middle, and low socioeconomic status neighborhoods, and there is still no discrepancy between the self-report and official correlates of social class. Of some interest are the apparently stronger relations between both parents’ education and delinquency within the middle-income neighborhoods. The middle-class value of education may have, one might hypothesize, a more substantial effect than other indicators of social class in those neighborhoods and among those families where education is important to occupation and socialization of children. In short, different components of social class may affect crime in different ways in different ecological contexts.

CONCLUSION

Most theories of criminal behavior are constructed around the assumption of a strong negative correlation between social class and crime. However, the empirical evidence shows that there is not the kind of meaningful inverse relationship between social class and both official and self-report measures of crime that are required for their empirical validation. To the contrary, extended analyses of the SYS data show that there is a systematically weak relationship, no matter how one measures, scales, or scores the data. The replication of analytic procedures used by Elliott and Ageton (1980) and Elliott and Huizinga (1983) in their discovery of an inverse relationship in the NYS data—unrestricted incidence scales, item analysis, tests of group differences—did not produce the same results. Except for a small number of social-class group differences on a few self-report items, these findings support the general conclusion that there is a systematically weak relationship between social class, measured by a number of different indicators, and variety of self-reported delinquency incidence scales, a number of official crime indexes, and a large number of self-reported crime items, all at the individual level of measurement. The findings also provide more evidence for convergence, rather than discrepancy, in the correlation between social class and official and self-report measures of crime. Perhaps social class as a correlate of crime is not so crucial after all—it may simply not exist as proposed or assumed by criminological theorists and researchers.

6 Communities and Crime

ROBERT J. SAMPSON

The study of communities and crime is making a comeback these days, or so it seems. A perusal of recent issues of major sociological and criminological journals reveals an increasing stream of studies analyzing the effect of ecological characteristics on the aggregate crime rate (see, e.g., Messner, 1982, 1983a, 1983b; DeFronzo, 1983; Blau and Blau, 1982; Parker and Smith, 1979; Crutchfield et al., 1982; Rosenfeld, 1982, 1984; Jacobs, 1981; Williams, 1984; Carroll and Jackson, 1983; Byrne, 1984; Sampson, 1984a). This evidence of interest is perhaps not unexpected. The field of criminology has always enjoyed a strong ecological tradition in delinquency, dating back in this country at least to the seminal works of Shaw and McKay. Despite the tradition of the ecological approach, however, the recent surge of empirical studies appears unprecedented.

Arguably the most prominent of recent studies in the ecological mold is Blau and Blau (1982). Their study of metropolitan structure and violent crime has stimulated numerous papers and debates. Close examination of the Blau’s article provides a clue as to the popularity of ecological studies. According to Blau and Blau (1982), the ecological or “structural” approach to the study of crime offers a distinctively sociological focus; by contrast, the study of individual behavior is suggested to rely psychologically reductionism. Apparently, the ecological approach offers us a macrosocial perspective, and promises to deliver key insights to the effects of social structure on crime.

A review of the literature on communities and crime finds this and other claims of recent research to be wanting, and the empirical results ambiguous. Notwithstanding the volume of studies utilizing aggregate

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crime may be used to illustrate a "structural orientation in macrosociological inquiry." According to Blau (1981: 171), two different questions can be raised about crime:

- Why some people commit crime while others do not; or why their rates are higher in some social situations than in others. The first question conceptualizes crime as behavior engaged in by individuals, which leads to a psychological investigation. The second question conceptualizes crime as more or less prevalent conflict in a social environment—for instance, a city—and thus as a characteristic of the pattern of social relations in a place. In this case, the units of analysis are not individuals but cities or other collectivities, which leads to a sociological investigation.

Blau's comments seem to imply that only a structural analysis using macrosocial units is proper sociological study. In fact, Blau (1981: 171) emphasizes added insight about this. A sociological perspective requires that groups or larger collectivities, not individuals, be units of analysis. "If true, it is no wonder that numerous researchers have embraced the ecological approach in attempts to address "macrosociological" theory (see, e.g., Rosenfeld, 1984; Blau and Blau, 1982; Liska et al., 1985). Even using ecological units is not enough, though. Blau (1981: 171) further argues that "a proper sociological analysis involves not only collective units but also some variables that pertain to distinctive properties of these units, not to aggregate properties of the individual-comprising them." And what are these distinctive properties? Among others, Blau (1981: 171) notes that economic inequality and racial composition are attributes that cannot characterize individual human beings but only social structures.

