entropy is the only index that obeys the “principle of transfers,” (the index declines when an individual of group  $m$  moves from unit  $i$  to unit  $j$ , where the proportion of persons of group  $m$  is higher in unit  $i$  than in unit  $j$  (Reardon and Firebaugh 2002). The entropy index considers the difference between the diversity (entropy) of the system and the weighted average diversity of individual units, expressed as a fraction of the total diversity of the system (Reardon and Firebaugh 2002). This generates Entropy scores ranging from 0 (all areas have the same composition as the entire metropolitan area) to 1 (all areas contain one group only). The current study used the Geo-Segregation Analyzer (Apparicio et al. 2014) to calculate white-black entropy.

Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted with tract level census data to create an index of concentrated disadvantage (Barton et al. 2017; Weil et al. 2021). Results indicated that the percent below poverty, percent unemployed, percent of female headed households, and percent receiving public assistance all loaded highly on the same factor. The final measure of concentrated disadvantage was created by taking the average of the standardized values of the component variables.

The residential stability measure was created using ACS data and was a combination of percent same house in past year and percent own home. Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted with tract level census data to create measure. Results indicated that the percent same house in past year and percent own home all loaded highly on the same factor. The final measure of residential stability was created by taking the average of the standardized values of the component variables.

Given that crime in one neighborhood affects crime in adjacent neighborhoods a lagged dependent variable was created. An exploratory spatial data analysis was first conducted to assess for spatial autocorrelation of violent crime rates because research found nearness and dependencies between geographic areas are key components of spatial inequalities related to race and socioeconomic status (Legewie 2018; Sharkey and Faber 2014). Given the distribution of census tracts in New Orleans, a queen’s continuity weights matrix was applied. The Moran’s  $I$  analysis results indicated significant spatial clustering of overall violent crime and homicide. Therefore, spatial lags of each crime measure were created and incorporated to control for spatial interdependence.

## Analysis strategy

The importance of collective resources for the relationship of segregation with violence was assessed with a series of OLS regressions that examine variation in rates of overall violent crime, aggravated assault, homicide, and robbery per tract. The first model in each set regressed the dependent variable on the structural measures. The second model in each set of regressions regressed the dependent



variable on the measures of collective resources. The third model regressed the dependent variable on the measures of collective resources controlling for neighborhood structural characteristics.

## Results

### Descriptive statistics

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics for all variables included in the analyses. The means and standard deviation for the overall violent crime rate and for the rates of specific violent crime types indicate that there was a substantial amount of variation in violent crime across tracts. The average tract also featured an entropy score of 0.47, which suggests moderate segregation. Descriptive statistics for concentrated disadvantage and residential stability feature a mean near zero because these measures were created by averaging standardized values of the component variables. Civic engagement, in-group ties and out-group ties are based on factor scores at the individual level that were aggregated to the census tract level. Since the factor scores at the individual level were normalized variables with means of zero and standard deviations of 1.0, the aggregated variables used here carry over some of these properties and cannot be interpreted in absolute terms. Social trust was a mean score that can range for individual survey respondents from 1 (low trust) to 4 (high trust). Individual responses were aggregated to the census tract level, and the tract mean is 2.498.

### Bivariate correlations

Table 2 displays the bivariate correlations among the variables used in this study. Among the measures of collective resources, only Civic Engagement ( $r = -0.38, p < .001$ ) and Social Trust ( $r = -0.55, p < .001$ ) were correlated with violent crime. The bivariate results of the collective resource measures with specific forms of violent crimes justify the examination of the decomposition of the violent crime measure into specific types. For example, Civic Engagement was negatively correlated with assault ( $r = -0.44, p < .001$ ) and homicide ( $r = -0.40, p < .001$ ) and robbery ( $r = -0.23, p < .001$ ). In-Group Ties was only correlated with robbery ( $r = -0.17, p < .05$ ). Out-Group Ties was not correlated with any of the collective resource measures. Social Trust was negatively correlated with assault ( $r = -0.61, p < .001$ ), homicide ( $r = -0.58, p < .001$ ) and robbery ( $r = -0.41, p < .001$ ).

