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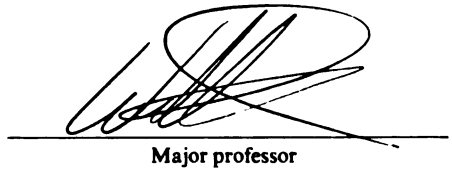

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THE MULTIPLE PATHWAYS OF NEIGHBORHOOD EFFECTS

By

Dan Cantillon

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ABSTRACT

THE MULTIPLE PATHWAYS OF NEIGHBORHOOD EFFECTS

By

Dan Cantillon

The role of neighborhood effects research on youth outcomes has been re-acknowledged in psychology as census data and other social indicators have displayed the extreme levels poverty endured by many residents in the urban areas of our nation. While recent studies have found empirical support for neighborhood effects on youth outcomes, most analyses have been limited in their assessment of the ways in which the neighborhood context impacts youth. Using structural equation modeling, the current study simultaneously assessed how neighborhood disadvantage impacts neighborhood-level, family-level, and individual-level variables to ultimately influence the youth outcomes of delinquency, drug and alcohol use, and conventional activity.

The results of this study found substantial support for the multiple pathways in which neighborhood disadvantage impacts both positive and negative youth outcomes. Specifically, neighborhood disadvantage was significantly associated with higher rates of delinquency and alcohol and drug use. Interestingly, the direct effect of neighborhood disadvantage was stronger and more consistent when official police data was analyzed versus self-report data. Indirectly, it was demonstrated that neighborhood disadvantage lead to less socially cohesive neighborhoods and ultimately higher rates of severe delinquency. Employing social disorganization theory, the current study has further delineated the indirect pathway from neighborhood structural disadvantage to

delinquency by unpacking the important neighborhood-level social processes (community social organization) as hypothesized by Shaw and McKay. The current study used sense of community as a measure of community social organization and assessed how this variable transmitted the effects of neighborhood disadvantage on informal social control, which was significantly related to delinquency rates. The current study also extended the assessment of the indirect pathways of neighborhood effects by assessing how neighborhood disadvantage impacts youth outcomes via its impact on parental support and monitoring and youth's affiliation with delinquent peers. The results indicated that neighborhood disadvantage significantly decreased parental support and monitoring, which lead to affiliation with delinquent peers and higher rates of delinquency and alcohol and drug use.

Overall, the results of this study demonstrated the multiple pathways through which neighborhood disadvantage exerts its deleterious effects on youth. The results underscore the need for multilevel prevention and intervention programs, which target neighborhood-level, family-level, and individual-level variables to reduce delinquency and drug use. Moreover, given the strong direct effect of neighborhood disadvantage, even multilevel programs and neighborhood development initiatives may have little impact on decreasing delinquency and drug use and increasing positive youth outcomes. In fact, to truly make an impact in disadvantaged neighborhoods, the results suggest that significant policy changes need to be made at the city, state, and federal level to address both the causes and consequences of concentrated poverty.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several decades, poverty has both spread and intensified across the urban areas of the United States (Jargowsky, 1997; Jargowsky & Bane, 1991; Massey & Eggers, 1990). What has been particularly insidious is the increasingly concentrated nature of this urban poverty. As cities lost residents to the development of the suburbs and beyond, impoverished urban neighborhoods became increasingly poorer, as those with any resources fled the area (Wilson, 1987, 1996). Much higher levels of poverty within individual neighborhoods has thus exacerbated the detrimental impact of individual family poverty. The spread and intensification of this social cancer, poverty, has been given a new name, concentrated neighborhood poverty, and has been used to label and characterize neighborhoods in which more than 40% of the residents live in poverty (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, & Aber, 1997).

Recent U.S. Census statistics continue to reveal that concentrated poverty is most often found in urban minority communities, as the persistently high levels of residential segregation continue to perpetuate racial, economic, and social inequality. Thus, even though the general poverty rate of 11.8% in 1999 was reported to be the lowest in twenty years, minorities (e.g., 23.6% of African Americans) and children (16.9%) continue to be dramatically over-represented (U. S. Department of Commerce, 2000). The case for minority children is particularly troubling; 27% of poor Black children live in high-poverty urban neighborhoods, while this is only true for 3% of White children (Jargowsky, 1997).

Poverty does not exist in a vacuum. Research has continually documented that when family poverty is exacerbated by concentrated neighborhood poverty, social problems such as drug abuse, crime and delinquency, health and mental health problems, child maltreatment, and many other social ills also substantially increase (Aneshensel & Sucoff, 1996; Coulton, Korbin, Su, & Chow, 1995; Crane, 1991; Sampson, 1987; Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999; Wilson, 1987). One of the most disconcerting and often discussed of these social problems is the endemic levels of violence that continue to persist in many disadvantaged urban communities across America, particularly in reference to youth. In fact, the level of violence that occurs in many American communities constitutes a public health emergency (Hammond & Yung, 1993; Koop & Lundberg, 1992). As reported by Koop & Lundberg, one million people die prematurely each year as the result of intentional homicide or suicide, and the leading cause of death for both Black and White teenage boys is gunshot wounds. National surveys have also consistently indicated that those at greatest risk for victimization of violent crime are youth (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).

Thus, while the overall levels of both adult and youth delinquency and criminality have substantially decreased since 1993 (Blumstein & Wallman, 2000), violence continues to pervade the urban landscape and has many detrimental consequences for those residents who are living in segregated and poor neighborhoods. In addition to the obvious mortality issues, exposure to violence among children and adolescents has been shown to increase mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (Aneshensel & Sucoff, 1996; Bell & Jenkins, 1993; Martinez &

Richters, 1993) as violence in extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods tends to be more public and thus visible in nature (Pynoos & Nader, 1990).

The causes and consequences of poverty, violence and other social problems are multiple and mutually reinforcing in the poor urban areas of our nation. While the role of the local community or neighborhood has been re-acknowledged over the last decade (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1997; Coulton, Korbin, & Su, 1996), the field of neighborhood effects still lacks a complete understanding of exactly *how* neighborhoods impact residents, particularly youth. Thus, the main goal of the current study is to investigate the various pathways disadvantaged neighborhoods impact youth outcomes such as delinquency and conventional activities. This includes both the direct impact of neighborhood disadvantage as well as its influence on other important variables in youth development such as the family microsystem, neighborhood mesosystem, and the influence of peer relationships.

The current study has several objectives. First, an updated systemic model of social disorganization will be evaluated to assess if neighborhood disadvantage impacts adolescent development and behavior. Second, it will be argued that sense of community provides a more valid and applicable measure of community social organization than previous methods used to assess the important mediating variables in SD theory. Third, the current study will evaluate how the neighborhood context influences parental monitoring and support and the impact of this important variable on adolescent development and behavior. The interaction between parenting style and neighborhood environment will also be assessed to see if different styles are utilized for different neighborhood environments, or if parenting style differentially impacts youth outcomes

depending on the local community context. Finally, the relationship between the local community context, parenting practices, and youth's affiliation with delinquent peers will be assessed.

First, an introductory section will deconstruct the oft-held notion that modern life has decimated the existence and importance of community for urban residents (Fischer, 1982; Freudenberg, 1986; Slovak, 1986; Suttles, 1972). Second, the development of the old-Chicago school and Social Disorganization theory will be presented, including a discussion of the rise, fall, and re-emergence of updated versions of SD theory. The next major section will review psychological conceptualizations of ecology and human development and integrate this paradigm with sociological conceptualizations of community theory. Fourth, returning to this study's guiding theoretical framework, the literature on updated systemic SD models, particularly those with the outcome measures of violence, crime, or delinquency will be reviewed. Finally, recent literature on how neighborhood disadvantage impacts parenting and family processes and youth's affiliation with delinquent peers will be reviewed and a list of specific research questions addressed by this study will follow.

Sociological Theory and the Eternal Quest for Community

While community psychology has only recently emerged as a sub-discipline in psychology that is concerned with deciphering how the environment impacts behavior (Levine & Perkins, 1997), the field of sociology has been documenting how the social structure influences human behavior and functioning for a much longer time. As a discipline, sociology emerged after the onset of industrialism and capitalist economic systems, which created large urban centers that dramatically altered the demographic,

political, and social composition of previously agrarian societies. In the United States, the urbanization and industrialization of America radically changed the demographic, economic, and social structure, particularly from the mid-19th century to early 20th century. For instance, between 1840-1880 the percentage of the population which resided in urban centers more than doubled, from 11 to 28% (Miller, 1973).

Classical sociologists such as Toennies (1957) and more modern sociologists such as Weber (1962) and Durkheim (1933) usually receive the most credit for documenting how the accoutrements of industrialism and technological innovation dramatically altered the social and political organization of communities, and indeed, societies. Many of these classic sociologists used ideal types, a heuristic tool, to compare and contrast the differences brought about by industrialization, technological advances, and urbanization (e.g., Tonnies - gemeinschaft/gesselschaft, Weber - traditional/rational, Simmel - rural/urban). Whether labeled gemeinschaft, traditional, or rural, this ideal type was always portrayed as superior, even on the rare occasions that some of its negative aspects were mentioned, compared to the urban polar type. For instance, while peaceful and communal images were presented in descriptions of the rural typology (e.g., traditional and sacred) equally value-laden, but negative language was used to describe the urban typology. In the modern urban world, sacred traditions supposedly became outdated and obsolete and intimate relationships and communal solidarity were replaced by superficial relationships and anonymity. While both a strength and weakness of ideal types are the oversimplication of complex social systems, the biases in descriptions of these ideal types often went unchallenged and continue to go unchallenged.

For instance, whether in reference to the 19th, 20th, or 21st century, the development of locomotives, mass public transportation, or the more recent development and expansion of the information superhighway, these industrial and technological advances have always been proclaimed to change the basic nature of our society. While being lauded as truly innovative, there was and continues to be a backlash against such breakthroughs and advances. Similar to the descriptions by the classic sociologists, the main thrust of the argument seems to be that we are losing an essential element through all this change and technological progress – community. But, rather than automatically decreasing a sense of community and connectedness among people, the one true constant regarding these modern developments is that another technological breakthrough will soon occur and, it too, will be subsequently followed by the same voices of community decline and disintegration. Thus, while the common lamenting of the past by politicians and academics may seem a recent and valid phenomenon, the fact is that sociologists, journalists, and ordinary citizens have always complained about the decay of our urban society and the need to do something dramatic to return to "the mythical golden era of peace and tranquility in American neighborhoods" (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993, p.1).

While there are new trends and challenges that have emerged in modern day America, and even though the intent of the current study is to better understand how disadvantaged urban contexts impact youth, it is first essential to question the often unchallenged assumption that the quality of life in urban areas is constantly declining. This is simply not true. There are many communities today that meet people's physical, social, emotional, and psychological needs, and the fact remains that the quality of life has substantially improved since the rise of urban centers in the mid-19th century (Suttles,

1972). It is important to understand this inherent bias, worldview, or really archetype, if research on neighborhood effects is ever going to be utilized to improve neighborhood conditions and people's quality of life. At the same time that this is forcefully argued, unfortunately, there are many dangerous and alienating neighborhoods which do not support the positive development of youth and adults. While this study is concerned with the later, it is argued that there is hope that these neighborhoods can be revitalized to become positive contexts for youth and adolescent development. And, the very real danger of a misplaced, collective nostalgia for a mythical era of our past is that it can only serve to divert attention and resources from a comprehensive effort to rebuild the physical and social infrastructure of disadvantaged urban neighborhoods.

The Old Chicago-School: Ecological Theory of Urban Dynamics and the Development of Social Disorganization Theory

While an extensive review of sociological theory is beyond the scope of this paper, a discussion of the development of sociology in the United States, and especially ly at the University of Chicago, is warranted since the grounding theory of the current study lies in the development of an ecological theory of urban dynamics and growth of the city, particularly as expounded by Shaw and McKay (1942) in their explanation of the structural causes or antecedents of delinquency in social disorganization theory. The sociology department at University of Chicago is credited with being the first institution in the United States which assessed the impact of America's urbanization in the early to mid-1900s. In The City, Park, Burgess, and McKenzie (1967) presented an ecological theory, borrowed from biology's attempt to understand how plant life adapted to changing environments, regarding how humans adapted to their rapidly changing

environment. Specifically, the authors were interested in how people adapted to the rise of urban centers. The old Chicago-school was concerned with measuring and assessing the impact of this expansion of our cities and the concomitant changes in social life for its residents.

In the second chapter, Burgess proposed his influential concentric zone theory, in which he argued that each successive concentric circle represented the extension or growth of a city from the original circle, which represented the central business district (the Loop in the case of Chicago). From these zones, one could predict the type of physical structures, businesses, and demographic characteristics of the individuals who had chosen to locate there. Basically, the poorest and least attractive housing and neighborhoods were found directly outside the central business district, followed by more and more attractive neighborhoods characterized by higher standards of living and considerably fewer social problems (e.g., crime, prostitution, drugs). As each social group gained more financial resources and social status, there was an effort to move outward to a better community. This resulted in expansion of the city, the natural tendency for each inner zone to extend its area by invading the adjacent outer zone. Thus, cities were in a constant state of change and expansion, and this was especially true of late 19th and early 20th century America when transportation and communication advances converted previous walking cities of five to eight miles to extended metropolises more than quadrupling in size (Miller, 1973).

The old Chicago-school was concerned with how this growth process affected the social organization of communities that were in a constant state of transformation. So, the primary area of interest for researchers was to assess how neighborhood change and

transformation impacted both the residents and the neighborhood itself. Or, as Wirth (1947) stated, "The central problem of the sociologist of the city is to discover the forms of social action and organization that typically emerge in relatively permanent, compact settlements of large numbers of heterogeneous individuals" (p.9). It was postulated that as communities expanded and incorporated outer zones, neighborhoods would go through massive changes due to population increase and turnover (invasion) and the community would be in a state of disorganization until, after some time, it stabilized into a new outer zone (succession). Therefore, the present level of invasion and succession in a particular neighborhood could predict the social organization of the community. According to this ecological theory of urban dynamics, social problems could be found in their most acute forms in communities undergoing these rapid population changes - in "disorganized" communities.

Shaw and McKay (1942) extended this ecological approach to the specific area of delinquency. These two sociologists are largely credited for popularizing a social ecological theory of delinquency, social disorganization theory, which explained how poor urban environments impacted adolescent development and delinquent behavior. Their main finding was that the association between neighborhood residence and delinquency decreased as the distance from the central city increased and that this association remained despite the rapid changes in the ethnic and racial characteristics of residents. Thus, variations in crime and delinquency rates reflected the structural and social characteristics of local communities more than they reflected the personal characteristics of residents who happened to live there. In general, social disorganization

theory has been defined as the inability of local communities to realize the common values of their residents or to solve commonly experienced problems (Kornhauser, 1978).

In its severe form, social disorganization leaves residents isolated from one another and from the social institutions that are supposed to provide basic services and a reasonable quality of life. The lack of residential stability and presence of a heterogeneous population make it extremely difficult to establish a strong network of relations or "weak ties" within the community that serve to establish norms and a supportive context for child development. In terms of formal community structures, the lack of neighborhood stability interacts with low socioeconomic composition and results in a paucity of quality neighborhood institutions (e.g., schools, social service agencies) which serve to bind residents together and provide essential services to them, particularly youth. SD theory is a systemic model which incorporates formal associations as well as the informal networks within a community that arise through friendship and kinship ties (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974).

SD theory posited that it was the level of community social organization that mediated the relationship between a neighborhood's compositional or structural characteristics and delinquency rates. Thus, social disorganization and social organization are on opposite ends of a continuum that describes a neighborhood's capacity to exert control over the behavior and activities of residents and non-residents (Sampson, 1993a). This distinction is critical because confusion has arisen due to the misuse of the theoretical framework in the past. For instance, social disorganization has been used as a descriptor of disadvantaged environments (e.g., structural disadvantage), the mediating social process (e.g., social organization/disorganization), and ultimate

outcomes (e.g., delinquency and crime; Bursik, 1988). Rather than simply describing the structural characteristics of communities or community outcomes, social disorganization theory should be viewed as an explanatory framework that describes the entire process of how most neighborhoods are negatively impacted by adverse structural conditions.

History of the Influence of SD Theory on Sociological, Criminological, and Psychological Inquiry: The Rise, Fall, and Re-emergence of SD Theory

While popular throughout the first half of the 20th century, SD theory fell into disfavor during the 1960s through the 1980s for several valid theoretical and empirical reasons (Bursik, 1988). This section will review the various criticisms and limitations of SD theory and address how updated systemic models of SD are adequately dealing with these issues.

The central issue was that social disorganization lacked empirical data linking the set of proposed structural variables to variations in community social organization and, ultimately, differential youth outcomes (Bursik, 1988). While structural information such as residential mobility and poverty rates could be easily obtained via census data, collection of community social organization data was very costly and time consuming because it required that interviews be conducted for a large number of neighborhoods throughout an entire city (Heitgerd & Bursik, 1987; Sampson, 1993b). Moreover, a macrosociological theory such as SD was inherently difficult to validate empirically, because both a strength and weakness of the theory is that it ties social structural conditions to individual behavior. It is extremely difficult to assess such macrolevel constructs or contextual effects on individual behavior (Coulton et al., 1996; Sampson,

1991; Shin, 1996), and only recent advances in methodological and statistical tools have allowed the field to discern such effects in an empirically valid manner.

The second main limitation of SD theory was that the majority of data collected to support this theory was cross-sectional. Thus, the field was unable to truly model how ecological change impacted human development and functioning in a manner that did justice to the basic tenets of the ecology theory of urban dynamics. After all, the main area of investigation for the old-Chicago school revolved around understanding how the process of neighborhood change, through invasion and succession of different populations, changed the physical, social, cultural, and economic landscape of local communities. Understanding this process required longitudinal studies of local communities rather than cross-sectional studies, which only have the ability to assess one point in time. While there are obvious financial and practical reasons for the lack of longitudinal neighborhood projects, it was nonetheless surprising and problematic, especially since change and adaptation are the central components to both ecological and social disorganization theory.

Moreover, as discussed earlier, the landscape of urban America has dramatically changed since SD theory was first developed in the early part of the twentieth century. This valid critique recognizes the lack of attention paid to extra-community dynamics such as: public policy, discrimination and segregation, land-controlling elite, change from a manufacturing to a service economy and the corresponding decrease in high-wage and low-skill jobs, and the increasing concentration of poverty and other indicators of disadvantage in urban areas (Coulton et al., 1995; Hirsch, 1998; Jargowsky, 1997; Jargowsky & Bane, 1991; Logan & Molotch, 1987; Wilson, 1987, 1996).

