
Crime and Community:
Dealing with Disorder and Drug Markets
in Chicago Neighborhoods

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The Social and Policy Context

- Concern about violence, drugs and street crime (1970s-1980s)
 - “Tough on crime” approach
 - Falling crime from mid 1990s until now
 - recognition of costs of mass incarceration
 - experiments with community approaches
 - Opening for more community-based and preventive approaches in future
 - benefits for low income and minority urban neighborhoods
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How Can Social Science Contribute?

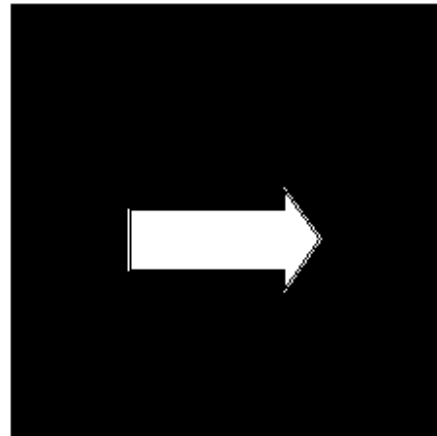
- Provide a theoretical framework for understanding community based crime-prevention
 - Must specify:
 - Factors that determine communal capacity to guide people away from crime
 - Specific mechanisms through which guidance is transmitted (Hope 1995)
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Early Social Disorganization Theory

Shaw and McKay (1942)

Neighborhood Structural
Characteristics

Residential Instability
Concentrated Poverty
Immigrant Concentration



Juvenile Delinquency

- Assumes healthy neighborhoods are “urban villages”
 - Strong ties are the key to social control
- Criticized for imposing an idealized vision of rural life

Hunter's Model of Community Control (1985)

Level of Control

Private

Parochial

Public

Dyadic Interactions
Between:

Indirectly Mediated by:

Triadic Interactions,
Directly Mediated by:

Collective Action by:

In Order to:

Level of Attachment:

	Friends & Kin	Neighbors	Citizens
	Sentimental Ties	Collective/Communal Interests	Legal Rights and Responsibilities
	Representatives of Friendship/Kinship Networks	Representatives of Community Organizations (including Gangs)	Police/ Other State Representatives
	Friendship/Kinship Networks	Community Organizations/ Neighbor Networks	Community Organizations/ Neighbor Networks
	Directly Intervene in Local Events	Directly Intervene in Local Events	Secure State Support for Intervention

Strong

Moderate

Weak

Collective Efficacy Theory

- Multiple measures, high quality data, sophisticated statistical techniques
 - Measures “collective efficacy” – “resident willingness and ability to intervene local events to promote order and safety”
 - Characterized as intervention for “the common good”
 - Strong confirmation of disorganization theory
 - Sampson et al (1997)
 - Structural characteristics → collective efficacy
 - Structural characteristics → violence rates
 - Collective Efficacy mediates relationship between structural characteristics and violence
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Collective Efficacy Measure (Sampson *et al* 1997)

- 5 Social Control items

- How likely is it that neighbors would intervene if:

- children were skipping school and hanging out on a street corner?
 - children were spray painting graffiti on a local building?
 - a child was showing disrespect to an adult?
 - someone was being beaten or threatened?
 - The local fire station was going to be closed down by the city?

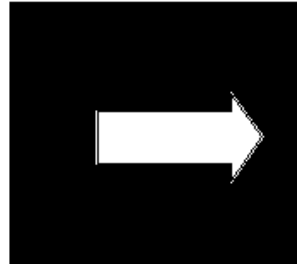
- 5 Social Cohesion Items

- Rate extent to which: people are willing to help their neighbors; neighborhood is close-knit; neighbors can be trusted; neighbors generally get along with each other; neighbors share the same values?
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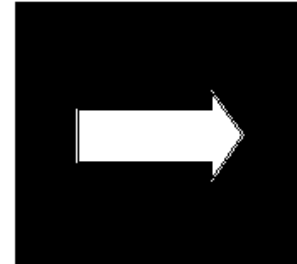
Challenging the “Urban Village” Assumption