The bivariate correlations of the control variables with each dependent variable were mostly consistent. For example, our Entropy measure was not correlated with any of the dependent variables. Concentrated disadvantage was positively associated with violent crime overall ( $r = 0.51, p < .001$ ), assault ( $r = 0.63, p < .001$ ) homicide ( $r = 0.65, p < .01$ ) and negatively correlated with robbery ( $r = -0.19, p < .05$ ). The positive correlation with robbery was likely a function of robberies being more likely to be reported in New Orleans neighborhoods frequented by tourists. Residential Stability was negatively correlated with violent crime ( $r = -0.31, p < .001$ ), assault ( $r = -0.34, p < .001$ ), homicide ( $r = -0.28, p < .001$ ) and robbery ( $r = -0.32, p < .001$ ).

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Violent Crime Rate (Logged)	3.43	0.96	0.79	6.31
Assault Rate (Logged)	2.64	1.03	0.00	5.22
Homicide Rate (Logged)	1.09	0.81	0.00	3.16
Robbery Rate (Logged)	2.56	0.93	0.00	5.78
Entropy	0.47	0.34	0.00	1.00
Concentrated Disadvantage	0.03	0.86	-1.45	2.75
Residential Stability	0.08	0.75	-3.34	1.63
Civic Engagement	0.02	0.42	-0.71	1.22
In-Group Ties	-0.03	0.39	-1.26	2.35
Out-Group Ties	-0.02	0.33	-1.11	0.94
Social Trust	2.51	0.25	1.61	3.36

**Table 2.** Bivariate correlations.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
1. Violent Crime	1.00	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2. Assault	0.91***	1.00	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
3. Homicide	0.73***	0.80***	1.00	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
4. Robbery	0.87***	0.65***	0.47***	1.00	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
5. Entropy	0.06	0.01	–0.16*	0.19*	1.00	–	–	–	–	–	–
6. Concentrated Disadvantage	0.51***	0.63***	0.65***	0.22**	–0.19*	1.00	–	–	–	–	–
7. Residential Stability	–0.31***	–0.34***	–0.28***	–0.32***	–0.05	–0.16*	1.00	–	–	–	–
8. Civic Engagement	–0.38***	–0.44***	–0.40***	–0.23**	0.05	–0.50***	0.20*	1.00	–	–	–
9. In-Group Ties	–0.09	0.05	0.12	–0.17*	–0.25***	0.10	–0.09	0.06	1.00	–	–
10. Out-Group Ties	–0.07	–0.03	0.99	–0.14	–0.15	0.01	0.07	0.18*	0.62***	1.00	–
11. Social Trust	–0.55***	–0.61***	–0.58***	–0.41***	0.08	–0.59***	0.28***	0.38***	–0.11	–0.04	1.00

Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Multivariate results**

Tables 3 through 6 present results of the OLS regression analyses. Variance inflation factor scores were checked for all models. The results did not suggest multicollinearity was an issue. Table 3 presents results of the regression analyses of overall violent crime. Model 1 regressed neighborhood violent crime rates on the neighborhood controls. The results indicate that violent crime was higher in neighborhoods that featured greater entropy ( $\beta = 0.15$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and concentrated disadvantage ( $\beta = 0.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results also indicate that neighborhoods with greater residential stability featured lower rates of violent crime ( $\beta = -0.21$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Model 2 regressed violent crime rates on the collective resource measures. Results indicate that violent crime rates were lower in neighborhoods that featured greater levels of civic engagement ( $\beta = -0.20$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and greater levels of social trust ( $\beta = -0.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Model 3 regressed violent crime rates on the neighborhood structural characteristics controlling for collective resources. Results indicate that concentrated disadvantage and residential stability continued to be significantly associated with neighborhood violent crime rates controlling for the collective resource measures. The change in coefficients for the neighborhood structural characteristics between Models 1 and 3 were assessed using the test developed by Steinmetz-Wood et al. (2017). Results indicate that the coefficients for Entropy, concentrated disadvantage and residential stability in Model 3 were significantly different from those in Model 1, but only concentrated disadvantage and residential stability remained significant in Model 3. The coefficients for concentrated disadvantage and residential stability declined from Model 1 to Model 3 which included the collective resources measures. This suggests the influence of structural characteristics on violent crime may be mediated by collective resources.