Updated systemic models of social disorganization have consciously incorporated these effects to a much greater degree. A good example of such recognition is seen in a re-analysis of data that was originally collected by Shaw and McKay. On the South Side of Chicago the African-American population was isolated by discriminatory housing policies in a small area known as the Black Belt until 1948 when the Supreme Court struck down race-restrictive covenants in housing policies. As African-Americans slowly gained greater mobility and choice in housing, there was tremendous opposition by the surrounding ethnic white neighborhoods, which resulted in numerous racial conflicts, real estate speculation, and white flight to the suburbs (Bursik & Webb, 1982; Hirsch, 1998). While this study and re-analysis comes from Chicago, this same sequence of events occurred throughout the industrial cities of the Midwest and East coast (Sugrue, 1996). Obviously, Burgess's concentric zone theory and invasion/succession principles captured in SD theory were unable to explain the influence of these 'unnatural' forces (e.g., racism, discrimination) in neighborhood change. The result was that Shaw and McKay's (1942) important theoretical finding that delinquency rates remained relatively stable despite continuous changes in the racial and ethnic composition of the community proved to no longer be valid.

However, as Bursik and Webb (1982) demonstrated in a re-analysis of the original data, social disorganization still maintained validity if one looked at the *nature* and *pace* of change in the racial and ethnic composition, which dramatically differed from the past. Community change in racial composition in this era was characterized as foothold change, turnover change, or entrenchment change. Foothold change indicated an increase of families of color in a neighborhood by at least 10% over ten years but

where they remained in the minority, while turnover change represented an increase of at least 10% but where families of color moved from minority to majority status. Entrenchment change occurred when families of color increased their composition by 10% and were in the majority in the community for all ten years. The main finding of this re-analysis was that delinquency rates significantly increased for foothold and turnover change but remained stable for entrenchment change: "The most established nonwhite, changing communities [entrenchment areas] had delinquency rates not much different than would have been expected from their previous patterns" (Bursik and Webb, 1982, p.39).

As these researchers concluded, the variation in delinquency patterns reflected the nature and pace of racial change rather than the specific groups involved. The incredible patterns of population turnover during this era excluded the development of an institutional and social network base that was responsible for keeping delinquency rates stable among Chicago neighborhoods up to 1950. Therefore, social disorganization theory still retained validity if one analyzed the external social forces (e.g., discriminatory housing practices, racism, white flight) that dramatically altered the gradual process of invasion/succession for Chicago neighborhoods. In fact, this finding should further support the underlying dimension of social disorganization theory, namely that the rate of neighborhood change is more important than whoever is involved. Another recent SD study that accounted for these external forces, as well as for the confounding variables of concentrated poverty and race, found that White and African-American youth had the same delinquency rates when neighborhood poverty was held constant (Peeples & Loeber, 1994). These researchers also found that concentrated

poverty was mainly concentrated in African-American neighborhoods. As these authors concluded, "As Shaw and McKay noted, it is impossible to reproduce for whites the conditions under which African Americans live. This is just as true today: Urban whites do not, to any appreciable degree, live in underclass neighborhoods" (p.144). Updated social disorganization models need to be able to explain these important social, political, and economic forces, both internal and external to the neighborhood, which alter neighborhood composition, growth, and development as evidenced by these examples.

The third major limitation of SD theory was the widespread confusion regarding the causes and effects of SD theory, which led to misunderstandings in articulating and evaluating the model (Bursik, 1988). Many theoreticians criticized Shaw and McKay for not clearly differentiating between the causes and effects of SD and utilizing the effects of SD as evidence of disorganization itself in a circular argument. While this is not an entirely valid argument, it certainly shows the complexity of their theory, which not only spanned various levels of analysis (community, individual) but also encompassed aspects of subcultural, strain, and control theories of crime and delinquency (Kornhauser, 1978). Once again, recent conceptual and methodological advances have allowed proponents of updated systemic models of SD to better model and measure key aspects of the theory and to clarify causes and effects.

The fourth main issue regarding SD theory is that the outcome measures of many SD studies have consisted of official recorded delinquency. There has been long-standing debate in the field of criminology as to whether official records are reliable and valid indicators of delinquency participation. In general, official records have been criticized as simply reflecting the biases in police practices and record keeping, while self-report

measures have been criticized for equating minor delinquency with the more serious infractions that comprise the uniform crime reports (Hagan, Gillis, & Chan, 1978; Sampson, 1986). Thus, it is important for current studies to include both self-report and official records of delinquency.

Another major impediment to the development of the SD field has been the lack of agreement on the basic methods used to measure what is labeled community, contextual, or neighborhood effects. Studies have generally utilized census tract demarcations as a measure of the community, however this practice has been strongly criticized as not ecologically valid by many theoreticians (Coulton et al., 1995; Crew, Kim, & Schweitzer, 1999; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). While this has always been a contentious issue, it certainly has not decreased the number of studies on neighborhoods. Instead, it has led to the development of many competing conceptualizations and measurements of community, and may well explain the sometimes contradictory findings in neighborhood studies.

Overall, while the aforementioned problems limited development of SD theory, or at least were responsible for its decline in popularity during the 1960s through the 1980s, updated systemic SD models have dealt adequately with these problems. While these issues have not been entirely reconciled, advances have allowed for a much better understanding of how the structural and social conditions of neighborhoods influence people. As a result of conceptual and methodological advances, SD theory has been dusted off, reformulated, and utilized as one of the guiding frameworks to understand neighborhood effects. Despite the numerous changes in the urban landscape over the past century, it is a strong testament to the underlying assumptions of the ecological theory of

urban dynamics that social disorganization continues to be used as a theoretical and conceptual framework for understanding the impact of the urban environment on youth outcomes.

The current study combines an updated model of social disorganization theory with community psychological theory to understand how social structural conditions impact community social organization and, ultimately, individual youth behavior. Community psychological theory, as discussed in the next section, bridges typical strict sociological and psychological paradigms to better understand the connection between macrosocial conditions and their link to the micro world of individual development and behavior.

Ecological Perspective of Human Development and Neighborhood Conceptualization

While this manuscript has thus far mainly focused on sociology's use of ecological theory to explain macrolevel adaptation of human populations to urban centers, the field of psychology has contributed greatly to our understanding of more microlevel phenomenon, such as the interaction between individuals and their environments. Moreover, the field of psychology has also significantly contributed to understanding how family and individual level-factors influence behavior, particularly in the decades when SD theory fell in disfavor and more individual-level analyses of crime and delinquency were the norm (Sampson, 1991, 1993b).

The utilization of ecology or ecological principles in psychological research is also borrowed from environmental biology and employed as a metaphor to suggest the need to go beyond the individual level and understand how the environment shapes human behavior (Levine & Perkins, 1997). Psychology's use of the ecological metaphor can be mathematically represented by Lewin's (1935) equation [B = f (P,E)], which

emphasizes that development or behavior is a function of the person, the environment, and their interactions. Unlike sociological theory, rather than describing how environmental characteristics impact groups of people, psychology brings the analysis down to the individual person. This includes a focus on individual traits, motivations, experiences, fears, and other characteristics that impact not only the individual, but those around him or her and the greater environmental context.

Expanding on Lewin's classic equation, Bronfrenbrenner (1979) argued that there existed a number of ecologically nested environments that influenced individual development, from those most immediate settings (e.g., family, home, and neighborhood) to more distal or macrosocial environments (e.g., city, country, and culture). Bronfrenbrenner's ecological theory of human development differentiated important developmental settings, which he labeled microsystems, and how they interacted to affect human functioning and capacity. As he so eloquently argued, the majority of psychological research is conducted out of context in that the focus is solely on the person or on the person in one specific setting. Unfortunately, this limitation was also further exacerbated by the fact that the setting was usually an artificial psychology lab where external influences could be constrained and minimized for experimental purposes.

Thus, while specific behaviors could be viewed and isolated in a lab setting, the natural influence of the various levels of the environment was purposely restricted. Bronfrenbrenner argued for the need to view human behavior and development as occurring in multiple ecological environments which produce independent effects, but also interact to affect development in a complex and multifaceted manner. He graphically represented these ecological contexts as a series of concentric circles nested

within each other to show the multiple layers of the environment, which he labeled microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

Thus, in a very similar fashion to Burgess's concentric circle theory, which emphasized the growth of urban areas and populations, Bronfrenbrenner also utilized an embedded graphical display to illustrate how the various levels of community context impact individual development. Consequently, the contribution of the field of psychology to this area of study was to assess how human thought and behavior played out in the structural and social conditions of the urban environment. The field of psychology placed the emphasis on understanding how individual-level characteristics and family dynamics may impact, and are impacted by, the environment. In Bronfrenbrenner's model, microsystems, represented by the innermost circle, are the more proximate physical and social settings, such as the family unit or elementary school for a child, while the mesosystem, the next distinct nested layer, represents the interrelations or interaction of two microsystems in which the developing individual actively participates. An example of the interaction between two microsystems would be when parents discuss their children's performance in school with the classroom teacher. The exosystem includes settings that do not directly involve the developing individual per se, but which nonetheless impact and are impacted by the setting in which the developing person resides. In the case of a child, this would include his or her parents' network of associations in the local neighborhood or workplace. In the outermost concentric circle, the macrosystem represents the broader economic, political, and social context of the culture.

As a child grows and develops, he or she is presented with an increasing number of microsystems, mesosystems, and exosystems, which must be navigated for successful development. While the majority of neighborhood effects research and prior community development programs have utilized census tract demarcations (Elliott et al., 1996; Levanthal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Sampson, 1997), this focus on one setting severely limits our understanding of the important transactions that occur as individuals navigate the multiple and layered ecological contexts of their environment. Similar to the laboratory setting, the artificial nature of census tracts imposes a constraint that does not reflect the everyday experience of people in their neighborhoods. Residents may not only think of their neighborhood differently, but they also are not limited to the boundaries imposed by census tracts. Adults and youth travel in and outside of their neighborhood, and areas outside the tract may have very important influences on them. For instance, in the case of youth, their school and other friends may lie outside the census tract in which their home is located. Thus, an ecological conceptualization of human development warrants looking at multiple levels of neighborhood environments and how they independently and conjointly affect individual youth.

One way to address this issue is to focus on a much smaller, objective, and ecologically valid conceptualization of the urban landscape – the face-block. While research has documented the subjectivity of what residents define as their neighborhood (Coulton, Korbin, Chan, & Su, 2001), the face-block constrains residents to think of their neighborhood in a consistent manner. The face-block consists of houses on both sides of the street that are intersected or bounded by cross-streets or a similar geographic demarcation such as dead-ends and railroad tracks (Unger & Wandersman, 1982). In

addition to readily identifiable objective boundaries, urban residents are more likely to know each other, participate in block level organizations or associations, and monitor and supervise activities at the block-level versus larger conceptualizations of neighborhood (Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman, & Chavis, 1990; Smith, Frazee, & Davison, 2000). Research on this conceptualization of neighborhood has also established both its reliability and validity as a measurement of the neighborhood environment (Appleyard, 1981; Brower, Dockett, & Taylor, 1983; Perkins & Taylor, 1996; Taylor, Gottfredson, & Brower, 1984; Unger & Wandersman, 1983). Furthermore, another major strength of a block conceptualization of neighborhood is that face-blocks can be easily aggregated up to larger neighborhood units and thus the distinct layers of the urban environment can be assessed independently or simultaneously.

While Bronfrenbrenner's ecological model is a useful heuristic to conceive of human development, the numbers of systems (e.g., microsystems, mesosystems) quickly accumulate and there is a need for a simpler, and in the case of neighborhood studies, geographically based way to conceptualize the neighborhood's influence on human behavior. Hunter's (1985) model of social orders presents a simpler yet elegant way to conceive of the various levels of neighborhood context and how they influence human behavior. Specifically, Hunter proposed three distinct levels of community which impact neighborhood residents: private, parochial, and public social orders. An additional strength of this model is that it already has been successfully incorporated into updated systemic models of social disorganization (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Taylor, 1997), and it is also the guiding conceptual framework for neighborhood development programs throughout the state of Illinois (Leverentz, 2001).

As displayed in Figure 1 (for comparative purposes, Bronfrenbrenner's four systems are listed in their corresponding social order), the three social orders are easily distinguishable by their size and the various methods used to achieve social order and control. The private social order represents the most immediate physical and social arena around an individual's home – the face-block or block. Although this interpretation is congruent with Hunter's, it must be acknowledged that the current formulation places more emphasis on the importance of geographic proximity in the private social order. The private social order contains the intimate and also informal relations that develop over time with the neighbors directly surrounding a resident's home. These are the type of relationships that develop among neighbors who provide instrumental support, such as the lending of tools or direct assistance, and the emotional attachment and support that comes from day-to-day contact (Unger & Wandersman, 1982). In this conceptualization of the neighborhood, shared norms exist about the appropriateness of public behavior and, if broken, can result in direct criticism, ridicule or ostracism from fellow neighbors (Black, 1989).

The parochial social order emanates outward from the area surrounding an individual's home to incorporate the larger and more typically conceived "neighborhood", which includes institutions and resources such as schools, places of worship, and community-based organizations. The parochial level of community captures the social attachments among close neighbors as well as the relationships that are not so well established or relationships with those individuals whose geography results in less daily or weekly contact. This level also represents the more formal aspect of relationships dictated by community institutions, such as the local school or market

exchanges at the local grocery store. The public social order, the third and final conceptualization of community, addresses prior critiques of SD theories by representing the larger social, economic, and political forces which strongly influence neighborhood dynamics at the parochial and private levels of community. These are the external forces that shape growth of cities in natural and unnatural (racism, land-controlling elite) ways, as many social disorganization critics and urban scholars have noted (Hirsch, 1998; Logan & Molotch, 1987). As has already been extensively documented and discussed, these are the same macrosocial variables that disproportionately and negatively impact poor minority neighborhoods in urban areas (Wilson, 1996).

Thus, the current study utilizes an updated model of social disorganization theory, integrates psychological and sociological theory of ecology and human development, and conceptualizes neighborhood influence at three distinct levels or social orders to understand how neighborhoods impact youth development. Since social disorganization is the grounding theoretical framework for the current study, recent literature on neighborhood effects via this paradigm will be reviewed and synthesized.

Current Neighborhood Effects Research

Since the late 1980s, the importance of the local neighborhood environment has been reacknowledged as statistics on concentrated poverty and its impact on children and youth have reached beyond academia through popular books such as There are no Children Here, The Truly Disadvantaged, and Savage Inequalities (Kotlowitz, 1991; Kozol, 1991; Wilson, 1987). In the academic research community, neighborhood effects research exploded during the 1990s and studies have quickly accumulated which document the significant role the neighborhood mesosystem plays in the outcomes of

residents, particularly in the development of children and youth (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1997; Coulton et al., 1995; Gonzalez, Cauce, Friedman, & Mason, 1996). Most of the research on poverty, or what is more generally labeled neighborhood disadvantage or neighborhood effects, falls into one of five camps: neighborhood institutional resource models, contagion or epidemic theories, collective socialization theories (SD theory), competition theories, and relative deprivation theories (Jencks, 1990; Levanthal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

While not mutually exclusive, each model stresses a particular pathway through which disadvantaged neighborhoods impact their residents. For instance, neighborhood institutional resource models stress the existence and quality of important youth developmental settings such as schools, community centers, and social service organizations, while contagion/epidemic models emphasize the importance of peer networks and postulate that negative peer systems are more abundant in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Collective socialization theories focus on the important role of community social organization, which includes the development and enforcement of community norms, supervisory capabilities of adults, and presence of adult role models. Thus, those studies that utilize an updated systemic model of social disorganization would be included in this camp. Competition theories emphasize how neighborhoods compete for a finite amount of resources, while relative deprivation theories stress the perceptions of residents' own neighborhoods assets and problems within the context of the surrounding neighborhoods and metropolitan area.

Updated Systemic Models of Social Disorganization or Collective Socialization

The current study utilizes a social disorganization or collective socialization framework to investigate neighborhood effects, although it is important to note that aspects of SD theory also correspond to institutional and contagion theories. As discussed earlier, social disorganization impacts community social organization informally by affecting residents' relationships and ties to each other, and more formally through the reduction of neighborhood organizational and institutional resources. Aspects of SD theory also correspond to the contagion model in that Shaw and McKay (1942) acknowledged the existence of multiple norms and values, which give rise to networks of deviant peers and adults in these neighborhoods. Overall, while these different theories about neighborhood effects emphasize different ways in which neighborhood disadvantage affects individuals, there is some overlap, particularly among collective socialization, institutional, and contagion models. Due to the recent proliferation of neighborhood effects studies, only those investigations that utilize a SD or collective socialization framework will be reviewed here. Additionally, since delinquency is the main outcome variable of the current study, the subsequent literature review will focus on studies which include crime, delinquency, or some measure of violence as a main outcome variable.

As previously mentioned, one of the main criticisms of the social disorganization model was the lack of empirical support for the proposed intervening relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and delinquency (Byrne & Sampson, 1986). A number of recent studies have addressed this and other major problems outlined earlier, thus resurrecting SD theory as one of the major conceptual frameworks through which to

investigate the impact of neighborhood disadvantage on youth outcomes, particularly in the field of delinquency research (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Levanthal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Sampson, 1991, 1993b). Simcha-Fagan & Schwartz's (1986) study marked the return of social disorganization theory by empirically demonstrating that the level of social organization in neighborhoods mediated much of the effects of disadvantaged structural characteristics on self-reported and officially recorded delinquency. Since the publication of this seminal article, a number of studies utilizing SD theory have confirmed that the level of social organization in communities mediates a significant amount of the effects of structural characteristics on delinquency, victimization, and general levels of violence (Elliott et al., 1996; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Unfortunately, as the hypothesized theoretical link between neighborhood disadvantage and delinquency has continued to receive empirical support, the field's sophistication in conceptualizing and operationalizing the mediating variable of SD theory has been limited.

As Table 1 indicates, there have been a number of ways that the mediating variable of community social organization has been operationalized and empirically supported. Unfortunately, the lack of a consistent, standardized measure inhibits comparisons across studies and thus limits the advancement of the field's understanding of how ecological change impacts the social fabric and networks of communities, and ultimately, youth outcomes. As illustrated by Table 1, there have been two major ways of measuring community social organization that have been empirically demonstrated. One method is to measure the level of friendship networks or contacts in the neighborhood, which emerged from the theoretical tradition of emphasizing the

importance of social networks and weak ties (Crenson, 1978; Elliott et al., 1996; Granovetter, 1973; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Warner & Rountree, 1997; Warren, 1978). The second method is to assess the informal social control processes that operate at the neighborhood level (Elliott et al., 1996; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson et al., 1997). Informal social control was usually measured by the likelihood that neighborhood residents would intervene if children and teenagers were engaging in minor "delinquent" behaviors or by the degree of organizational participation in informal and formal community groups. Table 1 illustrates that informal social control has received more empirical support, especially as of late, and is being utilized to a greater degree than friendship networks to measure the level of community social organization. Logically, informal social control taps into the ability of a community to realize its common values and regulate behavior that would be harmful to the collective. Moreover, there has been extensive discussion over the years on the important role of informal social control in controlling crime and delinquency (Greenberg & Rohe, 1986; Sampson et al., 1997).