Neighborhood Structural Characteristics

Residential Instability
Concentrated Poverty
Immigrant Concentration



Collective Efficacy



Crime and Violence
Perceived Violence
Homicide
Violent Victimization

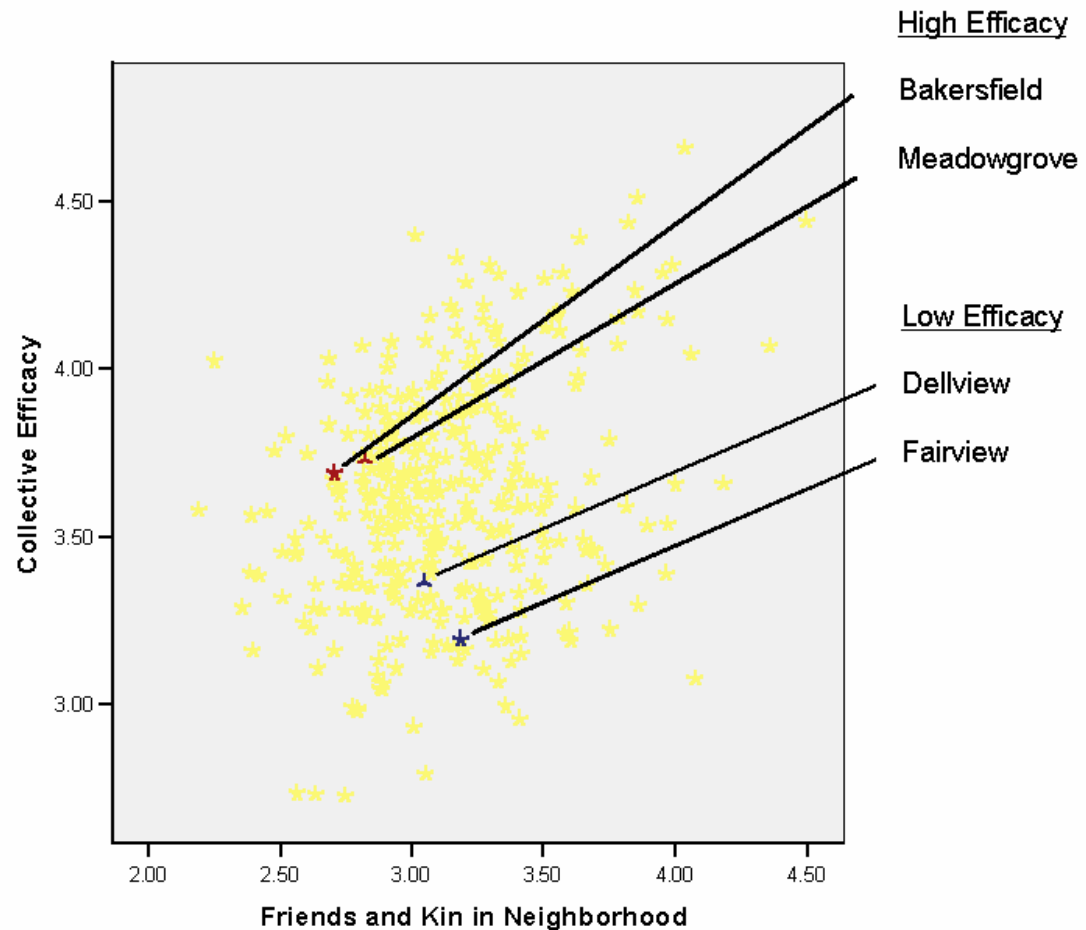
- Strong ties can limit social control
 - Pattillo’s (1999) ethnographic work in “Groveland”
 - Browning *et al* (2004)
- Collective efficacy not dependent on strong ties
 - Morenoff *et al* (2001)
- Little understanding of how collective efficacy develop in absence of strong ties

Unanswered Questions and Research Design

- *How* do residents intervene in local events?
 - Qualitative research
 - *How* can residents exercise social control in neighborhoods with low levels of friendship and kinship ties?
 - Observation in neighborhoods with weak ties
 - *Why* do structurally similar neighborhoods have different collective efficacy levels?
 - Comparison of high and low efficacy neighborhoods
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Study Design

- Qualitative study
- 4 structurally matched neighborhoods
 - 2 high efficacy and low friendship/kinship ties
 - 2 low efficacy and moderate ties
- Stable collective efficacy (1995 & 2003)



* Data shown comes from the PHDCN Community Study

Key Neighborhood Characteristics

- African American neighborhoods within large segregated regions
 - ~ 30% of population below poverty (average for U.S. Black neighborhoods)
 - History of disinvestment and decline after 1960s racial transformation
 - Presence of open air drug markets, organized street gangs
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Qualitative Methods

- Observations focus on response to “hanging out” and drug sales
 - Community policing meetings and community organizations as entry points
 - 38 semi-structured interviews
 - 19 months of field work
 - Grounded Theory approach
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How do residents intervene in local events?