The results of the OLS regression analysis of assault rates are presented in Table 4. Model 4 regressed assault rates on the neighborhood structural characteristics. The results indicate assault rates were higher in neighborhoods characterized by greater concentrated disadvantage ( $\beta = 0.62$ ,  $p$

**Table 3.** OLS Regression of Violent Crime Rates.

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	b	$\beta$	S.D.	b	$\beta$	S.D.	b	$\beta$	S.D.
Entropy	0.42*	0.15*	0.19	–	–	–	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>0.18</b>
Concentrated Disadvantage	0.56***	0.50***	0.08	–	–	–	<b>0.30**</b>	<b>0.27**</b>	<b>0.10</b>
Residential Stability	–0.27**	–0.21**	0.09	–	–	–	<b>–0.20*</b>	<b>–0.16*</b>	<b>0.08</b>
Civic Engagement	–	–	–	–0.46**	–0.20**	0.16	–0.23	–0.10	0.17
In-Group Ties	–	–	–	–0.38	–0.16	0.20	–0.43*	–0.17*	0.20
Out-Group Ties	–	–	–	0.10	0.03	0.25	0.17	0.06	0.24
Social Trust	–	–	–	–1.87***	–0.49***	0.27	–1.28***	–0.34***	0.30
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>		0.33		0.34			0.40		

Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Bolded show significant differences compared to the model that only includes neighborhood control variables ( $p < .05$ ).

< .001) and lower in neighborhoods characterized by greater residential stability ( $\beta = -0.24, p < .001$ ). Model 5 regressed assault rates on the measures of collective resources and indicates that assault rates were lower in neighborhoods that featured greater civic engagement ( $\beta = -0.24, p < .001$ ) and social trust ( $\beta = -0.52, p < .001$ ). Model 6 regressed assault rates on the neighborhood structural characteristics controlling for collective resources. The results continue to show that assault rates were higher in neighborhoods characterized by greater concentrated disadvantage ( $\beta = 0.40, p < .001$ ) and lower in neighborhoods characterized by greater residential stability ( $\beta = -0.17, p < .01$ ). Analysis of the change in coefficients for the structural characteristics between Models 4 and 6 indicate that the decrease in the strength of the coefficients for concentrated disadvantage and residential stability was significant, providing further evidence that collective resources may have mediated the influence of structural characteristics.

The results of the analyses of homicide rates are presented in Table 5. Model 7 regressed neighborhood homicide rates on the neighborhood structural characteristics. The results indicate that homicide rates were higher in neighborhoods characterized by greater concentrated disadvantage ( $\beta = 0.61, p < .001$ ) and lower in neighborhoods that featured greater residential stability ( $\beta = -0.19, p < .01$ ). Model 8 regressed homicide rates on the collective resource measures. Results indicate that homicide rates were lower in neighborhoods that featured greater civic engagement ( $\beta = -0.21, p < .01$ ) and social trust ( $\beta = -0.50, p < .001$ ). Model 9 regressed homicide rates on the neighborhood structural characteristics controlling for collective resources. The results indicate that concentrated disadvantage and residential stability continued to be associated with homicide rates, but the strength of the coefficients for each was significantly weaker after controlling for collective resources.

Table 6 presents results of the analyses of neighborhood robbery rates. Results in Model 10 indicate that robbery rates were higher in neighborhoods characterized by greater entropy ( $\beta = 0.23, p < .01$ ) and concentrated disadvantage ( $\beta = 0.22, p < .01$ ) and lower in neighborhoods characterized by greater residential stability ( $\beta = -0.28, p < .001$ ). Model 11 regressed robbery rates on the collective resources

**Table 4.** OLS regression of assault crime rates.

Variables	Model 4			Model 5			Model 6		
	b	$\beta$	S.D.	b	$\beta$	S.D.	b	$\beta$	S.D.
Entropy	0.34	0.11	0.18	–	–	–	0.32	0.11	0.18
Concentrated Disadvantage	<b>0.75***</b>	<b>0.62***</b>	0.07	–	–	–	<b>0.49***</b>	<b>0.40***</b>	<b>0.09</b>
Residential Stability	<b>-0.33***</b>	<b>-0.24***</b>	0.08	–	–	–	<b>-0.23**</b>	<b>-0.17**</b>	<b>0.08</b>
Civic Engagement	–	–	–	<b>-0.59***</b>	<b>-0.24***</b>	0.17	-0.24	-0.10	0.16
In-Group Ties	–	–	–	0.07	0.03	0.20	-0.01	-0.01	0.19
Out-Group Ties	–	–	–	-0.10	-0.03	0.25	-0.01	-0.00	0.23
Social Trust	–	–	–	<b>-2.11***</b>	<b>-0.52***</b>	0.27	<b>-1.22***</b>	<b>-0.30***</b>	0.29
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>		0.47		0.41			0.52		

Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Bolded show significant differences compared to the model that only includes neighborhood control variables ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 5.** OLS regression of homicide crime rates.