While these two methods may seem to tap into the same construct, upon closer inspection, it is evident that one acts as a catalyst that necessarily precedes the other. Specifically, the degree to which families, neighbors, and local institutions interact and socialize youth is part of the process of a community realizing its common values and developing shared norms. Once consensus is reached, it is communicated informally from neighbor to neighbor and more formally through a community's institutions. Only when such shared norms exist are residents emboldened to intervene when these norms are being violated. In other words, shared norms must obviously exist before one can intervene when they are being violated. Thus, informal social control and related

intervention behaviors should be viewed as outcomes of community social organization rather than as true measures of community social organization itself. Even though some of the newer studies have incorporated items that measure informal social processes of community cohesion in addition to intervention items (Sampson et al., 1997), there continues to be an over-reliance on behavioral indicators of community social organization. Moreover, the few studies that have assessed social processes such as weak ties and neighboring have found inconsistent results, leading to questions about the validity of the model, or at least how to best measure the social processes that lead to informal social control (Macoby, Johnson, & Church, 1958; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Warner & Rountree, 1997).

Sense of Community

A critical next step for the field is to develop or agree upon a measure that assesses the social processes that are required for informal social control and intervention behaviors with youth in the community. Recent studies have noted this need and asked researchers to incorporate measures that move beyond behavioral indices to measure the various social processes that are inherently embedded in the complex and reciprocal relationships among community social organization, informal social control, and crime and delinquency (Bellair, 2000; Veysey & Messner, 1999). Sense of community may be an effective and accurate measure of such social processes. SOC has been defined as "a *feeling* that members have of belonging, a *feeling* that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared *faith* that members' needs will be met by their commitment to be together" (italics added; as cited in McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.9). As noted over two decades ago (Sarason, 1974), "It [sense of community] is a phrase associated with a

kind of maudlin togetherness, a tear-soaked emotional drippiness that misguided do-gooders seek to experience" (as cited in Chavis, Hogge, McMillan, & Wandersman, 1986, p.24). While Sarason sardonically pointed out its "non-scientific" nature, it is precisely the shared emotional and communal quality of this variable that captures the complex and subtle social processes necessary to form cohesive and supportive communities.

In conjunction with the above definition, McMillan & Chavis (1986) conceptualized four distinct aspects of SOC: membership, influence, sharing of values with an integration and fulfillment of needs, and a shared emotional connection. Thus, for SOC to exist in a residential neighborhood setting, residents must identify with the community, feel that they matter to the community and that the community matters to them, feel that the community shares their values and meets their needs, and experience affective attachments with other community members. As the above definition indicates, SOC measures the emotional and social processes that precede direct intervention and are usually enforced through subtle behaviors such as the withdrawal of sentiment, respect and esteem, and social and instrumental support (Black, 1989; Hunter, 1985).

In addition to the argument that SOC provides a more accurate and valid measure of community social organization, another advantage is the applicability of the measure. For example, an evaluation of a program which only utilizes the outcome variable of informal social control may show no effect when, in reality, a considerable amount of social change has occurred in the community. Or, as has been found in previous research (Perkins, Wandersman, Rich, & Taylor, 1993), neighborhoods with higher levels of informal social control may seem to have more crime because residents report more to

the police, whereas a neighborhood with more crime may seem to have fewer problems because people are afraid to call the police out of fear of retaliation. In fact, this has been extensively documented as one of the major reasons why residents in high-crime neighborhoods do not "get involved" (Korbin & Coulton, 1997). Moreover, there are many different ways of intervening with youth and most studies fail to distinguish between informal intervening which includes speaking directly to the youth and/or his or her parents, versus formal intervening, which involves calling the police or other formal agencies. There is a vast difference between these two types of intervening and the fact that in some communities problems can be solved by speaking directly with the involved youth and/or parents while in other communities problems can only be solved by calling the police. The former speaks to a community with extensive social networks, established norms, and a lot of informal social control where problems are solved directly and locally, while the latter speaks to a lack of informal social control and reliance on formal community structures and agencies.

The development of SOC within a neighborhood is a continual and dynamic process, which requires extensive and positive interactions with fellow community members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Unger & Wandersman, 1982, 1983). In neighborhoods with a high degree of SOC, social ties are strengthened and extended as community members realize that they not only share a common identity and history, but more importantly a common future. And, as the research is beginning to document, the future of the neighborhood is intricately tied to some of the most important outcomes individuals and families, such as safety, access to quality neighborhood resources, quality

of life, and economic opportunity (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1997; Coulton et al., 1996; Coulton et al., 1995).

Both SD theory and SOC stress the importance of neighborhood consensus on goals and values for the community, particularly with issues that have the potential to affect all residents in the community. Rather than a restrictive or invasive social control process, both theories emphasize the development of norms and guidelines to ensure a high quality of life in the residential environment. For instance, one basic need for all communities, as previously noted, is the ability to form a safe environment where residents are free from victimization. In this respect, neighborhoods that lack consensus or the ability to realize such a basic community goal can be labeled as having little sense of community, or alternatively, as being socially disorganized. In accordance with the definition of social disorganization, SOC taps into the informal social processes and connections that are necessary for a community to self-regulate and inhibit harmful behaviors. Moreover, utilizing SOC as a measure of community social organization improves upon the current mediating variables in social disorganization theory, which tend to focus on behavioral indicators or outcomes of social organization rather than the process itself.

Since SOC's conceptualization, research has demonstrated its importance to both neighborhood and individual-level outcomes. For instance, SOC has been found to relate to the amount of emotional and instrumental support individuals provide to neighbors (Unger & Wandersman, 1982) and also has a positive effect on psychological health in adults (Davidson & Cotter, 1991). SOC has also been found to influence the degree to which residents work on common public problems, as well as participate in the political

process (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Davidson & Cotter, 1989, 1993). For youth, SOC has been found to significantly reduce adolescent loneliness and to be more important in this respect than levels of social support (Pretty, Conroy, Dugay, Fowler, & Williams, 1996). Most significant in terms of using SOC as a mediating variable in SD theory, prior research has documented SOC as a quantifiable neighborhood level construct which can be targeted in designing intervention and rehabilitation programs for disadvantaged urban neighborhoods (Buckner, 1988; Chavis, Hogge, McMillan, & Wandersman, 1986; Glynn, 1986; Kingston, Mitchell, Florin, & Stevenson, 1999; Pretty, 1990).

In summary, there is a need within the social disorganization theoretical framework for a more comprehensive, applicable, and valid construct of community social organization than informal social control and related intervention behaviors. As a measure of the mediating variables of SD theory, sense of community goes beyond behaviors and would be able to quantify if shared norms and social networks are developing within communities. Thus, this construct would be much more useful in community assessments and could inform community revitalization and building programs on how and where to proceed to eventually attain the goal of increased informal social control and safety in the neighborhood.

Measuring SOC

While the four proposed dimensions of SOC, membership, influence, fulfillment of needs, and a shared emotional connection, have long been discussed, empirical evidence has not fully supported them, resulting in varying conceptualizations and measures of SOC over the years (Chipuer & Pretty, 1999). Some scales ask about neighboring and neighborhood participation while others do not, some measures refer to

the respondent's block, some to the local neighborhood, and a couple even refer to the respondent's experiences throughout their entire city. There has also been considerable disagreement over whether SOC is a unidimensional or multidimensional construct (Hill, 1996). While evidence seems to be in favor of a multidimensional construct, the exact factor structure of SOC has not been confirmed. While the dimensions of this important construct remain elusive, rather than deterring research, it should simply indicate the diversity of the community experience (Please see Table 2 for a description of prior SOC measures).

Simply put, like people, all communities are distinctive. Thus, it is unlikely that any one measure of SOC is going to capture all the important dynamics across various communities (e.g., urban/rural, poor/wealthy, stable/transitory, territorial/non-territorial). Given the debate over what exactly constitutes the important elements of sense of community, the conceptualization used for this study attempted to assess its most basic and vital components – the shared emotional connection among neighborhood residents and the feelings of influence and empowerment that lead community members to establish shared norms and solve locally experienced problems.

Of course, it is also readily acknowledged that healthy communities first require an adequate level of physical security and safety, and unfortunately, most researchers have neglected to include this dimension in their conceptualization and measurement of SOC. Since the field of neighborhood effects usually attempts to identify how poor urban environments affect adolescent development, it seems ironic that more emphasis has not been placed on basic physical safety issues, especially since many researchers note how dangerous it is to live in some of these neighborhoods. One recent study

(McGuire, 1997) which included a safety measure summed up its importance by stating, "It appears in this community residents' judgments about the neighborhood as a worthwhile place to live may be most heavily influenced by immediate danger and crime, because the ratings of quality of life loaded on to the street crime scale" (p.562). Unfortunately, the current study did not have enough items about neighborhood safety to include this important variable in the sense of community construct.

Healthy communities are also often described as areas where people know each other and experience a feeling of togetherness. As articulated by Chavis and McMillan (1986), the shared emotional connection among neighborhood residents "... seems to be the definitive element for true community" (p.14). Thus, while safety is necessary for the mere existence and development of SOC, its defining element is the camaraderie and connection neighborhood residents feel for each other. As extensively noted by researchers, authors, and lay people, communities can be extremely safe and yet at the same time also extremely alienating with little or no feelings of community togetherness.

In safe communities where there is a strong emotional attachment among residents, this is usually witnessed by neighborhood celebrations such as block parties, summer festivals, and other events where, whether consciously noted or not, community itself is celebrated. It is in such communities that neighbors can come together to also address public problems. In fact, it is argued that this empowering, action component, or "neighborhood empowerment", is vital for a healthy community. Even in neighborhoods where there are relatively few problems that neighbors need to come together to address, social gatherings and neighborhood celebrations are vitally important. It is this element of sense of community that most closely parallels the definition of social disorganization

as laid out by Kornhauser (e.g., the inability of local communities to realize the common values of their residents or solve commonly experienced problems).

The impact of neighborhood disadvantage has been primarily investigated via its impact on community social organization. Due to the conceptual, methodological, and statistical difficulty of partialling neighborhood effects, it is not surprising that the multiple pathways through which disadvantaged neighborhoods impact youth outcomes, particularly delinquency, have not been fully delineated. In the past several years however, there has been a growing effort to understand how the neighborhood context impacts youth outcomes via other pathways such as its influence on parenting and family relations and processes (Barrera et al., 2002; Elder, Eccles, Ardelt, & Lord, 1995), peer relationships (Gonzalez et al., 1996), school context (Kozol, 1991; Pretty, Andrewes, & Collett, 1994), and the interactions among these important developmental contexts and influences (Griffin, Scheier, Botvin, Diaz, & Miller, 1999; Simons, Johnson, Beaman, Conger, & Whitbeck, 1996). Since parenting and family processes are the most important variables in terms of youth development, the current study incorporated this proximal context. Moreover, recent research has not only focused on how neighborhood disadvantage impacts parenting, but how families have utilized creative strategies to offset the insidious effects of growing up in neighborhood devastated by concentrated poverty. Thus, parenting practices can both mediate and moderate the influence of neighborhood disadvantage, as the following literature review will display.

The Impact of Neighborhood Disadvantage on Parenting, Family Processes, and Affiliation with Delinquent Peers

Overall, the most consistent finding in research on delinquency has been the strong role family factors contribute to such behavior. In particular, all major meta-analyses have found that parental involvement, monitoring, and discipline are the strongest predictors of delinquency (Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). While this has been the most consistent finding in the literature to date, very few of these studies have looked at how parenting characteristics are influenced by neighborhood factors, thus, these results may be overestimated or, at a minimum, misinterpreted due to cross-level misspecification. For instance, part of the variance accounted for in delinquency by parenting variables may actually be due to the ways in which disadvantaged neighborhoods impact or interact with parenting styles. By omitting macrolevel variables such as neighborhood disadvantage, current estimates of individual or parenting effects may be artificially or spuriously inflated (Simons et al., 1996).

There are many hypothesized ways in which the neighborhood context impacts parenting and family variables. One of the most obvious is the amount of stress incurred by living in an economically and socially disenfranchised neighborhood. McLoyd (1990) reviewed the literature and found that economic hardship and poverty can affect the mental health of parents both directly and indirectly, and that this influence can impact parenting abilities and thus their children. Neighborhood disadvantage can impact parents directly by providing an inhospitable and dangerous environment for parents and their children. Moreover, such a stressful environment can also create problems such as

chronic anxiety and depression, which can decrease parents' energy, frustration level, and ability to monitor and supervise their children's daily lives. Indirectly, the stressors of living in a disadvantaged neighborhood can exacerbate any pre-existing individual and family issues or problems.

Returning to the basic tenets of social disorganization theory, communities characterized by extreme levels of disadvantage also generally have the fewest community and institutional resources which adults and families can access and utilize to offset such hardships. The lack of adequate resources for such families produces a cruel irony: those with the greatest need have the fewest community-based resources to assist them in caring for their families. Moreover, as demonstrated by Coulton et al. (1996), the resources that are available to these residents are perceived to be of inferior quality. For instance, the most important resource for families in any neighborhood is the quality of the local school system. The severe problems of schools in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods has been well-documented and is considered a national crisis (Kozol, 1991; Simon & Burns, 1997).

Other studies have also suggested that the psychological and emotional distress caused by poverty undermines parents' beliefs in their ability to be good parents. Elder et al. (1995) found that both white and black parents under economic pressure had a lower level of parental efficacy because of depressed feelings. Moreover, this finding was especially true for single parents who did not have a partner to help reduce the daily stress caused by financial problems. A related study, which also assessed community and parenting variables, found that mothers living in disadvantaged neighborhoods had a poorer physical environment in, and directly outside, the home. This study also found

that these mothers also displayed less emotional warmth and responsiveness to their children (Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1994). Importantly, these findings were substantial, even after controlling for family poverty and conditions. The authors suggested that the poor physical environment might be due to the lack of incentives to invest effort, time, and money in one's house when the overall neighborhood housing is in distressed condition. In terms of the finding that these mothers displayed less emotional warmth to their children, this may be due to the reality of living and raising children in poor urban neighborhoods, where this may be seen as an adaptive parenting strategy - to prepare their children for the harsh neighborhood environment they will encounter (McLoyd, 1990). It is also worthwhile to note the difference between current poverty and the effects of long-term and persistent poverty, which is often neglected in neighborhood effects research. McLeod & Shanahan (1990) found that persistent poverty impacts children's internalizing symptoms above and beyond current poverty. Due to the fact that poverty has become more intense and concentrated within neighborhoods over last several decades, its long-term effects cannot be overstated.

There have been a number of other studies which have found that parenting characteristics and styles differ by neighborhood context, particularly that in lower SES neighborhoods authoritative and harsh parenting styles are more common (Elder & Caspi, 1988; Simons, Lorenz, Wu, & Conger, 1993). As Furstenberg (1993) has documented, parenting and family management strategies can be characterized as collective, individualistic, or mixed and the strategy chosen is usually in direct response to the social organization of local communities. Cohesive neighborhoods with adequate resources allow parents to trust that their kids will be supervised and monitored by neighborhood

residents and that they will be informed when their child is misbehaving. Thus, they are able to use "collective" parenting strategies. In contrast, extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods often lack the common values, social ties, and neighborhood resources that result in a "village-like" atmosphere where residents look out for children. In such an environment, an individualistic parenting strategy is often utilized since parents cannot trust that their children will be supervised and aided by neighborhood residents.

At the extreme end of this individualistic parenting style is the "lock-up" strategy, where parents in severely disadvantaged and dangerous neighborhoods protect their children by severely limiting their contact and association with others from the neighborhood (Brodsky, 1996; Furstenberg, 1993). While this is an adaptive response to harsh external neighborhood conditions, it further isolates families living in concentrated poverty and limits any potential access and support from similar neighbors and community members, as well as from local social service agencies and institutions that do exist. Further, as children age, the role of peers and the general community will play a greater role in their development no matter how successful parents are in protecting their children from such an impact. Thus, the importance of consistent support and monitoring can have much greater impact in disadvantaged neighborhoods. In a review of the literature on successful methods parents use to offset poor neighborhood environments, Jarret (1995) found that such a stringent parental monitoring strategy was one of five major strategies. Together, these five strategies were termed "community-bridging" to describe how parents use the limited resources in their community, limit the influences of their neighborhood on their children and access resources in other communities to aid in the positive development of their children.

In a related study on how neighborhood disadvantage influences parenting styles and strategies, the role of restrictive discipline and low levels of parental monitoring and involvement were hypothesized to mediate the relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and childhood aggression. Rather than a direct mediating role, harsh and restrictive parenting increased children's belief and acceptance of aggression and this resulted in greater externalizing problems for these children (Colder, Mott, Levy, & Flay, 2000). Since neighborhood disadvantage also directly increased children's positive beliefs about aggression, this study reveals the complexity of the multiple and varied ways neighborhoods impact children.

Other studies have looked at the impact of the neighborhood context on children by evaluating the interaction between neighborhood disadvantage and parenting practices rather than just looking at its mediating role. For instance, Gonzalez et al. (1996) found that the relationship between maternal restrictive control and youths' (junior high) school performance was moderated by neighborhood risk. Overall, maternal control was not significantly related to a child's school performance. However, in high-risk neighborhoods, high maternal control resulted in better grades while in low-risk neighborhoods high maternal control resulted in worse grades. Although a cross-sectional study, this result lends empirical support to the protective or adaptive parenting practice of a more controlling or harsh parental style when families reside in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

This long-held belief has been extensively documented in qualitative and ethnographic studies of disadvantaged urban neighborhoods. After all, the results of not knowing exactly where one's child is at all hours of the day can have much more severe

consequences in dangerous neighborhoods than in neighborhoods that, for instance, do not have a gang presence or an active open-air drug market. As one of the mothers from Brodsky's (1996) study states "Yeah, and then the drive-bys. It just- you know, you can't let the kids play outside anymore because you're afraid someone is gonna come around the corner shootin' at the- the dealers and the kids will be outside and they'll get hit". Ethnographic and qualitative studies have also documented the dissonance parents in these neighborhoods experience when they weigh providing more autonomy to their children or restricting this autonomy because of the endemic levels of violence and related problems outside their front door. As one of the parents from Furstenberg's (1993) qualitative study stated, "Well, I know that I'm very protective of my son. I have to give him more space so he can grow. Of course, in some neighborhoods the prerequisite of basic safety levels are not met and this prevents parents from worrying about higher-order needs of their children such as independence and autonomy. Nevertheless, most researchers seem to continue take a static view of community context and assume that the end goal should always be a tight and cohesive neighborhood, even though it is sometimes advantageous for parents to isolate themselves from their community, as the aforementioned quotes so poignantly illustrate.