■ Three-Tiered Model of Social Control

- Individual residents displace problems from their own properties (microdisplacement)



- Neighborhood leaders reinforce control in disorderly spaces (mediated control)



- Residents act collectively to reclaim habitually disorderly spaces (space reclamation)
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Intervention for the “Common Good”?

“Do you live here? . . . If you don’t live here, and I do, I guess you got no business standing in front of my place like that.” Ms. Stafford, Bakersfield resident

“I would say something like this . . . ‘honey, I’m not knocking what you have to do for money, but you can’t do it here.’ And they would move.” Ms. Powers, Bakersfield resident

“I come home, they’re selling drugs in front of my door! I say, ‘you don’t pay no damn rent here – move it on out! Take it up the street or something, I’m not having it here!’”
Tenant at community meeting, Meadowgrove

“I don’t allow them to sell drugs here in front of my place.”
Mr. Giles, Fairview resident

Failure of Individualized Control

- Ecological niches for disorder develop if residents are:
 - Fearful
 - perceived risk of retaliation
 - Conflicted
 - economic or social ties to offenders
 - Absent
 - abandoned or poorly managed buildings/lots
 - Failure of informal social control inhibits exercise of formal control
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Neighborhood Leaders: Mediated Intervention

- Informal neighborhood leaders:
 - Directly intervene in larger spatial areas
 - Mediate for fearful residents
 - Mediate with conflicted residents
 - Draw on personal social networks in pursuit of neighborhoods safety/order/improvement
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Collective Action: Space Reclamation

- Focus on reinforcing order in habitually disorderly spaces:
 - Temporary efforts: “positive loitering”
 - State efforts: “tactical teams”, police cameras, foot or bike patrol
 - Reassigning control: new construction, community gardens
 - Competition for resources as a zero-sum game:
 - Requires exercise of “public level” control
 - Highlights need for more systemic change
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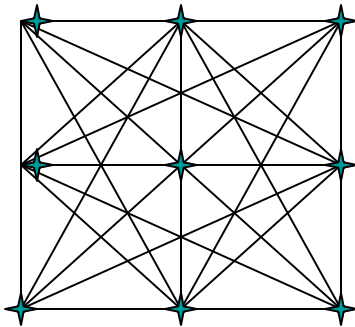
How can residents exercise social control in the absence of strong ties?

- Individualized control
 - “Contiguous efficacy” rather than “collective efficacy”
 - Brokering of mutual “respect”
 - Direct request to move
 - Compliance with request
 - Spatial limitations allow for effective police intervention
 - Trespassing claims replace charges of dealing/disorder
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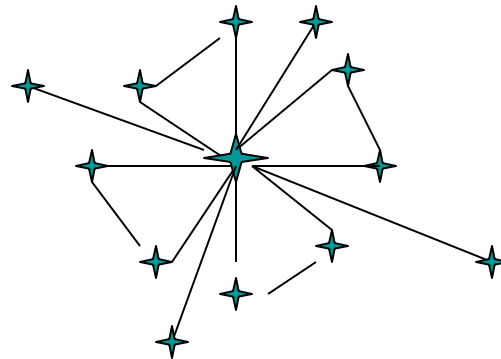
A Modified View of Social Networks & Social Control

- Social control may depend on informal community leaders with ties to:
 - Fearful/conflicted/absent community members, *and*
 - Public/parochial resources

Dense & Extensive Networks



Mediated Networks



Beyond Strong Ties: Parochial and Public Level Control

Level of Control

Private

Parochial

Public

Dyadic
Interactions

Microdisplacement
based on mutual
respect

Intervention based
on legal
property rights

Triadic
Interaction

Mediation of social
control by informal
leaders

Police mediation
of property
rights claims

Collective
Action

Space
reclamation
efforts

Garnering of
resources for space
reclamation

Conclusions

- Emphasizes and extends neglected aspects of systemic theory:
 - Role of the individual
 - Spatial basis of social control
 - Challenges conception of “community” which places a heavy burden on residents of urban neighborhoods
 - Calls for research that furthers understanding of informal neighborhood leadership
 - Opens door to new ways of thinking about and combining community-based crime prevention strategies
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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank:

The residents of Bakersfield, Meadowgrove, Fairview and Dellview for their gracious participation and support.

Dan A. Lewis, Bart Hirsch, Tom Cook, Spyros Konstantopoulous and Albert Hunter for their feedback and advice.

The Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods and Wesley Skogan for providing supplemental data.

The Northwestern Alumnae Association and the Institute for Policy Research for providing funding during the study period.