Variables	Model 7			Model 8			Model 9		
	b	$\beta$	S.D.	b	$\beta$	S.D.	b	$\beta$	S.D.
Entropy	-0.15	-0.06	0.14	–	–	–	-0.14	-0.06	0.14
Concentrated Disadvantage	<b>0.58***</b>	<b>0.61***</b>	<b>0.06</b>	–	–	–	<b>0.39***</b>	<b>0.41***</b>	<b>0.07</b>
Residential Stability	<b>-0.20**</b>	<b>-0.19**</b>	<b>0.07</b>	–	–	–	<b>-0.13*</b>	<b>-0.13*</b>	<b>0.07</b>
Civic Engagement	–	–	–	<b>-0.41**</b>	<b>-0.21**</b>	0.13	-0.12	-0.06	0.13
In-Group Ties	–	–	–	0.23	0.11	0.16	0.10	0.05	0.16
Out-Group Ties	–	–	–	-0.13	-0.05	0.20	-0.08	-0.03	0.19
Social Trust	–	–	–	<b>-1.58***</b>	<b>-0.50***</b>	0.22	<b>-0.89***</b>	<b>-0.28***</b>	0.23
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>		0.45		0.38			0.48		

Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Bolded show significant differences compared to the model that only includes neighborhood control variables ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 6.** OLS regression of robbery crime rates.

Variables	Model 10			Model 11			Model 12		
	b	$\beta$	S.D.	b	$\beta$	S.D.	b	$\beta$	S.D.
Entropy	0.61**	0.22**	0.20	–	–	–	0.45*	0.16*	0.20
Concentrated Disadvantage	<b>0.24**</b>	<b>0.22**</b>	<b>0.08</b>	–	–	–	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.10</b>
Residential Stability	–0.34***	–0.28***	0.09	–	–	–	–0.28**	–0.22**	0.09
Civic Engagement	–	–	–	–0.15	–0.07	0.17	–0.11	–0.05	0.18
In-Group Ties	–	–	–	–0.48*	–0.20*	0.21	–0.48*	–0.20*	0.21
Out-Group Ties	–	–	–	–0.07	–0.02	0.26	0.04	0.02	0.25
Social Trust	–	–	–	–1.51***	–0.41***	0.28	–1.33***	–0.36***	0.32
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>		0.17		0.20			0.27		

Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Bolded show significant differences compared to the model that only includes neighborhood control variables ( $p < .05$ ).

and indicates that robbery rates were lower in neighborhoods that featured greater levels of in-group ties ( $\beta = -0.20$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and social trust ( $\beta = -0.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Results of Model 12 indicate that entropy ( $\beta = 0.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ) was positively associated with robbery rates and residential stability was negatively associated with robbery rate ( $\beta = -0.22$ ,  $p < .01$ ) after controlling for collective resources. While the strength of the coefficients for entropy and residential stability were weaker in Model 3, results of the Clogg tests indicate only the coefficient for residential stability was significantly different from Model 10.

## Discussion

A great deal of research has examined the relationship of segregation with neighborhood violent crime, but the causal mechanism has yet to be fully determined (Beaulieu and Continelli 2011; Dean et al. 2018; Eitle 2009; Kang 2016; Kling, Ludwig, and Katz 2005; Krivo et al. 2015; Light and Thomas 2019). Recent research about broader neighborhood correlates of crime highlighted the importance of neighborhood collective resources as potentially mediators of the relationship of social structural characteristics with crime (Sampson 2012; Weil et al., 2021). The potential mediating influence of collective resources has also been discussed regarding the segregation-crime relationship but was not empirically assessed (Light and Thomas 2019; Peterson and Krivo 2010; Peterson, Krivo, and Browning 2006). The current study represents an initial step toward the examination of the importance of collective resources for the segregation-crime relationship. We found little support that segregation was positively associated with violent crime in New Orleans and that the limited relationship of segregation with violent crime was unlikely to have been mediated by collective resources. We did find tentative evidence that the influence of neighborhood structural characteristics on violent crime was mediated by neighborhood collective resources.

Our first hypothesis drew upon the social disorganization framework and predicted that neighborhood violence would be higher in neighborhoods characterized by greater segregation, greater concentrated disadvantage, and lower levels of residential stability. We found mixed support for this hypothesis. First, in contrast with much of the contemporary research on the segregation-crime relationship (Dean et al. 2018; Eitle 2009; Kang 2016; Light and Thomas 2019), we found little evidence that segregation was associated with overall violent crime or with rates of aggravated assault, homicide, or robbery. Light and Thomas (2019) provide a possible reason for this contradictory finding as they reported Black-White segregation was negatively associated with homicides where the victim was White and positively associated with homicides where the victim was Black. Our data did not allow for the differentiation of violent crimes where the victim was White from those where the victim was Black, so this was not something that could be assessed in the current study.