In a related manner, Kupersmidt et al. (1995) found that the interaction between neighborhood context and parenting styles and strategies depended on the type of behavior under study. Similar to the aforementioned study, some parenting and family variables work in certain environments while in other environments the same parenting styles can produce deleterious effects. Utilizing cluster analysis, Gorman-Smith, Tolan, & Henry (2000) were also able to show that parenting practices and neighborhood type

interact in unforeseen ways to impact youth in these neighborhoods. For example, task-oriented families work well in highly cohesive neighborhoods, but in neighborhoods with low levels of cohesion this parenting style led to a significant increase in serious and chronic delinquency for teenage youth. This finding suggests that there is a relationship or continuum between parenting and familial monitoring and control on one-hand and neighborhood sources of supervision, monitoring and social control of youth on the other (Sampson, 1986, 1997). As discussed at length earlier, research on the mediating role of community social organization has shown that collective supervision of children and enforcement of neighborhood norms (e.g., collective efficacy) results in significantly lower levels of violence (Sampson et al., 1997).

Neighborhood Selection Effects

A major and valid critique of all neighborhood effects studies has been the fact that people are not randomly assigned to neighborhoods and that this selection bias may explain the results rather than the findings being due to neighborhood-level structural or social factors. In other words, some argue that the effect of neighborhood disadvantage may operate at the family or individual-level and the relationship found at the neighborhood-level is simply due to aggregation effects (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Duncan & Raudenbush, 1999; Korbin & Coulton, 1997; Levanthal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). While this argument cannot be entirely refuted because even random experiments like the moving to opportunity program are not truly random, it seems a bit simplistic and victim blaming to suggest that neighborhood context plays no role in youth outcomes and that any negative effect found is simply due to poor parenting and other characteristics ascribed to poor people. In fact, this argument could be made for any social problem

found in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods and essentially blames the victim rather than attempting to understand the detrimental impact of deleterious structural and social conditions.

Gorman-Smith, Tolan, & Henry (2000) found not only great variability in community social organization and family functioning in disadvantaged neighborhoods, but also that "exceptional family functioning" comprised almost 30% of the sample. This is a high percentage, especially since the study purposely over-sampled previously identified "high-risk" youth from some of the worst neighborhood environments in the city of Chicago. Thus, not only is there great variability among families in poor environments, but many of these families somehow find a way to help their children thrive in some of the most disenfranchised developmental contexts. In fact, the vast majority of children from disadvantaged neighborhoods grow up to lead successful and productive lives like the majority of youth from more advantaged neighborhoods (Seidman, 1991). Unfortunately, the field of neighborhood studies has not concentrated its efforts at understanding how families thrive in such harsh environments and has neglected this more likely outcome and chosen to focus on those families and youth experiencing serious difficulty, whether the ultimate negative outcome of interest is school dropout, drug abuse, or delinquency. Thus, it is not only important to investigate various pathways to delinquency, but also to extend analyses to examine positive youth developmental outcomes such as success in school and participation in community and school activities.

Overall, research has shown neighborhood effects account for only 5-10% of variance in child and adolescent outcomes (Levanthal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000), thus,

family, peer, and individual factors are stronger determinants. While it is acknowledged that these variables account for a greater percentage of variance in delinquency rates, the role of the neighborhood context may increase as more sophisticated models include the neighborhood's impact and interaction with parental characteristics and individual youth characteristics. It is especially important to examine whether neighborhood disadvantage accounts for more variance in youth outcomes, particularly delinquency, when its influence on parenting styles and strategies (e.g., parental monitoring and support) is included. More important than this empirical rationale however, is that a greater understanding of the interaction between family and neighborhood contexts can lead to more successful interventions by targeting the multiple and varied contexts that influence youth development.

Summary

While the role of neighborhood effects on youth outcomes has been re-acknowledged, particularly in regard to the development of concentrated poverty, it is essential not to overly romanticize the past and assume that the urban areas of our nation are beyond repair. The fact remains that there never was a golden era of community and urbanization does not necessarily eliminate the possibility of developing cohesive and supportive neighborhood environments for residents and their families (Fischer, 1982; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). However, at the same time, it is also true that certain structural and social features of urban neighborhoods can be detrimental to residents, particularly youth. Also, as Simons et al. (1996) discovered, the same structural and social characteristics that negatively impact families and youth are not solely limited to urban areas.

While neighborhood-based studies have concentrated their efforts at understanding how negative structural characteristics impact community social organization, the assessment of how disadvantaged neighborhoods indirectly impact youth outcomes via family and individual-level variables has been a more recent development (Colder et al., 2000; Furstenberg, 1993; Gonzalez et al., 1996; Paschall & Hubbarb, 1998; Sampson, 1993a). This should not be too surprising as the impact of disadvantaged neighborhoods on community social organization and youth outcomes was only recently established, despite the fact that social disorganization theory emerged in the early period of the last century. While the studies reviewed have shown empirical support for various ways neighborhood disadvantage impacts parenting practices, the current study focused on how disadvantaged urban contexts led to decreased parental support and monitoring because of the increased stressors and difficulties associated with rearing youth in such unstable and inhospitable environments. While this indirect or mediating role of parental support and monitoring will be evaluated, it was also hypothesized family support and monitoring could act as a moderating variable in two ways. First, it was hypothesized that family support and monitoring could interact with informal social control to increase positive youth outcomes and decrease negative youth outcomes. Second, it was argued that some parents would substantially increase support and monitoring in an attempt to offset negative structural and social conditions found in disadvantaged neighborhoods. In this case, high levels of family support and monitoring would reduce the impact of low levels of sense of community and informal social control on youth outcomes. Thus, family support and monitoring will be evaluated as both a mediator and moderator of neighborhood disadvantage.

The Current Study

The literature reviewed in the introduction displayed the various and multiple pathways neighborhood disadvantage is able to negatively impact families. The current study will investigate these various pathways and how they interact to transmit the influence of neighborhood disadvantage on youth outcomes. Please see Figure 2, which displays the conceptual model that will be evaluated.

The current study merges sociological and community psychological conceptualizations of ecological theory to better understand the impact of negative structural conditions on individual youth development. Utilizing an updated model of social disorganization or collective socialization framework, neighborhood is conceptualized at three distinct levels, with the focus of this study on the most immediate and objective conceptualization of neighborhood - the face-block. The current study attempts to understand the impact of neighborhood disadvantage by assessing *how* neighborhood structural conditions influence youth outcomes by simultaneously impacting the social organization of local communities, parenting styles and strategies, as well as affiliation with delinquent peers. The major research objectives and hypotheses of the current study are:

1. The direct impact of neighborhood structural conditions (block stability and block income) on youth outcomes will be assessed. It is hypothesized that higher rates of block stability and block income will lead to more positive youth outcomes and less negative youth outcomes.
    a. Block income will also have an indirect impact on youth outcomes by increasing the endogenous variable of family support and monitoring. It is hypothesized that

neighborhoods with higher incomes will have more community resources and institutions, which help facilitate youth development and the ability of parents to support and monitor their children.

b. Block stability will also indirectly influence youth outcomes via its impact on sense of community, informal social control, and family support and monitoring. It is hypothesized that neighborhood stability helps facilitate the development of social networks and norms, which subsequently reinforces positive youth development and parental involvement and support.

2. The endogenous construct of family support and monitoring will also be analyzed as a moderating variable between sense of community, informal social control, and youth outcomes.

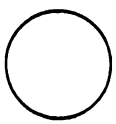
   a. Specifically, it is hypothesized that this may happen in two different ways. First, family support and monitoring may interact with high levels of informal social control to significantly increase positive youth outcomes and significantly decrease negative youth outcomes.

   b. It is also hypothesized that families in severely disadvantaged neighborhoods may utilize extremely intense parental support and monitoring strategies to offset the negative influence of the negative structural and social characteristics.

Figure 1

Hunter's (1985) Three Social Orders

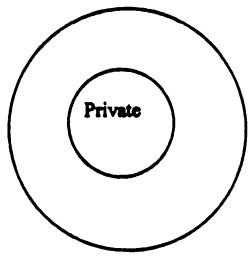
Private Social Order



- Household, nearby households, and intimate social ties in local area (e.g., face-block).
- Frequent face-to-face interaction, informal "weak ties", and some intimate relationships.
- Establish shared norms and enforced through provision or withholding of instrumental and social support, esteem, friendship.

- *Neighborhood Microsystem*

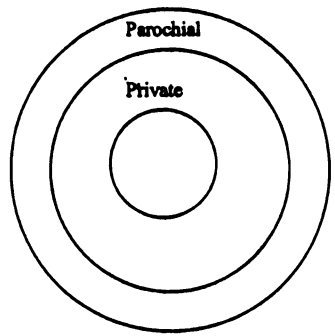
Parochial Social Order



- Community-wide area. Includes resident's private social order networks and beyond, including institutional resources of the community.
- Schools, CBOs, churches, social service agencies, etc.
- Movement on continuum from informal to formal.

- *Mesosystem and Exosystem*

Public Social Order



- Intersection of social orders. Also includes extracommunity factors - political, cultural, social, economic, and other macro-level factors.
- More formal on continuum - State and federal bureaucratic organizations.
- Distinguishing characteristic is legitimate right to use force.

- *Macrosystem*

Table 1

Significant Findings From Recent Social Disorganization Studies

Study	Mediating Variables	Outcome Variables
Simcha-Fagan & Schwartz, 1986	• Organizational participation • Community disorder-criminal subculture	• Self-reported delinquency • Severe self-reported delinquency • Officially recorded delinquency
Sampson & Groves, 1989	• Organizational participation • Local friendship networks • Control of street corner youth [a]	• Criminal offending rates (personal violence & property/vandalism) • Criminal victimization rates (mugging/robbery, stranger violence, total crime, etc.)
Elliott, Wilson, Huizinga, Sampson, Elliott, & Rankin, 1996	• Social integration • Informal networks • Informal control [b]	• Prosocial competence • Conventional friends • Problem behavior
Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997	• Collective efficacy [c]	• Violence • Household victimization • Homicide rates
Bellair, 2000	• Informal surveillance • Informal control	• Burglary • Stranger Assault/Robbery

Note. The reviewed studies all utilized a social disorganization framework with similar independent variables. Only the mediating variables which proved significant with at least one of the outcome variables are listed.

[a] Control of street corner youth was the most consistent significant mediating variable.

[b] Informal control was the only significant mediating variable with all three outcome variables.

[c] Collective efficacy combined five items on social cohesiveness and trust and five items on informal social control.

Table 2

Sense of Community & Related Measures for Geographic Communities

Study	Quick Description	Basic Results
Doolittle & Macdonald (1978)	• PCA found support for 6 separate factors.	• 6 components: Supportive climate, Family life cycle, Localism, Safety, Informal interaction, & Neighborly interaction. • Percent of variance accounted for by each component: 15%, 12%, 8%, 7%, 6%, 6%.
Krupat & Guild (1980)	• Surveyed a number of different sized communities and created a community social climate scale with 30 items and 6 components.	• 6 components: Warmth and closeness (α = .83), Activity/entertainment (α = .78), Alienation/isolation (α = .68), Good life (α = .66), Privacy (α = .54), & Uncaring (α = .53).
Riger & Lavrakas (1981)	• Found 2 important components in patterns of attachment and interaction of neighborhood residents. • Created a typology of neighborhood attachment for residents: young mobiles, young participants, isolates, and established participants.	• 2 components: Physical rootedness (α =. 59) & Socially bonded (α = .56). • Rooted accounted for 38% of variance and bonded for 17% of variance.
Glynn (1981)	• Assessed ideal and actual levels of SOC in 3 different communities through a 178-item scale. • Decreased instrument to 60 items through analyses.	• Unidimensional – psychological sense of community. • Actual SOC α = .97. • Ideal SOC α = .92.
Chavis, Hogge, McMillan, & Wandersman (1986)	• Created the Sense of Community Index (SCI), which had 4 components. • Shortened version of scale (SCI – short form)	• 4 components: Membership, Influence, Integration and fulfillment of needs, and Shared emotional connection.

	contains 12 items and is the one most often used in measuring SOC despite reliability problems.	• Overall alpha has been found to be around .71.
Davidson & Cotter (1986)	• Created Sense of Community scale (SCS) which originally had 17 items. • Referred to level of city vs. neighborhood.	• Unidimensional. • α = .85 in one community and .81 in the other.
Buckner (1988)	• Created Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument (NCI). Originally thought to be 3 separate scales (attraction to neighborhood, neighboring, & psychological sense of community) but analyses indicated it could be one overall construct.	• Unidimensional. • 17 item scale entitled Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument. • α = .95.
Pretty (1990)	• Used short form of SCI in a University residence sample comparing SOC with the University Residence Environment Scale (URES) (Moos & Gerst, 1974).	• Unidimensional. • PCA found that it was inappropriate to look at the short form as 4 separate components.
Davidson & cotter (1993)	• Used a shortened version of their SCS. This version was reduced to 5 items.	• Unidimensional. • Alpha = .84.
Pretty, Andrews, & Collet (1994)	• Used shortened version of SCI to calculate school sense of community and neighborhood sense of community.	• Unidimensional.
Hill (1996)	• Reviewed various measures of SOC and discussed implications for the field.	• Found less than 30 published measures of SOC and factor analysis has yielded both unidimensional and multidimensional interpretations.
Puddifoot (1996)	• Reviews measures of	• 14 Components - Presents

	SOC, community satisfaction and identity, etc. • Argues for more multidisciplinary research and focus on qualitative measures.	an argument for 14 dimensions of community identity.
Skaeveland, Garling, & Maeland (1996)	• Created the MMN, multidimensional measure of neighboring scale. This scale contains 14 items and one of few to measure negative neighbor relations.	• 4 Components: Supportive acts of neighboring, Neighbor annoyance, Neighborhood attachment, Weak social ties. • Percent of variance accounted for by each component: 32%, 16%, 8% & 8%. • Alpha ranged from .70-.86 for the four subscales.
Barnes & McGuire (1997)	• Adapted questionnaire from Simcha-Fagan & Schwartz (1986) to use with families with young children. • Named Neighborhood Characteristics Questionnaire (NCQ). • Shows similarity of community social organization in SD theory and measures of SOC.	• 4 Components: Perception of street crime and life quality (α = .85), Social relationships and networks among neighbors (α = .82), Attachment to neighborhood (α = .81), and Neighborhood disorder (α = .77).
Brodsky, O'Campo, & Aronson (1999)	• Used a revised form of Chavis, Florin, Rich and Wandersman's scale (1987; as cited in Linney and Wandersman, 1991). 10 items.	• Unidimensional. • PCA found support for 2 dimensions although one was too small so only kept one dimension for study. • α = 84.
Kingston, Mitchell, Florin, & Stevenson (1999)	• The SOC scale utilized in this study assessed many of the same elements as previous scales although some components were developed for this study.	• 4 Components: Neighborhood-related attitude scale (α = .83), Neighborhood influence scale (α = .89), Neighborhood related behavior (α = .80), Participation in community

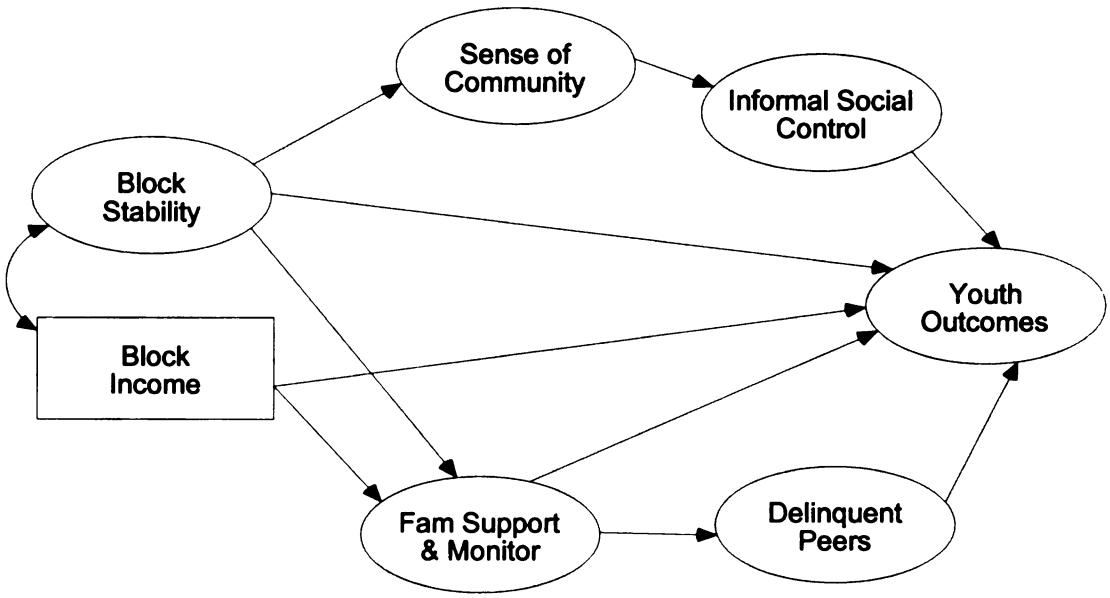
		organizations (No alpha, one item).
Chavis & Pretty (1999)	• Reviews theoretical and measurement articles on SOC and serves as an introduction to a special issue.	• One major theme of this article was the continued search for measures.
Chipuer & Pretty (1999)	• Reviews the short-form of SCI and its proposed 4 dimensions.	• Found that components of SCI were unreliable (Alphas ranged from .16 to a high of .72). • Suggest using long form of SCI as foundation to create a new measure
Chipuer, Pretty, Delorey, Miller, Powers, Rumstein, Barnes, Cordasic, & Laurent (1999)	• Created a SOC scale for youth called the Neighborhood Youth Inventory. 22 item measure which had 4 components. • Used Buckner's NCI and short form of SCI to create inventory with input from youth.	• 4 components: Support, Safety, Activity, & friendships. Alphas ranged from .64 to .94.
Crew, Kim, & Schweitzer (1999)	• 4 items measuring SOC at block-level.	• Unidimensional. • Alpha = .81
Schweitzer, Kim, & Mackin (1999)	• SOC measure was comprised of 16 items related to connection, belonging, and support.	• Alpha not reported but assessed as a unidimensional construct.
Prezza, Amici, Roberti, & Tedeschi (2001)	• Translated Davidson & Cotter's SCS into Italian. 18 items. • Found support for 5 components but also found that it could be looked at as one dimension.	• Unidimensional. • While 5 factors had eigenvalues over 1, all items loaded > .36 on the first factor so interpreted unidimensionally. Overall alpha = .82.
Zani, Cicognani, & Albanesi (2001)	• Translated Davidson & Cotter's SCS into Italian and measured adolescent's SOC. • Items loaded differently from adults. So, concept of SOC plays out	• 4 Components: Opportunity for participation and fulfillment of needs, Pleasantness of living area, Social climate, & Membership.

	differently for youth.	• Percent of variance explained by each component: 15%, 14%, 12%, & 12%. • $\alpha = .85$.
Martinez, Black, & Starr (2002)	• Created Perceived Neighborhood Scale (PNS), a scale with items from previous published items on SOC, neighborhood satisfaction, etc. Intended for parents of young children. Total 34 items and a CFA found 4 components.	• 4 components: Social embeddedness, Sense of community, Satisfaction with neighborhood, Fear of crime.
Obst, Smith, & Zinkiewicz (2002)	• Looks at numerous scales over the years (Bardo & Bardo, 1983; Buckner, 1988; Glynn, 1981; Lalli, 1992; Nasar & Julian, 1995; Skaeveland et al., 1996). • Performed a PCA on all 95 items from these scales and found support for 5 components of SOC	• 5 components: Ties and friendship, Influence, Support, Belonging, and adds construct of conscious identification. • Percent of variance accounted for by each component: 24%, 13%, 10%, 7%, & 4%.