Our findings regarding our other structural measures were consistent with previous research and the social disorganization framework. For example, consistent with a substantial body of research (Becker 2016; Dean et al. 2018; Eitle 2009; Hipp 2010; Kang 2016; Light and Thomas 2019; Massey and

Denton 1993; Peterson and Krivo 2010), we found rates of violent crime overall and of each form of violent crime were higher in neighborhoods that featured greater concentrated disadvantage. Consistent with previous research, we also found residential stability was negatively associated with rates of violent crime overall and each form of violent crime (Morenoff et al., 2001; Sampson 2012).

Our second hypothesis predicted that the relationship of our social structural measures, including segregation, would be mediated by neighborhood collective resources. We were only able to engage with this hypothesis in a limited way due to our analysis strategy. Our results suggest limited support for this hypothesis as comparison of coefficients across our OLS models suggested collective resources mediated the influence of concentrated disadvantage and residential stability on overall violence, assault, and homicide, while comparison of coefficients across the robbery models suggested collective resources mediated the influence of entropy. These findings have importance for research on the relationship segregation and crime because they suggest that the influence of segregation on neighborhood violence is unlikely to be overcome by simply bolstering neighborhood communities, but instead require larger structural changes. Several studies discussed the potential importance of collective resources for the relationship of segregation with crime, but data limitations prevented the empirical assessment of whether collective resources mediated the relationship of segregation with crime (Light and Thomas 2019; Peterson and Krivo 2010; Peterson, Krivo, and Browning 2006). Given the potential uniqueness of New Orleans, we encourage future research to examine the importance of collective resources for the segregation-crime relationship. This can be done through more empirical research on the role of segregation in the development of collective resources within neighborhoods in addition to research on whether collective resources mediate the relationship of segregation with crime. Further, similar studies could be carried out in other cities, especially cities in the Northern United States, to see if the same relationships are observed.

Our third hypothesis drew upon the social distance model to predict that neighborhood rates of violence would be lower in areas characterized by more social trust, lower where external bonds are stronger, higher where within group bonding social networks are stronger, and lower in neighborhoods with stronger civic engagement. We found collective resources were inconsistently related with neighborhood violence depending on the dependent variable and whether other neighborhood structural characteristics were controlled. We did, however, consistently find a negative relationship of social trust with neighborhood violence. This relationship is consistent with previous research, but this measure is also the most consistent with the measures of collective resources used in previous research (Barton et al. 2017; Sampson 2012). Overall, this suggests that certain collective resources – social trust and civic engagement, but not social networks – can be linked with improved neighborhood conditions, which reduces social distance while creating better opportunities for advancement and mentorship opportunities for youths that reduces the development of criminogenic cultures (Ansari 2013; Tolbert, Lyson, and Irwin 1998).

The primary limitation of the current study pertains to the generalizability of the results. Because we aggregated our survey data and crime data to the tract level for our analyses, we were unable to assess how these relationships vary once individual and family characteristics were controlled. Individual characteristics such as what resources individuals had access to, could better help with understanding the relationship. Further, the design of this study does not permit the examination of whether these relationships were causal or compositional. For example, the relationships could be compositional in that observed characteristics might have been the result of individuals self-selecting into segregated neighborhoods because that is where they could afford to live or self-selecting out of neighborhoods because their financial situation improved. Alternatively, the relationship might have been causal in that violent crime was more common in segregated neighborhoods because they lacked the necessary resources for crime prevention. The current study was unable to determine whether the relationships were compositional or causal because we were unable to adequately measure the importance of these changes over time. Determining the nature of this relationship would give new and helpful insight to this relationship. Finally, the findings are applicable to violent crime only and

collective resources may have different relationships with different types of crime. Therefore, they are not generalizable to all types of crime.

This study examined the importance of collective resources for the relationship of residential segregation with crime. Overall, our results suggest neighborhood collective resources have implications for neighborhood violence, but it is unlikely that they mediate the influence of larger structural forces such as segregation on violence crime. Given the limited research on the relationship of segregation and crime that has controlled for collective resources, we encourage future research to explore the importance of collective resources for the segregation-crime relationship in other cities where such data are available.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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