Note. An attempt was made to review the vast majority of published empirical studies on sense of community and related variables. Since the concept spans many disciplines and is labeled differently across these content areas, some studies may have been omitted. Also, studies which investigated non-territorial communities (e.g., Bishop, Chertok, & Jason, 1997) were excluded from presentation.

Figure 2

Conceptual Model



CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Procedures

Setting

This research study was conducted in the city of Lansing, Michigan. Lansing is the state capital and an industrial city with a population of approximately 127,000. The Sense of Community in Lansing Neighborhoods Project office is located at Michigan State University in East Lansing. All interviews were conducted in either the homes or on the front porches of the respondents.

Participants

Participants were referred from the local school district. There were 103 tenth-grade males who participated in the study along with one of their parents and one of their neighbors. Therefore, for each student there was a total of three interviews (student, parent, and neighbor) for a combined total of 309 interviews. Of the 103 youth, 41% were White, 40% were African American, 11% were Hispanic, 6% Asian, and 3% mixed race. As can be seen in Table 3, student respondents closely matched the racial/ethnic percentages of Lansing High School students.

Primary caretakers and neighbors had to be over the age of 18. Only one adult was surveyed at each household to avoid the potential bias or influence of others. Of the 206 participating adults, 67% were female and 67% owned their own homes. The average length of time on the block was approximately 10 years and covered a range from three months to 39 years. An interpreter was utilized to increase Asian respondents

since a large percentage were of Hmong descent and many of these youth's parents spoke little or no English.

Recruitment Procedures

This research project was conducted with assistance from the Lansing school district office of research and evaluation services. First, the Lansing school district provided a random sample of 300 tenth-grade male students who attended public high schools throughout the city. To ensure that no parent, youth, or neighbor felt coerced to participate, a three-step consent procedure was employed. First, the school district required that the initial mailing to the 300 families were sent out from the school district's own office. The SOC research team mailed an initial letter to these 300 parents, which explained the rationale and goals of the study and contained a request for participants. A self-addressed, stamped postcard was included and parents were instructed to return this postcard if they did *not* want their youth to be included in a pool of possible research participants. The phone number to the SOC project office was also included and parents were encouraged to call if they had any questions, comments, or concerns. Once an adequate time had passed from this initial mailing, the Lansing school district office of research and evaluation services provided the SOC project team with the names and addresses of all those parents who did not return the postcard indicating that they did not want to participate. This resulted in a 22% refusal rate for a sample size of 235. This passive consent procedure complied with local school district policy, and again, was only the first of a three-step procedure.

For the second component of the recruitment procedure, trained interviewers traveled to the youth's home to explain the study to the youth's primary caretaker and ask

if they would like to participate. A follow-up letter with the interviewer's name was left if the primary caregiver was not home or too busy to discuss the study at that time. If a primary caregiver was home and agreed to participate, the interviewer reviewed the consent form, obtained a signature, and interviewed the parent either at that time or set up an appointment for an interview in the future. At this point of the consent procedure, an additional 41 students (17%) were dropped because their parents refused to participate. Also, 49 students (21%) were dropped for various reasons including incorrect addresses, if a family moved, or if they did not live on a street where a face-block could be adequately approximated.

In the third component of the consent procedure, each youth was contacted during the initial parent visit, or at a follow-up visit, and asked if they would like to participate. If so, the interviewer reviewed the project assent form, obtained a signature, and either interviewed the youth then or set up a time for a future interview. So, even if parents signed written consent, only those youths that also assented on their own were included in the study. Of all youth that were approached, only one refused to participate and was dropped from the study. Neighbors were approached via a random sampling procedure and in the same manner as the primary caretaker although only verbal consent was needed for their participation. There were three requirements for a neighbor's participation. They had to be at least 18, agree to participate, and live on the same face-block as the youth.

Interviewer Training and Supervision

Upper-level, undergraduate psychology students received college credits for participating as part of an independent study course at the University. Initial interviewers

were trained for one and a half months prior to the data collection process in a class format which was similar in nature to that of a graduate level seminar. First, interviewers were introduced to seminal works in the area of Sense of Community and delinquency. Second, interviewers were responsible for reading and discussing the recent research on neighborhood studies that incorporated social disorganization theory. Third, interviewers were exposed to methodological issues in community research with an emphasis on interview techniques. Finally, and most importantly, interviewers reviewed the various survey instruments and practiced role-playing interviews until there was adequate consistency in their administration of the survey. Particular attention was paid to the youth interviews and how to build rapport, trust, and explain, in terms that the youths could understand, the meaning of confidentiality. Interviewers that were recruited after this training period received an abbreviated version of this training course.

In order to increase consistency across interviewers, a project staff member accompanied the interviewer for the first two interviews and provided support and feedback. Also, the project team developed an extensive interviewer training manual, which detailed the multiple issues that interviewers may confront, and strategies to overcome these potential pitfalls. During the data collection phase, interviewers attempted to conduct eight hours of interviews per week. Interviewers were required to go out on different days and times but were instructed to focus their time during the early evening hours and on weekends. Interviewers also kept a logbook that consisted of the dates, days, and times of attempted contacts in order to facilitate face-to-face contact of all households. Most importantly, no household was excluded because it was difficult to establish contact, regardless of the number of times an interviewer had to return.

Households with an invalid address (e.g., abandoned, family moved) were returned to the Lansing school district for the correct or updated address. Interviewers also met one time per week for a two-hour supervisory group meeting during the first month and a half of data collection. After this, interviewers met individually for 30-minute sessions with the Sense of Community in Lansing Neighborhoods project coordinator. Project staff was also always available to interviewers for help or feedback as often as needed. Finally, to assess interrater reliability, two interviewers coded approximately 6% of all interviews. Of a total of 868 items, only six were inconsistently marked, for an overall agreement rate greater than 99%.

Interview Procedure

Trained interviewers traveled to the youth's homes to conduct the interviews for the study. First, interviewers introduced themselves to a primary caretaker as a project member on the Sense of Community in Lansing Neighborhoods Project team. Each interviewer had a Michigan State University ID card displayed along with the SOC project logo. Interviewers provided a brief scripted introduction and description of the study prior to obtaining consent. Again, written consent was obtained from the primary caretaker, written assent from the youth, and verbal consent was obtained from the neighbor prior to interviews.

Face-Block Measures

This study differed from the majority of previous neighborhood effects studies based on social disorganization theory by conceptualizing and measuring neighborhood at the block-level and by directly measuring the proposed independent variables of neighborhood income and residential stability. The vast majority of previous studies

have utilized some combination of census indicators or other administrative data to derive these measures. In general, income or SES has been measured in numerous ways that are representative of social science research. Most prior studies have summed and standardized a number of measures within a census tract such as: percentage of families below the poverty line, percentage of residents employed in professional or managerial positions, percentage of college educated residents, average income or housing value, etc. Residential stability has most often been calculated as the proportion of families that have moved in the last five years in a census tract.

Another major difference in the current study was the way in which the independent variables were operationalized. The independent variables were conceptualized and measured on a level of advantage versus the traditional method of focusing on levels of disadvantage. It is argued that this modification was more than just a matter of semantics. Researchers need to be more sensitive to the communities under study as what is being investigated surround issues of safety, quality of life, and possible life outcomes of youth in these communities. By conceptualizing and measuring these neighborhoods in a positive manner, the dialogue can change from one focused on deficits to one focused on investigating and explaining the various strengths of these neighborhoods and the people who live within them.

Block Income

Income was individually calculated by dividing monthly income by the number of residents in the house. To obtain a block income measure, the parent and neighbor's income were simply averaged.

Block Stability

Individual scale scores (e.g., parent, neighbor) were calculated by summing four likert items such as: People move in and out of this block a lot – reverse coded. Block scores were obtained by averaging the parent and neighbor's total scale score. Respondents were asked to rate from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) their endorsement of the four items. Parent and neighbor responses were assessed together to obtain block-level reliability. Alpha was .84.

Sense of Community

This scale was created to measure the sense of community that exists on residential face-blocks within an urban community. The measure was created after an existing literature search on all of the sense of community measures in the literature, thus, many of the items were previously published in other scales. There were six items for this measure and respondents were asked to rate from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) their endorsement of the item. Examples include: People who live on this block feel connected to each other, (2) A feeling of community spirit exists among the residents on this block, and (3) People on this block have a voice regarding important community issues. Parents and neighbors of the targeted youth were asked to respond to this measure and their scores were averaged to construct a SOC score for the face-block of each youth. All negatively worded items were reverse coded prior to analyses. Alpha was .77 at the block-level.

Informal Social Control

Parent and neighbor's scores were averaged to obtain a block measure of informal social control. There were four items, which asked about the likelihood that

neighborhood residents would intervene, and respondents answered on a 5-point scale from 5 (very likely) to 1 (very unlikely). Each item was preceded by the following question "How likely are people on this face-block to intervene if ...": Children are fighting in front of your house and A child is taking something from a neighbor's house. Intervene was defined as actions taken to address the misbehavior such as confronting the youth directly, discussing the situation with their parents, or calling the police. Alpha was .81 at the block-level.

Official Crime & Delinquency

Officially reported crime and delinquency data was collected from the Lansing Police department. Using ArcView 3.2, the sums of specific delinquency violations were calculated to correspond to the minor delinquency, severe delinquency, and alcohol and drug use self-report measures from the youth outcome survey. To correct for moderate skew and kurtosis problems, all of these outcome variables were log transformed [LN(sum + 1)].

The crime dataset included all crimes which occurred in Lansing and resulted in arrest between 1995 and 1998. Prior crime and delinquency research has found that using a number of years increases the reliability of official police data (Peterson, Krivo, & Harris, 2000). Also, to approximate the size of typical face-blocks in the Lansing area, a 600-foot "buffer" was constructed around each youth's address. To create this buffer, GIS utilized each youth's address and drew a circle 600 foot in every direction around their home.

Thus, in addition to the block that the youth lived on, the buffer also included 600 feet perpendicular to the home and could include blocks behind and across from the

youth's home. While this extended the neighborhood beyond the youth's block, it was necessary for two reasons. First, there needed to be enough variance across the youth's blocks, and with such a small area, this was likely not to be the case. Second, many crimes occur at or very close to a street corner and are either coded that way or one block is randomly chosen. Thus, these incidents needed to be included for both blocks and the creation of buffers in this manner handled this potential problem. In cases where parts of these buffers or neighborhoods overlapped, incidents were summed for both neighborhoods.

Family Measures

Family Support and Monitoring

Five items were summed to create this scale. Higher scale scores indicate a greater level of support and monitoring by the youth's primary caregiver. Three questions asked about helping and supporting their son in school and 2 items asked whether or not they knew their son's friends and parents of those friends. Alpha was .69.

Individual Youth Measures

Affiliation with Delinquent Peers

There were three items which assessed each youth's affiliation with delinquent peers. Each item was preceded by the following question "How many of your friends ... ...": rob or bully others into giving them something; sell drugs. Youth answered on a 5-point scale from 5 (all of them) to 1 (none of them). Alpha was .69.

Youth Outcome Measures

There were three major elements to the youth outcome survey: conventional activity, self-reported delinquency, and alcohol and drug use. To correct for severe skew

and kurtosis, all of the self-reported delinquency outcome variables were log transformed [LN(scale + 1)]. The vast majority of these items were taken from the youth survey utilized in Elliot et al.'s (1996) study on neighborhood effects in Chicago and Denver, although there were some modifications to the delinquency and drug use sections.

Minor Delinquency – self-report

This component contained four items, all of which related to stealing. Three items related to stealing various amount of money (e.g., $50 or less, $100 or less) and one item asked about stealing something from a car. Alpha was .69.

Severe Delinquency – self-report

Two items constituted this component of self-reported delinquency. These two items were on the severe end of the scale and asked the participant if they had attacked someone in the past year, while the other item asked if they used force (may have included a weapon) to take money or things from someone else.

Alcohol and Drug Use

There were two items for the survey measure of alcohol and drug use. Each youth was asked the number of times in the past year that they consumed alcohol until they were intoxicated and the number of times in the past year they used marijuana.

Conventional Activity

This outcome variable was measured by three items that asked about the number of activities the youth participated in school, in the community, and youth religious activities. Alpha was .39.

Data Analyses

Since there were multiple indicators for the main constructs, and because the intent of the current study was to explore the various pathways by which disadvantaged neighborhoods impact youth, latent covariance analysis was utilized in a two-stage process to assess the main research questions of the study. The first phase of analysis required the theoretical formulation of a measurement model while the second phase consisted of assessing the relationships among the latent variables from the conceptual model as displayed in Figure 2 (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996).

The measurement model was evaluated by the overall fit or chi-square test, which should be nonsignificant to indicate adequate model fit. Since the chi-square is overly influenced by sample size (Gerbing & Anderson, 1992; Schumacker & Lomax, 1996), and since other fit indices produce a downward bias with small samples (Fan, Thompson, & Wang, 1999; Gerbing & Anderson, 1992), a number of additional fit indices were utilized to assess model fit. For both the measurement and structural models, the chi-square statistic will be presented along with the standardized RMR, RMSEA, and IFI. To indicate good model fit, the standardized RMR should be close to .08, RMSEA should be close to .06, and IFI should be around .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1998, 1999). Maximum likelihood estimation was used because it is the most common estimation method in structural equation modeling and performs well under poor conditions such as small sample size and excessive kurtosis, both of which characterize this study (Hoyle & Panter, 1995). Finally, to achieve best fit, modification indices and standardized residuals were also analyzed and changes were made to the model only if they corresponded to underlying substantive theory.

The second phase of data analysis consisted of applying the measurement model to a path model. The exogenous manifest variable of block income and latent exogenous variable block stability are hypothesized to have both direct and indirect effects on youth outcomes. Specifically, block stability will indirectly influence youth outcomes by facilitating greater levels of sense of community and informal social control as well as via its influence on family support and monitoring. Block income will indirectly influence youth outcomes by facilitating the ability of parents to supervise and support their children. Finally, family support and monitoring will also be evaluated as moderating the relationship between block stability, sense of community, and informal social control on youth outcomes. Due to the difficulty of assessing moderating relationships in structural equation modeling, these hypotheses will be evaluated by conducting regression analyses.

Analysis of the proposed structural models also employed the overall model of fit index or chi-square test and the indices described previously. The current analysis used a deductive approach in evaluating structural models by starting with a full conceptual model and testing alternative models using the chi-square difference test (Hoyle & Panter, 1995). However, only three paths were potentially removed from the conceptual model. Since the intent of the current study was to evaluate the direct and indirect effects of neighborhood advantage on youth outcomes, all indirect pathways were kept in the final structural model to facilitate comparisons of the model across the various youth outcomes. Thus, only the direct paths from block stability and block income to youth outcomes were removed from the conceptual model if they were insignificant and resulted in a non-significant chi-square difference test. To assess the hypothesis proposed by the contagion theory of neighborhood effects, a path from block stability to

affiliation with delinquent peers was added to the conceptual model. If this path was not significant and resulted in a non-significant chi-square difference, it was deleted from the model.

Table 3

Race/Ethnic Background of City's High School Students & Research Participants

Race/Ethnic Category	High School Students	Research Participants
White	45%	41%
African-American	36%	40%
Hispanic	12%	11%
Asian	7%	6%
Mixed Race	N.A.[a]	3%
Native American	1%	0%

Note. Race/Ethnic background of the students was obtained from the city's school district office of research and evaluation services. Percentages are rounded so can sum to over 100%.
[a]N.A. = Not available. Mixed race/ethnicity is not an option on school demographic forms.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Measurement Model

The first step in covariance structure analysis is the specification of a measurement model to assess both convergent and discriminant validity prior to assessing any structural relationships among the variables. Thus, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on all variables in the conceptual model to insure that indicators loaded on their respective latent variables. Since there were multiple outcome variables, only the measurement model for conventional activity will be presented although a confirmatory factor analysis was performed on each separate outcome variable.

The initial measurement model provided adequate fit statistics, minus the chi-square value [$\chi^2(260, N = 103) = 364$, $p = .000$, standardized RMR = .072, RMSEA = .063, IFI = .900.]. Utilizing the cutoff values previously discussed, the standardized RMR and RMSEA suggested adequate fit although the IFI was low and should be closer to a value of .95. By reviewing the standardized residual covariance matrix and modification indices, it was apparent that there were a couple of adjustments that could be made to improve model fit. Specifically, the modification indices suggested that correlating the error between two indicators of the same underlying construct would substantially reduce chi-square and improve fit.

For the second measurement model, the error of two of the indicators for family support and monitoring (FS4 and FS5) were correlated and this improved model fit [$\chi^2(259, N = 103) = 331$, $p = .002$, standardized RMR = .073, RMSEA = .052, IFI = .931]. These questions are distinctly related in that one asks about knowing their child's

friends while the other asks about knowing the parents of their child's friends. Thus, it made conceptual that these items would share error variance. While the fit indices showed improvement, the IFI was still a bit low and a review of the standardized residuals and modification indices suggested a further possible correlation among the errors of the indicators in another construct.

For sense of community, the modification indices suggested that the error for two of the action items could be correlated, action 2 and action 3. Again, there was both conceptual and empirical support for correlating the errors of these items. One of these items asked about people on the block feeling they have a voice in important community issues and the other asks about participation in block groups such as neighborhood watches and block clubs. These are the type of local informal and formal neighborhood groups created to address important community issues and provide residents with a voice and collective action in community affairs. Thus, in a theoretical sense, it again made sense that the errors of these two items would share variance. Empirically, the goodness of fit statistics improved and suggested good model fit when these errors were correlated in the third measurement model [$\chi^2(258, N = 103) = 319$, $p = .005$, standardized RMR = .073, RMSEA = .048, IFI = .942]. Please see Figure 3, which displays the final measurement model while the factor loadings for the measurement model are presented in Table 4. The factor loadings for the additional outcome variables are also included at the bottom of the table.

Structural Models

Conventional Activity

A two-stage process was utilized to derive the final structural model for all outcome variables. First, a structural equation model was conducted on the conceptual model as presented in Figure 2. In this first stage, a path from block stability to delinquent peers was also included to assess the contagion model of neighborhood effects, which suggests that delinquent peers are more abundant in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The second stage consisted of evaluating whether or not the direct effects of the exogenous variables (block stability and block income) and the contagion path should be retained for the final model. Thus, if any of the exogenous variables did not exert a significant direct path, or if the path from block stability to delinquent peers was not significant, these paths were set to 0 and a chi-square difference test was conducted to assess if these paths should stay in the final model. If the chi-square was not significant, these paths were removed for the final model. In order to facilitate comparison across the various youth outcome variables, all of the indirect paths were included in the final model.

The initial model for the outcome of conventional activity produced adequate fit indices (Please see Table 5) although five of the proposed paths were not significant. Regarding the paths that could be removed, the direct path from block stability to conventional activity was insignificant (.14) and the path from block stability to delinquent peers (-.07) was also insignificant. These paths were set to 0 and a chi-square difference test was conducted to evaluate if model fit worsened with their removal. The

chi-square difference test was insignificant, thus, these paths were deleted for the final model.

The final structural model for conventional activity is presented in Figure 4 [$\chi^2(288, N = 103) = 359$, $p = .003$, standardized RMR = .085, RMSEA = .05, IFI = .933]. Block income exerted a significant direct effect (.27*) with higher income neighborhoods leading to increased rates of conventional activity, which was measured as the number of school, community, and religious activities. Again, the direct impact of block stability was insignificant and removed from the model.

Indirectly, block stability exerts a significant positive influence on sense of community (.42*) and family support and monitoring (.35*). Sense of community significantly increases informal social control (.40*) but this indirect pathway does not have an impact on conventional activity (.20). The pathway from block stability to family support and monitoring significantly decreases affiliation with delinquent peers (-.41*) but again does not significantly impact rates of conventional activity (-.10). However, block stability does exert an indirect effect by increasing family support and monitoring, which directly increases conventional activity (.35*).

Overall, it was found that the residential stability of neighborhoods indirectly increased youth's participation in conventional activity through its influence on family support and monitoring. The income level of the neighborhood was also found to have a direct positive impact on conventional activity while its proposed indirect impact via family support and monitoring was not supported by the data. Finally, the path from block stability to affiliation with delinquent peers was not significant and removed from the model.

Minor Delinquency – self-report

The initial model for the outcome variable of self-report minor delinquency produced marginally adequate fit indices (Please see Table 6). The IFI was low, standardized RMR a bit high, although the RMSEA statistic suggested adequate fit. Regarding the direct effects of the exogenous and manifest variables, both block stability and income had little impact on minor delinquency. These direct paths were removed, along with the path from block stability to delinquent peers, due to an insignificant chi-square difference for the final model.

The final structural model for self-report minor delinquency is presented in Figure 5 [$\chi^2(314, N = 103) = 403$, $p = .000$, standardized RMR = .09, RMSEA = .05, IFI = .920]. As can be seen from the final model, the hypothesized direct impact of block income and stability did not hold for this outcome variable. Thus, both of these direct paths were removed. Indirectly, block stability has a substantial impact on both sense of community (.42*) and family support and monitoring (.33*) and ultimately influences minor delinquency through the latter pathway. As before, block stability facilitates the development of sense of community and this variable leads to higher levels of informal social control in the neighborhood. However, block stability's impact on minor delinquency is negligible as there is no relationship between informal social control and minor delinquency (.01). As in the case of conventional activity, block stability facilitates family support and monitoring which subsequently reduced youth's affiliation with delinquent peers (-.40*). Affiliation with delinquent peers is significantly positively associated with higher rates of minor delinquency (.46*); thus, block stability exerts a

strong indirect effect on this outcome via this pathway. The results also show that the direct path from family support and monitoring is not related to minor delinquency (.15).

Minor Delinquency – official

The initial model for the outcome variable of official minor delinquency produced marginally adequate fit indices (Please see Table 7) although there were still three insignificant pathways. For the final model, the direct path from block income was removed as well as the path from block stability to delinquent peers. The final structural model for official minor delinquency is presented in Figure 6 [$\chi^2(242, N = 103) = 306$, $p = .003$, standardized RMR = .088, RMSEA = .052, IFI = .938]. As can be seen from the final model, the direct path of block stability to minor delinquency was quite large and remained in the final model (-.46*) while block income was unrelated to official minor delinquency (-.09) and this path was removed from the model.

Indirectly, block stability increased sense of community and informal social control, which was associated with lower rates of official minor delinquency (-.14), although this path is not statistically significant. Block stability also substantially increased family support and monitoring levels but this path was not significantly associated with minor delinquency (-.03). Family support and monitoring did significantly decrease affiliation with delinquent peers (-.39*) but the pathway from delinquent peers to official minor delinquency was also insignificant (-.17). Finally, block income also does not exert an indirect effect on this outcome variable through its influence on family support and monitoring (.01). Thus, all of the indirect pathways from block stability and block income are ultimately not significantly related to official rates of minor delinquency.

Severe Delinquency – self-report

The final structural model for severe delinquency is presented in Figure 7, while the goodness of fit indices for all the structural runs are displayed in Table 8. The final model produced adequate goodness of fit statistics although the IFI is still a bit low [$\chi^2(263, N = 103) = 363$, $p = .000$, standardized RMR = .089, RMSEA = .061, IFI = .910]. The final structural model for severe self-reported delinquency includes direct paths from the exogenous variables of block stability and income and an indirect effect of block stability via its impact on family support and monitoring and association with delinquent peers. Similar to official minor delinquency, the direct impact of block stability remains and is quite large (-.45*). Thus, in the case of self-reported severe delinquency, the residential stability of a neighborhood significantly decreases this serious type of offending pattern. Equally strong, but a rather surprising finding, is the positive path coefficient between block income and severe delinquency (.43*), suggesting that higher income neighborhoods lead to higher rates of severe delinquency.

Block stability also indirectly decreased self-reported severe delinquency by promoting family support and monitoring, which in turn, decreased affiliation with delinquent peers (-.40*). Since affiliation with delinquent peers is positively associated with severe delinquency (.35*), block stability indirectly decreased severe delinquency. The pathway from block stability to sense of community and informal social control was significant, however, the paths from these variables did not significantly impact rates of severe delinquency (.04). Block income was also not significantly associated with family support and monitoring (.02), and thus, did not exert an indirect effect on self-reported severe delinquency.

Severe Delinquency - official

The final structural model for official severe delinquency is presented in Figure 8, while the goodness of fit indices for the structural runs are displayed in Table 9. The final model produced excellent goodness of fit statistics [$\chi^2(242, N = 100) = 293$, $p = .013$, standardized RMR = .087, RMSEA = .046, IFI = .950]. In regard to the direct effects of the exogenous variables, block stability retains a large and significant impact on officially reported severe delinquency (-.41*) while block income had no relationship to severe delinquency (-.04) and this path was dropped from the model. The path from block stability to affiliation with delinquent peers was also not significant and dropped from the final model.

Indirectly, the path from block income to family support and monitoring was also not significant and did not exert any indirect impact on official severe delinquency. Block stability has a substantial effect on severe delinquency via sense of community and informal social control as well as its impact on family support and monitoring and affiliation with delinquent peers. Block stability increases both sense of community and informal social control, which is negatively associated with official rates of severe delinquency (-.16*). Block stability also facilitates family support and monitoring and this variable significantly reduces affiliation with delinquent peers (-.39*). With official severe delinquency, however, the path from delinquent peers to severe delinquency is insignificant (-.17).

Alcohol and Drug Use – self-report

The final structural model is presented in Figure 9 and the goodness of fit indices are displayed in Table 10. The final model produced adequate goodness of fit statistics

[χ^2(265, N = 103) = 335, p = .002, standardized RMR = .086, RMSEA = .051, IFI = .936]. The direct paths from block stability to self-reported alcohol and drug use (-.08) and block income to self-reported alcohol and drug use (.03) were both insignificant and removed from the final model. The path from block stability to delinquent peers (-.07) was also insignificant and removed because the chi-square difference was not significant when all three of these paths were set to 0.

Block stability did exert an indirect effect on alcohol and drug use via its impact on family support and monitoring. Specifically, block stability increased family support and monitoring (33*), which significantly decreased youth's affiliation with delinquent peers (-.37*). In the case of self-reported alcohol and drug use, the path coefficient from affiliation with delinquent peers to alcohol and drug use was .72*, suggesting a very strong relationship between these two variables. Since family support and monitoring significantly reduces affiliation with delinquent peers, it has the potential to offset this strong relationship. While block stability also displayed a significant relationship with sense of community (.42*), this pathway did not have a significant impact on alcohol and drug use as informal social control was not significantly related to this outcome variable (-.08).

Alcohol and Drug Use – official

The final structural model for official alcohol and drug use is presented in Figure 10 while the goodness of fit indices are displayed in Table 11. The final model produced adequate goodness of fit indices [χ^2(242, N = 100) = 302, p = .006, standardized RMR = .086, RMSEA = .050, IFI = .941]. In terms of direct effects of the exogenous variables, block stability was significant and retained in the final model (-.38*) while block income

was not significant and deleted from the final model (-.12). The path from block stability to delinquent peers was not significant and also deleted from the final model.

Indirectly, block income's impact on family support and monitoring was not significant consequently this manifest variable did not exert any indirect effects on official youth alcohol and drug use. While block stability continued to have significant relationships with sense of community and family support and monitoring, these indirect pathways did not significantly impact official alcohol and drug use violations. Specifically, the path from informal social control to this outcome variable was .05 and the path from affiliation with delinquent peers was -.01.

The Moderating Effect of Family Support and Monitoring on Youth Outcomes

Family support and monitoring was also assessed as a potential moderating variable between informal social control and youth outcomes. However, for all outcome variables, family support and monitoring did not significantly moderate this relationship (Please see Table 12).

Figure 3

Measurement Model

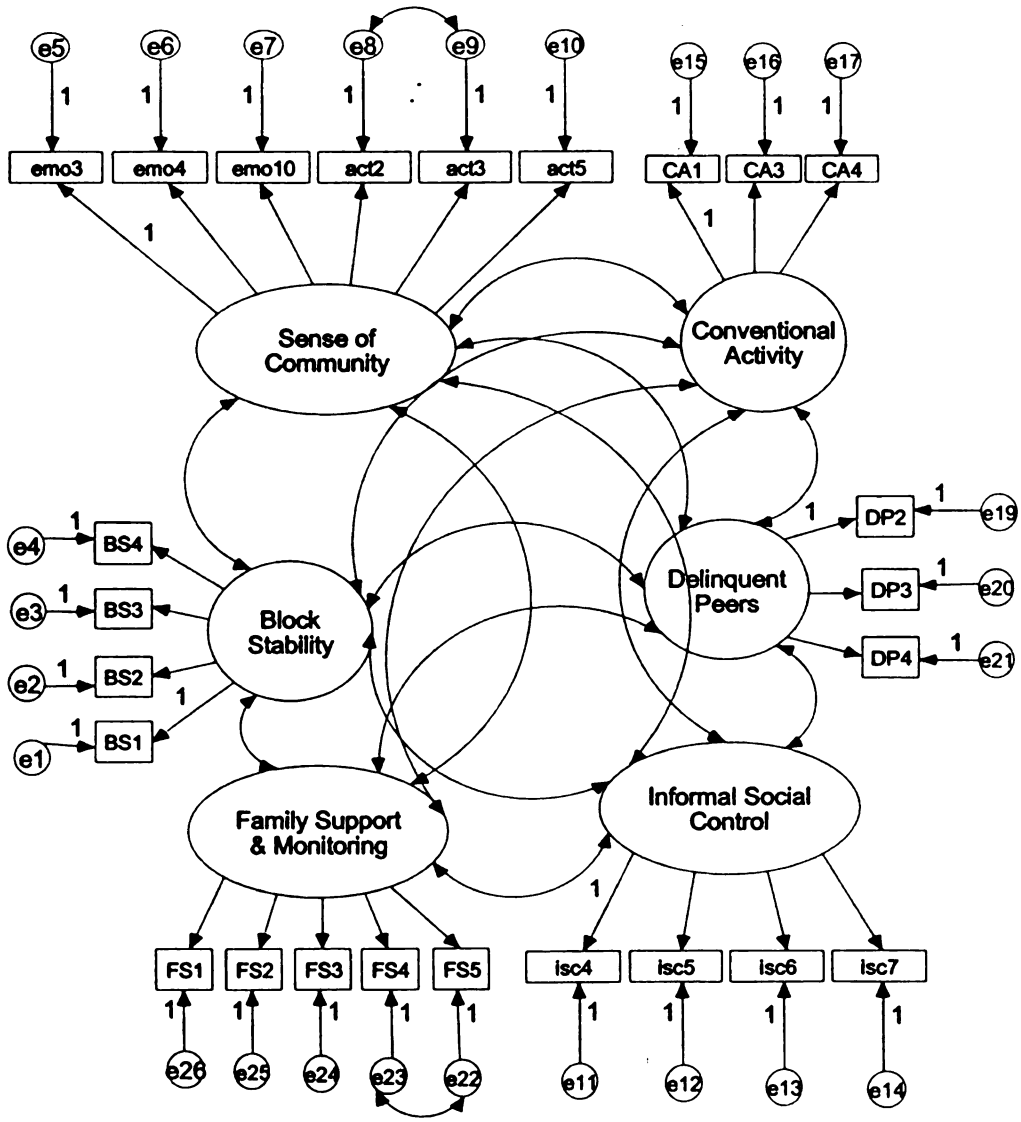


Table 4

Final Measurement Model Factor Loadings (N = 103)

Latent Construct	Indicators	Factor Loadings
Block Stability (BS)	BS1	.777
	BS2	.751
	BS3	.827
	BS4	.626
Sense of Community (SOC)	EMO3	.776
	EMO4	.728
	EMO10	.882
	ACT2	.674
	ACT3	.737
	ACT5	.741
Informal Social Control (ISC)	ISC4	.809
	ISC5	.732
	ISC6	.904
	ISC7	.832
Family Support and Monitoring (FSM)	FS1	.505
	FS2	.745
	FS3	.697
	FS4	.590
	FS5	.270
Delinquent Peers (DP)	DP2	.624
	DP3	.685
	DP4	.765
Conventional Activity (CA)	CA1	.655
	CA3	.441
	CA4	.349
Self-Reported Minor Delinquency	SRD5	.560
	SRD6	.853
	SRD7	.460
	SRD11	.692
Self-Reported Severe Delinquency	SRD16	.914
	SRD17	.534

Table 5

Goodness of Fit Indices & Chi-Square Difference Results for Conventional Activity

Model	χ^2	df	p value	Std. RMR	RMSEA	IFI	χ^2 Difference
Initial	359	286	.002	.085	.050	.932	
Final	359	288	.003	.085	.050	.933	.906, 2 p = .636

Figure 4

Final Structural Model for Conventional Activity

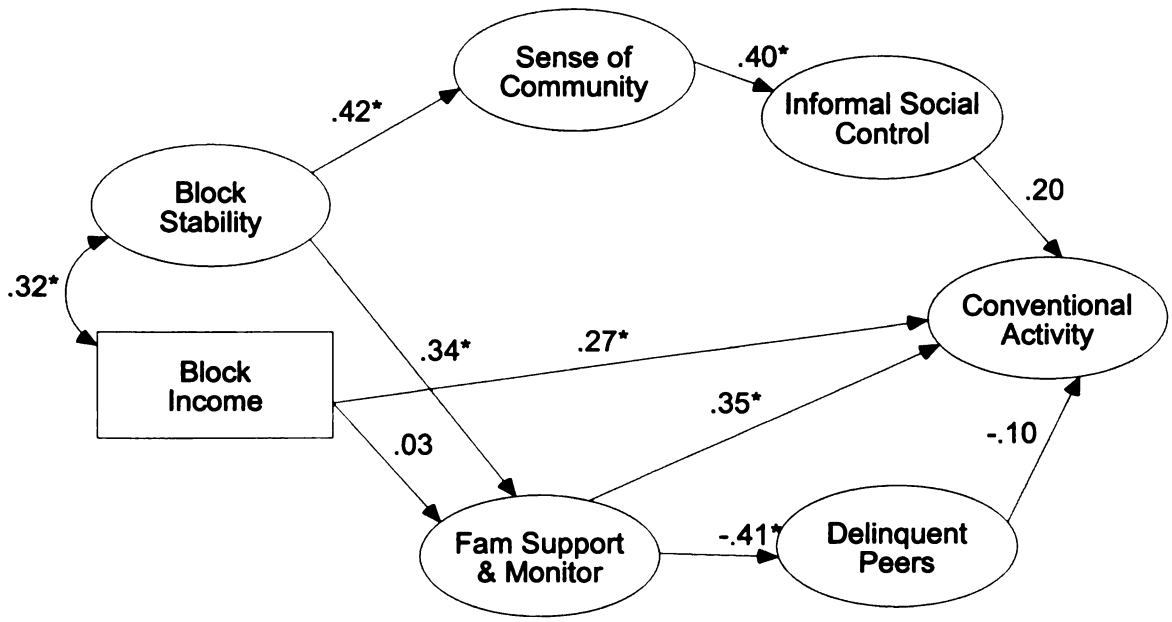


Table 6

Goodness of Fit Indices & Chi-Square Difference Results for Minor Delinquency self-report

Model	χ^2	df	p value	Std. RMR	RMSEA	IFI	χ^2 Difference
Initial	403	311	.000	.090	.054	.921	
Final	403	314	.000	.090	.05	.92	.401, 3 = .940

Figure 5

Final Structural Model for Minor Delinquency - self-report

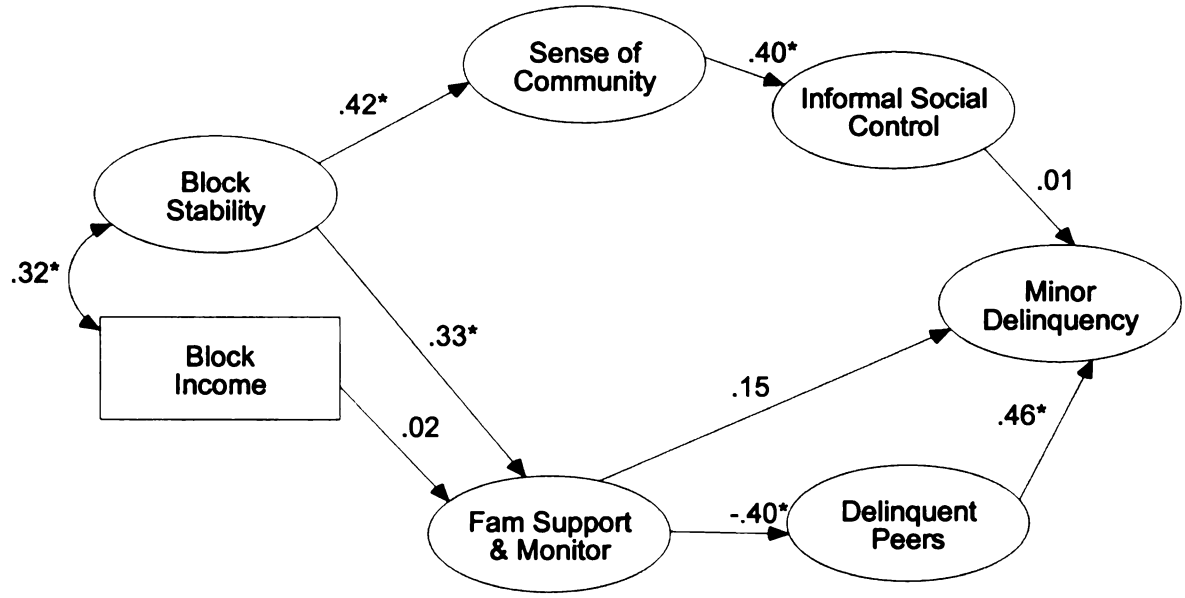


Table 7

Goodness of Fit Indices & Chi-Square Difference Results for Minor Delinquency - Official

Model	χ^2	df	p value	Std. RMR	RMSEA	IFI	χ^2 Difference
Initial	305	240	.003	.088	.052	.938	
Final	306	242	.003	.088	.052	.938	1.008, 2 = .604

Figure 6

Final Structural Model for Minor Delinquency - official

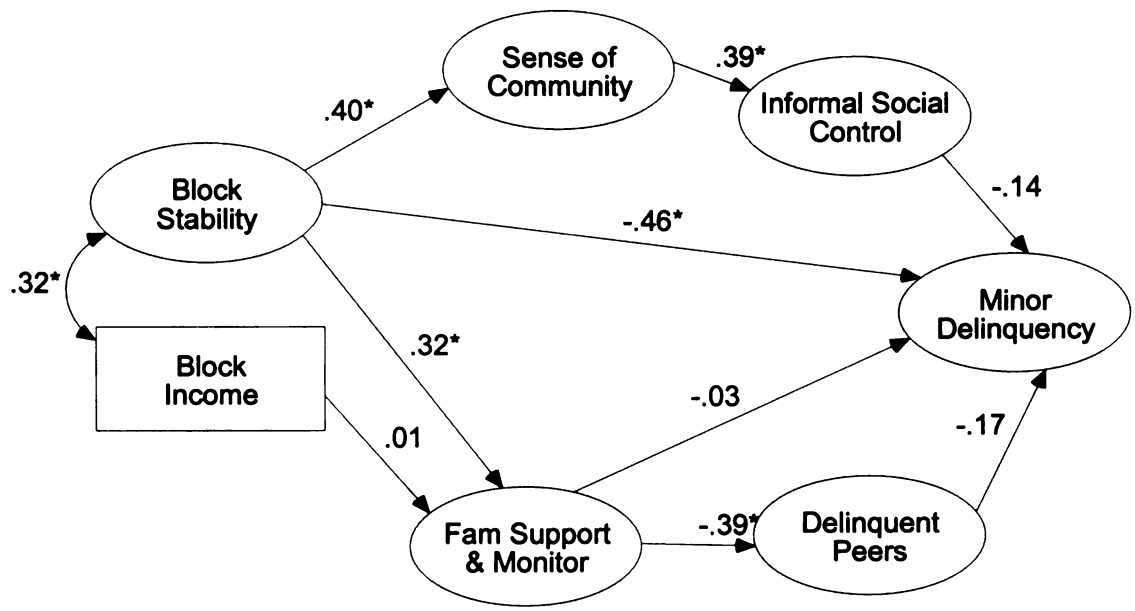


Table 8

Goodness of Fit Indices & Chi-Square Difference Results for Severe Delinquency - self-report

Model	χ^2	df	p value	Std. RMR	RMSEA	IFI	χ^2 Difference
Initial	363	262	.000	.089	.062	.909	
Final	363	263	.000	.089	.061	.910	.379, 1 = .538

Figure 7

Final Structural Model for Severe Delinquency - self-report

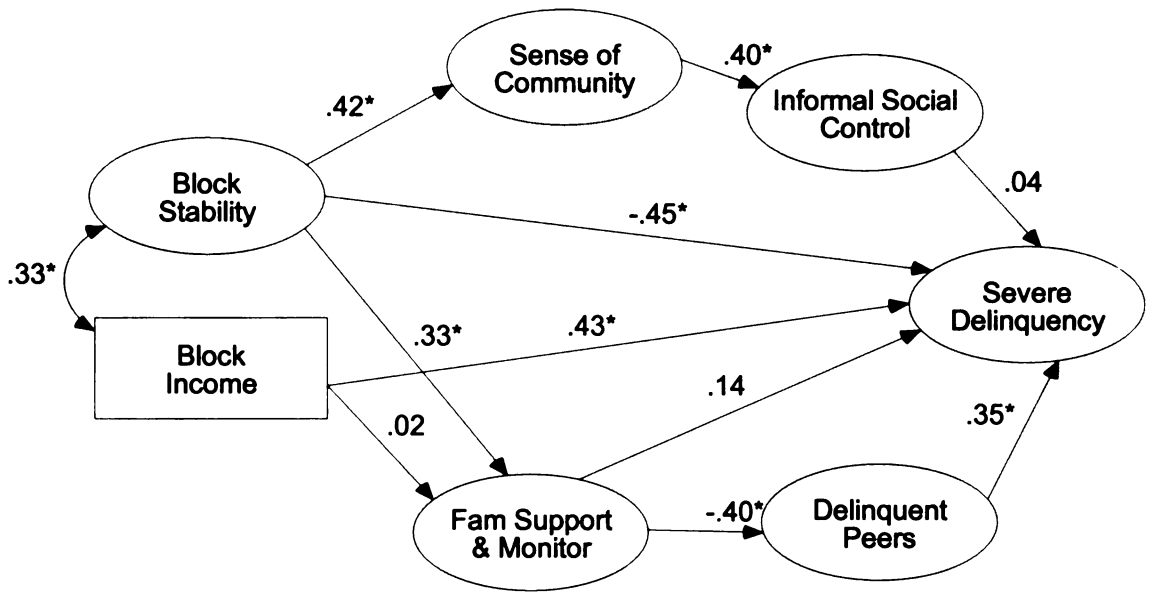


Table 9

Goodness of Fit Indices & Chi-Square Difference Results for Severe Delinquency - official

Model	χ^2	df	p value	Std. RMR	RMSEA	IFI	χ^2 Difference
Initial	293	240	.011	.088	.047	.949	
Final	293	242	.013	.087	.046	.950	.346, 2 = .841

Figure 8

Final Structural Model for Severe Delinquency - official

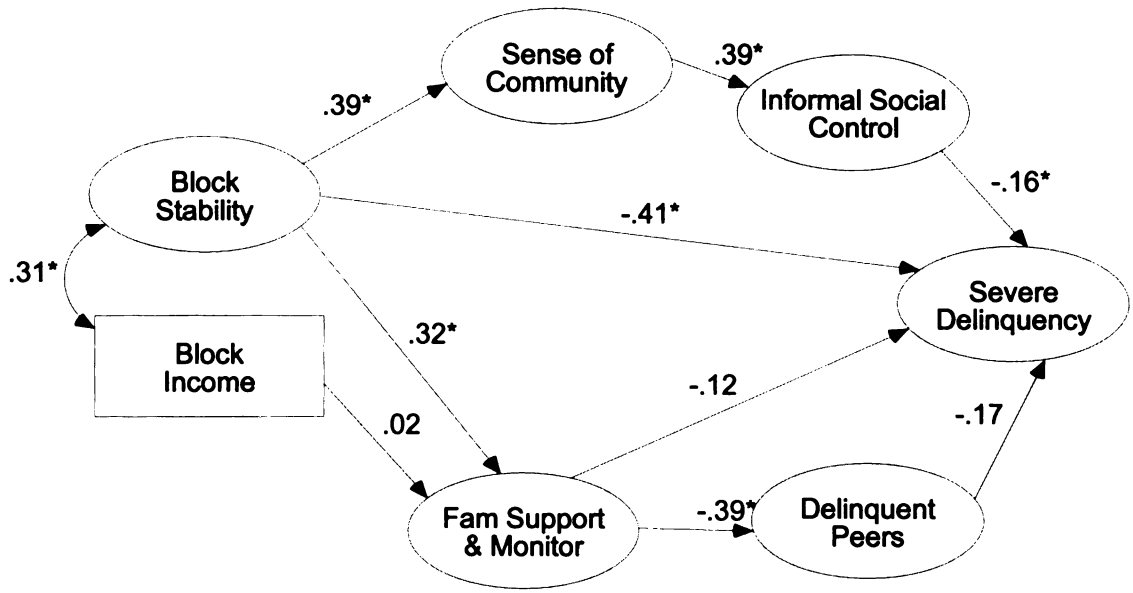


Table 10

Goodness of Fit Indices & Chi-Square Difference Results for Alcohol and Drug Use – self-report)

Model	χ^2	df	p value	Std. RMR	RMSEA	IFI	χ^2 Difference
Initial	334	262	.002	.086	.052	.934	
Final	335	265	.002	.086	.051	.936	.900, 3 = .825

Figure 9

Final Structural Run for Alcohol and Drug Use - self-report

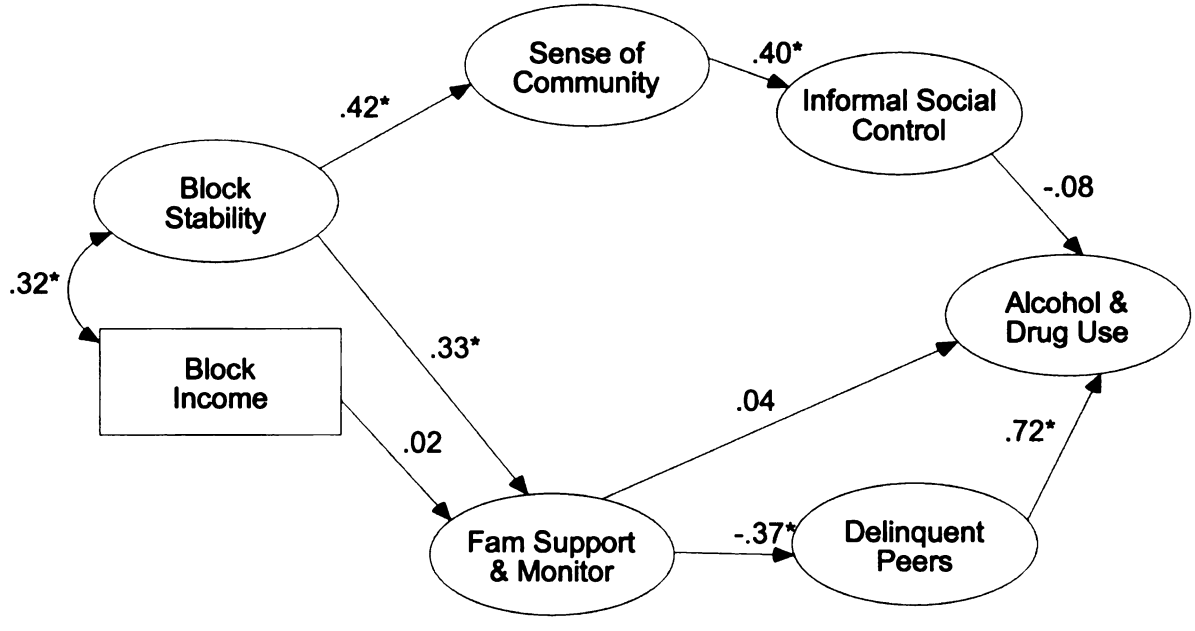


Table 11

Goodness of Fit Indices & Chi-Square Difference Results for Alcohol and Drug Use – official

Model	χ^2	df	p value	Std. RMR	RMSEA	IFI	χ^2 Difference
Initial	300	240	.005	.087	.051	.941	
Final	302	242	.006	.086	.050	.941	1.565, 2 = .457

Figure 10

Final Structural Run for Alcohol and Drug Use - official

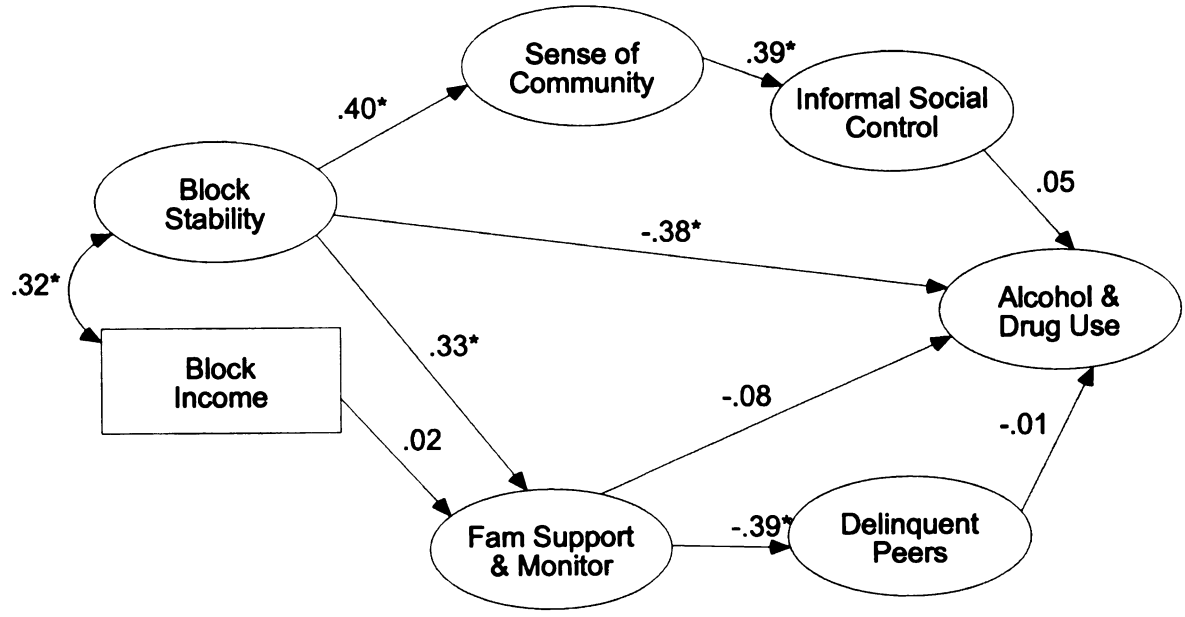


Table 12

Moderating Effect of Family Support and Monitoring on Youth Outcomes

Outcome Variable	Unstandardized Beta	T-Value	P-Value
Conventional Activity	.62	1.49	.14
FSM x ISC			
Minor Self-Reported Delinquency	.18	.89	.38
FSM x ISC			
Minor Official Delinquency	.14	.66	.51
FSM x ISC			
Severe Self-Reported Delinquency	.00	.40	.69
FSM x ISC			
Severe Official Delinquency	.21	1.76	.08
FSM x ISC			
Self-Reported Alcohol & Drugs	.12	.32	.75
FSM x ISC			
Official Alcohol and Drugs	-.00	-.86	.39
FSM x ISC			

Note. FSM = Family Support and Monitoring and ISC = Informal Social Control.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The Role of Neighborhood Stability

Overall, the most consistent finding from the current study was the strong role of neighborhood stability in the majority of the structural equation models - from conventional activities to minor and severe delinquency. Returning to the old-Chicago school and the original formulation of an ecological theory of urban dynamics from which social disorganization emerged, it was theorized that residential stability was the strongest predictor for the overall health of a community (Park et al., 1967). While most researchers ignored this structural feature and solely focused on the role of poverty (Byrne & Sampson, 1986; Kornhauser, 1978), there have been several important studies over the years that have documented how it is the compilation of negative structural characteristics, particularly residential turnover, that negatively impact communities and those who live there.

For instance, as discussed earlier, Bursik and Webb (1982) demonstrated that although data from 1940 to 1970 in Chicago seemed to disconfirm the basic tenets of social disorganization theory, it was only because the nature and pace of residential turnover changed dramatically during those decades. Once the federal government outlawed discriminatory housing practices in the late forties, residential turnover around the traditional black belt exploded. Real estate speculation, white flight to the suburbs, and intense and sometimes violent battles occurred throughout the South side of Chicago as African-Americans gained greater access to housing, despite the intense efforts of

many white ethnic neighborhoods (Hirsch, 1998). Once Bursik and Webb accounted for these factors, they found that delinquency patterns essentially stayed the same as they had in the past. In essence, rather than disconfirming social disorganization theory, this study validates its fundamental hypotheses by demonstrating the *vital* importance of neighborhood structural characteristics, particularly residential stability, on the youth outcome of delinquency.

Another seminal article that directed attention on the importance of the residential stability of a neighborhood comes from Kasarda and Janowitz's (1974) study on community attachment. In this study, they compared a model based on the work of Wirth and Toennies, which blamed increasing size and density - essentially the process of urbanization - as the causes of community dislocation to the ecological model of the old-Chicago school, which argued that residential stability was the key factor. The results supported the hypothesized importance of residential stability in community attachment and satisfaction. As these authors stated,

> First, location in communities of increased size and density does not weaken bonds of kinship and friendship. Instead, length of residence is a central and crucial factor in the development of these social bonds. Second, location in communities of increased size and density does not result in substitution of secondary for primary and informal contacts ... Third, increased population size and density does not significantly weaken local community sentiments. But community sentiments are compatible with desire to avoid the negative features of local community life" (p. 339).

Thus, the finding of the primary importance of block stability from the current study supports previous research and has many implications for community-based programs

and initiatives designed to decrease negative youth outcomes. In fact, the results from the current study suggest that efforts to assist children and youth in disadvantaged neighborhoods will have little success if they do not address neighborhood structural factors, which have both strong direct and indirect effects on youth outcomes.

Official Delinquency vs. Self-Reported Delinquency

Social disorganization developed in the early to middle part of the twentieth century, thus, this model was extensively utilized in explaining official records of crime and delinquency since self-report data was not collected during this time period (Bursik, 1988; Shaw & McKay, 1942). Since the development of victimization surveys, there has been perpetual debate in the field of criminology as to what self-report and official crime and delinquency data actually measure since research has found conflicting results depending which source of data is utilized. Self-report data has been criticized as equating minor delinquency with severe delinquency (Hindelang et al., 1979), while many studies have shown a strong correlation between official data and individual and neighborhood socioeconomic status suggesting that there is substantial bias in those individuals who are apprehended and enter the criminal justice system (Hagan, Gillis, & Chan, 1978; Hindelang et al., 1979; Menard, 1987; Sampson, 1986a). In fact, some research has even found a negative correlation between self-report and official measures of the same crime (O'Brien, 1983).

The results from this study showed that there was no relationship between self-report and official minor delinquency (-.08). In the case of official and self-report alcohol and drug use, there was also an insignificant relationship (.04) while a significant positive relationship was found in the case of severe delinquency (.19*). Thus, as delinquency

moves from relatively minor infractions such as stealing to more serious delinquency, the relationship between self-report and official data increases and becomes significant. While this is a good finding in that it suggests the measures are significantly related in the case of less frequent and more severe delinquency, nevertheless, the correlation was small suggesting that there is still a wide discrepancy between the two measures. Furthermore, similar to recent updated systemic models of social disorganization (Simcha-Fagan & Schwartz, 1986), the current study found that the social disorganization model "fit" the data better when official verses self-report data was analyzed. For instance, in the case of self-reported severe delinquency, the path from neighborhood stability to sense of community, informal social control, and this outcome variable was not significant. But, in the case of official severe delinquency this indirect pathway was significant.

Since self-report measures have been utilized in delinquency research, there have been many competing theories proposed to explain the different findings between self-report and official data. First, the disparity could suggest that police target neighborhoods with higher levels of residential instability and lower incomes under the assumption that poorer and less stable neighborhoods contain more "delinquents". Thus, by increasing their presence and time in these neighborhoods they subsequently witness and arrest more people for crime and delinquency. Second, it could suggest that more stable neighborhoods with higher incomes facilitate the development of social networks, sense of community, and neighborhood norms, which result in increased informal social control in the neighborhood. In other words, in neighborhoods where people know each

other and each other's kids, it is more likely that they will directly intervene when they see misbehavior, or at least, inform the parents of the youth involved.

Thus, there is less need for formal institutions such as the police to intervene since the community is able to reduce behavior that can lead to serious injury or victimization. Whereas, in neighborhoods with people constantly moving in and out, people do not have the time or the incentive to get to know each other, reach consensus on what is and what is not acceptable behavior in the community, and then act to stop behavior that violates community norms. Thus, these neighborhoods rely heavily on institutions such as the police department to institute and maintain minimal levels of social control and safety in the neighborhood. While elements of both theories are probably valid, it is argued that the latter scenario provides a better explanation for the significant negative impact of informal social control on official severe delinquency and lack of impact on self-report severe delinquency found in the current study.

Therefore, while police departments are often heavily criticized for bias and discriminatory enforcement, they may simply be responsible for enforcing laws that detrimentally impact residents of disadvantaged communities. Nevertheless, whether intended or not, since residents living in these disadvantaged neighborhoods are overwhelmingly minorities, the net result is discriminatory in nature (Bishop & Frazier, 1996; Donziger, 1996; Miller, 1996; Wordes, Bynum, & Corley, 1994). For example, even though the rates of drug use are essentially equivalent among racial and ethnic groups, and Whites constitute the majority of the U.S. population, ninety percent of the adult prison admissions in 1993 for drug offenses were either Black or Hispanic (Donziger, 1996).

As concentrated levels of poverty increased throughout the eighties and nineties along with it came concomitant social problems such as crime and delinquency, drug abuse, and child maltreatment (Coulton et al., 1995). At the same time, funding for all components of the criminal justice system increased dramatically throughout the eighties and nineties. For instance, throughout the 1980s, police expenditures increased by 416%, court system by 585%, prosecution and legal services by 1,109%, and corrections by 990% and by the mid-1990s the United States budget for the crime control industry exceeded $200 billion (Miller, 1996). In fact, the United States now has the highest rate of incarceration per capita among the Western democracies. Thus, rather than dealing directly with the structural and economic antecedents of crime and drug use, the United States instead has utilized the criminal justice system to deal with its social problems.

The result of such a policy has been disastrous for minorities. While African-American juvenile comprise 15% of the juvenile population, they account for 26% of arrests, 45% of delinquency cases involving detention, and predominate among youth sent to adult prison (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). Moreover, the substantial increase in funding for the prison industrial complex meant less funding was available for progressive polices and programs such as drug prevention and treatment and community development initiatives.

Overall, rather than simply blaming the police or those who live in disadvantaged communities, the results of the current study and past research suggest the need for alternatives to aggressive police enforcement in disadvantaged neighborhoods. In fact, the act of removing such a large percentage of the male population in disadvantaged

neighborhoods most likely increases the instability and disorder in the community, thereby, ultimately increasing crime and delinquency.

Measuring Community Social Organization

As discussed in the introduction, there have been many different types of measures used to assess the "village-like" potential for communities. Some studies have looked at the number of contacts or weak ties in the community or the number of residents participating in neighborhood organizations, while others have looked at the level of informal social control. Perhaps the most comprehensive measure utilized to date has been the construct of collective efficacy employed by Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls (1997). This measure combined both items on social connection among residents and willingness to intervene to stop youth misbehavior in the neighborhood and was defined as "... a task-specific construct that relates to the shared expectation and mutual engagement by adults in the active support and social control of children" (as cited in Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999, p.635).

However, it has been argued and modeled in this study that the mediating variable of SD theory, community social organization, and informal social control are distinct variables. In order to correctly measure the process of community organization and disorganization that Shaw and McKay described, it is necessary to model and measure all of the social and behavioral processes involved. One contribution of the current study is that it further delineates the indirect path from neighborhood structural disadvantage to community social organization, informal social control, and youth outcomes. Recent research has also demonstrated that the relationship between neighborhood structural characteristics, neighborhood social characteristics, informal social control, and crime is

much more complex than traditionally modeled. To appropriately represent this relationship, a nonrecursive model seems necessary since crime and delinquency certainly impact neighborhood social and structural characteristics as well as the willingness of residents to intervene (Bellair, 2000; Brower et al., 1983; Warner & Rountree, 1997).

For instance, crimes such as burglary and other property offenses may increase neighborhood surveillance and intervention while more violent crime such as assault and battery may reduce intervention out of a fear of retaliation (Korbin & Coulton, 1997). Thus, there are several valid reasons to replace, or, at least augment the current measures of updated systemic social disorganization models, which have relied too heavily on behavioral measures such as informal social control. Moreover, the relationship among neighborhood structural characteristics, social characteristics, and willingness to intervene is complex and often depends on the context of communities under study. Thus, all of the important structural, social, and behavioral variables proposed by social disorganization theory must be included in order to completely understand the complex and reciprocal relationship among these variables which ultimately result in differential community and youth outcomes such as delinquency.

The Indirect Effect of Neighborhood Stability via Family Support & Monitoring

While the majority of neighborhood effect studies have concentrated their efforts at understanding the relationship between community social organization and youth outcomes, there are several additional pathways through which neighborhood disadvantage can have a deleterious impact on youth outcomes. In terms of the lower part of the conceptual model (See Figure 2), the indirect path from neighborhood stability

to family support and monitoring was consistently significant and usually in the mid-thirties (e.g., .35* in the case of conventional activity). For this outcome variable, the direct path from family support and monitoring to conventional activity was also significant (.39*). More often though, there was not a direct and significant relationship between family support and monitoring and the outcome variables. Usually, the relationship between neighborhood stability, family support and monitoring, and youth outcomes was much more complicated. With the delinquency outcomes, neighborhood stability significantly increased family support and monitoring, which subsequently significantly decreased affiliation with delinquent peers. This is an important relationship because affiliation with delinquent peers significantly increased negative youth outcomes, particularly with self-report data. For example, in the case of self-reported alcohol and drug use the path from delinquent peers to this outcome variable was extremely strong (.71*).

Thus, stable neighborhoods facilitated positive parenting strategies, which were able to reduce affiliation with delinquent peers, and consequently, the strong role of this variable on negative outcomes like self-reported alcohol and drug use. Previous neighborhood effects studies which also incorporated parental monitoring and support measures found that neighborhood disadvantage significantly disrupted parenting and resulted in increased negative youth outcomes (Brodsky, 1996; Larzelere & Patterson, 1990; Patterson & Dishion, 1985; Sampson & Laub, 1994; Simons et al., 1996). There also have been a number of studies that found neighborhood disadvantage negatively impacted parenting through other indirect pathways such as increasing family stress and conflict (Paschall & Hubbarb, 1998), increasing erratic and harsh discipline (Griffin et

al., 1999; Sampson & Laub, 1994), decreasing maternal warmth and responsiveness (Klebanov et al., 1994), and decreasing parents' sense of efficacy (Elder et al., 1995). Taken together, these studies support the multiple indirect pathways neighborhood disadvantage detrimentally impact parents and ultimately their children. As models of neighborhood disadvantage become more complex and are not simply limited to one or two parenting variables in a narrow methodological approach (Florsheim, Tolan, & Gorman-Smith, 1998; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1991), the findings can inform the development of prevention and intervention programs which account for the complex ways disadvantaged neighborhoods directly and indirectly impact parents and parenting practices.

The role of Neighborhood Income

Another consistent finding throughout most of the youth outcome variables was the rather negligible role of neighborhood income. Contrary to the proposed hypothesis, block income did not indirectly impact any assessed outcome variable through its influence on family support and monitoring. It was hypothesize that more advantaged neighborhoods would have more youth sponsored activities and institutions and that this would facilitate parents in supporting and monitoring their adolescent's activities. However, this path was insignificant in every structural model.

As far as a direct impact, neighborhood income only produced a significant path for the outcome variable of conventional activity (.29*) and self-reported severe delinquency (.43*). As discussed in the limitations section, this may be the result of using block income instead of the more traditional and comprehensive measure of socioeconomic status. However, given the paucity of findings for income and large role of neighborhood

stability, it seems that this explanation cannot totally justify the results of the current study. Another possible reason for the lack of direct and indirect effects for block income may lie in the structural composition of the sampled city. Unlike the majority of neighborhood effects studies, the current study was conducted in a mid-size, Midwestern city that does not have large pockets of either extreme wealth or extreme poverty. Given that many neighborhood effect studies purposely oversample residents on opposite ends of neighborhood structural characteristics such as income to increase and capitalize on variance (Sampson, 1993a), the lack of disparity throughout the city of Lansing may be a major reason for the lack of finding many of the hypothesized direct and indirect effects for block income. As a recent comprehensive literature review on neighborhood effects found (Levanthal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000), national and multisite studies have much greater sampling variability and the higher intercorrelations among neighborhood dimensions in city-based studies such as this one lead to higher probability of a null finding. Or, as other studies have hypothesized, there may be also be a tipping point that structural factors must exceed to exert an impact on youth outcomes (Simons et al., 1996). Nevertheless, there were many significant findings and the neighborhood structural and social characteristics from the current study are certainly more representative of medium-sized cities than the majority of neighborhood effects studies, which are usually completed in the largest U. S. cities.

Moderating Role of Family Support and Monitoring

The current study hypothesized that family support and monitoring would act as both a mediator and moderator. The results showed that neighborhood advantage facilitated parental support and monitoring, which decreased affiliation with delinquent

peers and resulted in less negative youth outcomes. In this manner, family support and monitoring transmitted much of the influence of neighborhood advantage on youth outcomes. However, it was hypothesized that family support and monitoring could act as a moderating variable in two different ways.

First, as discussed in previous research (Furstenberg, 1993; Sampson, 1993a; Sampson et al., 1999), parental supervision, monitoring, and other practices are strongly influenced by the level of community social organization. In neighborhoods characterized by consensual norms and a sense of community, parents can count on fellow residents to supervise and intervene when their youth are misbehaving in the neighborhood. Thus, their own level of supervision and monitoring is supported when they are not with their child. In this manner, it was hypothesized that the synergistic effect of the interaction between these two sources of supervision and social control, neighborhood-level and parental-level, could significantly increase positive and decrease negative youth outcomes.

Second, it was also hypothesized that parents in neighborhoods with a lack of norms and supportive adults often utilize extremely individualistic parenting strategies where they constantly monitor and supervise their youth and purposely restrict their child's interaction with others in the local community. By utilizing such community-bridging strategies (Brodsky, 1996; Furstenberg, 1993; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1997; Jarret, 1995; Jarret, 1997) family and parenting practices can be utilized to offset the negative impact of neighborhood structural and social disadvantage. However, the results indicated that family support and monitoring did not moderate the relationship between informal social control and youth outcomes in any of the outcome variables.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study that warrant caution in interpreting the results. First and foremost, this was a cross-sectional study with a relatively small sample size for structural equation analysis. Thus, this study needs to be replicated with a larger longitudinal sample to truly understand the impact of neighborhood effects on youth outcomes. Second, some of the outcome variables suffered from moderate to severe skewness and kurtosis problems. While those variables which were problematic were log transformed prior to conducting analyses, it must be acknowledged that such distributional properties have the potential to bias SEM results. To reduce the potential for errors, maximum likelihood estimation was utilized since this estimation method is robust to skew and kurtosis problems. Third, income was utilized as an independent variable instead of socioeconomic status, thus interpretation of the lack of impact of neighborhood income on youth outcomes must be interpreted with caution. Finally, this study included individual-level, family-level, and neighborhood-level variables. Since only two households per block were utilized to create many of the neighborhood-level variables, multilevel modeling procedures such as hierarchical linear modeling could not be utilized for data analysis. Thus, individual and family-level variables could not be partialled from neighborhood variables and the strong finding of the neighborhood variables with official data may be confounded by the fact that both were measured at the neighborhood-level.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study demonstrated the strong direct and multiple indirect ways neighborhood context impacts youth outcomes. As neighborhood effects models become more sophisticated, these pathways will be further delineated and have important implications for intervention programs. Empirical research can be used to guide multilevel prevention and intervention programs to target the most important and influential individual, family, and community-level variables. As the current study showed, programs will not be successful if they do not incorporate the multiple influences in adolescent's lives. For instance, it was demonstrated that peers play a very strong role in the self-reported use of alcohol and drugs. In practice, typical delinquency and drug use prevention programs usually simply target youth and implement educational curriculums at school or attempt to provide supervised after-school activities, a mentor, etc. and neglect other important contextual variables such as family support and monitoring, sense of community and informal social control, as well as the importance of safe and stable neighborhoods. The results of the current study showed that while peers play a strong role in alcohol and drug use, increased parental monitoring and support can significantly decrease this effect. Furthermore, it was found that family support and monitoring could be significantly increased by fostering the development of safe and stable neighborhoods, which would then further reduce alcohol and drug use. Thus, there are many different foci for prevention and intervention programs to target and the strong

link between neighborhood structural and social characteristics, and ultimately youth outcomes, suggests the need to go beyond the individual and family-level.

By working with local residents, neighborhood-level intervention programs that are culturally and contextually valid can be developed and implemented to create safe and supportive neighborhoods. Moreover, it is argued that programs which target the multiple ecological transactions among and between individuals, families, and their communities will be better able to create and sustain positive social change by influencing the multiple factors responsible for youth outcomes.

Another implication from the current study is that the field of neighborhood effects should no longer be constrained to administratively defined neighborhoods such as census tracts and census block groups. In fact, a block-level conceptualization of neighborhood offers many advantages, the greatest of which are the identifiable and objective boundaries of urban blocks. However, while the current study found support for a block-level conceptualization of neighborhood, it is readily acknowledged that not all researchers will want to or should focus on such a small conceptualization of neighborhood effects. For instance, block-level dynamics may be more salient for young children than for adolescents, who are no longer restricted to the immediate neighborhood and have friends and participate in activities throughout a much larger geographic area. Or, block-level dynamics may be more important for some outcomes than others. However, the main point is that individual blocks can be aggregated together to create larger neighborhoods while the reverse is not true. Thus, by incorporating spatial analysis software such as geographic information systems, the field is no longer limited to a number of pre-defined and extremely large neighborhood conceptualizations

(e.g., census tract). In the current study, a 600-foot buffer was created around each youth's home to approximate a block-level conceptualization of neighborhood but there is no reason that this buffer could not have been extended to a quarter mile to represent a larger neighborhood conceptualization. Perhaps this would have made a difference in the strength of the various pathways for certain outcome variables such as drinking and drug use, which are more likely to happen a greater distance from home than the other outcome variables. In sum, the flexibility offered by software programs such as GIS will help the field of neighborhood effects better understand the various levels or conceptualizations of community and how they may differentially impact youth and community outcomes.

Appendices

Appendix A

Indicators of Latent Constructs

Construct	Indicator
Block Stability	
BS1	The majority of residents on this block rent their houses.
BS2	When people come to live on this block, they tend not to stay here long.
BS3	People move in and out of this block a lot.
BS4	I would like to live on this block for at least another five years.
Sense of Community	
Em3	People who live on this block think of themselves as a community.
Em4	People on this block feel connected to each other.
Em10	A feeling of community spirit exists among the residents on this block.
A2	People on this block have a voice regarding important community issues.
A3	People on this block participate in neighborhood organizations like block groups, neighborhood watches, neighborhood associations, etc.
A5	People on this block never do things to improve the block.
Informal Social Control	*How likely are people on this face-block to intervene if ...*
I4	Children are f fighting in front of your house.
I5	A child is taking something from a neighbor's house.
I6	A child is throwing stones at another child or pet.
I7	A child has a weapon.
Family Support & Monitoring	
FS 1	I help _____ with his homework every night.
FS 2	I help my child with problems they are having at school.
FS 3	I attend meetings concerning my child's school and education.
FS 4	I know _____'s friends.
FS 5	I know the parents of my child's friends.
Affiliation with Delinquent Peers	*How many of your friends ...*
DP2	Break into buildings.
DP3	Sell drugs
DP4	Use marijuana

Appendix B

Correlation Matrix

	Income	Block Stability	Sense of Comm.	Informal Social Control	Family Support & Monitor	Delinq. Peers	Conventional Activity	SRD Minor	ORD Minor	SRD Severe	ORD Severe	SRD Alcohol & Drugs	ORD Alcohol & Drugs
Income	--												
Block Stability	.28**	--											
Sense of Community	.12	.35**	--										
Informal Social Control	.26**	.31**	.37**	--									
Family Support & Monitoring	.12	.32**	.20*	.14	--								
Delinquent Peers	-.06	-.15	.10	.09	-.22*	--							
Conventional Activity	.26**	.29**	.17*	.22*	.34**	-.18*	--						
SRD Minor	-.01	-.01	.19*	.04	.00	.39**	-.02	--					
ORD Minor	-.24**	-.43**	-.21*	-.31**	-.24**	-.07	-.18*	-.08	--				
SRD Severe	.09	-.33**	-.07	-.03	-.18*	.29**	-.14	.18*	.16	--			
ORD Severe	-.20*	-.42**	-.13	-.31**	-.27**	-.06	-.15	-.02	.72**	.19*	--		
SRD Alcohol & Drugs	-.07	-.14	.02	-.01	-.17*	.51**	-.11	.58**	.14	.24**	.08	--	
ORD Alcohol & Drugs	-.22*	-.36**	-.12	-.10	-.20*	.09	-.17*	-.11	.60**	.07	.49**	.04	--

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