Let us analyze the implications Blau's dichotomous representation of criminal behavior has for ecological inquiry. First, Blau states that the first question (i.e., the psychological question) conceptualizes crime as behavior engaged by individuals. Can this be otherwise? Note that Blau is referring to violent crime (e.g., rape, murder) and thus we can dispose with notions of organizational actors as perpetrators of "white-collar" crimes. Of course individuals engage in crime. More than that, they commit the very crimes that make up the aggregate crime rate. For example, Blau and Blau (1982) analyze variations in aggregate violent crime rates across SMSAs. The crime rate is simply the number of reported offenses in an area per 100,000 persons. Are we then to
conceptualize crime as behavior engaged in by SMSAs? Clearly the aggregate crime rate is inextricably linked to the behavior of individuals and groups within the social unit. Yet it is a legitimate and different question to ask why one city has a higher crime rate than another city, rather than why some individuals commit crime and others do not. All this seems obvious enough, so what is the confusion? The problem for Blau's question seems to be that the answer may depend on the differential characteristics of individuals living in different cities, or on the social structural conditions in cities independent of individual characteristics. Whether or not the answer is two is not magical and do not possess strictly macrosociological wisdom as some recent articles would have us believe. Indeed, by relying on aggregate crime rates to represent all that is social about crime, one runs the risk of confounding individual with structural effects. The following section briefly examines one aspect of this issue concerning the aggregate crime rate.

ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION
An established finding of criminological research is that for serious personal crimes (e.g., homicide, robbery), blacks have offending rates several times those of whites (see, e.g., Hindelang, 1978, 1980, 1981). For example, Hindelang (1981) calculated age-race-sex-specific offending rates for the United States using both Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and the National Crime Survey (NCS) victim surveys. Compatibility between UCR and NCS estimates was extremely high, particularly for robbery (see also Hindelang, 1978). Regardless of the data source, black males exhibited robbery offending rates anywhere from 9 to 14 times greater than those of whites. For instance, the ratio of black/white robbery offending for adult males (21 and over) is estimated at 14.3 using UCR data and 13.0 using NCS data (Hindelang, 1981: 468). Because of the congruence in data sources, Hindelang concludes that for serious personal crimes at least, large race differentials in arrest rates reflect differential involvement in offending. Recent research (Blumstein and Graddy, 1982) tends to suggest that this differential is present stems primarily from differences in prevalence of offending and not to differences in individual crime rates (i.e., intensity of offending) among active offenders. That is, a higher proportion of blacks than whites come to be involved in serious criminality, but once engaged, blacks and whites tend to have similar recidivism rates.

The higher individual-level prevalence of offending among blacks than whites has consequences for aggregate analysis. Quite simply, we would expect a positive relationship between percentage black and the
The use of aggregate crime rate has obvious implications for ecological inquiry. The most important is that the aggregate rate obscures ecological or contextual effects with compositional effects arising from individual-level differences. In the above example percent-age black was positively related to aggregate crime, but only because of black-white differences in offending. Recall that Blau (1981, 171) argued that (a) racial composition is a characteristic of collectivities, not individuals and (b) analysis of aggregate crime leads to explanations of violence "in terms of the structural conditions promoting conflict." Indeed, there can be little doubt that racial composition represents a structural or macrosocial property of residential environment. The experience of growing up black in a predominantly white community is certainly different than growing up black in a predominantly black community. An entire class of sociological theory is built around the effects of social structure on minority-majority and intergroup relations (see, e.g., Blaustock, 1967; Blau, 1977). But racial composition also reflects compositional effects if individual-level racial differences are not taken into account. Hence use of ecological units per se does not necessarily imply a macrosociological perspective. Indeed, much of what is commonly referred to as ecological criminology resembles little that is actually ecological or contextual in perspective. As Kornhauser (1978: 104) bluntly asks delinquency researchers:

How do we know that area differences in delinquency rates result from the aggregate characteristics of communities rather than the characteristics of individuals selectively aggregated into communities? How do we even know that there are differences at all once their differing composition is taken into account?

Kornhauser’s question poses serious problems for the ecological researcher. For example, Messner (1983a) finds a positive direct effect of percentage black on the aggregate homicide rate for SMSAs and claims support for the subculture of violence thesis. Is Messner’s finding indicative of a macrosociological effect of racial composition? Since he used the ecological approach (Blau, 1981) we might be inclined to think so. But as shown above, the aggregate crime rate shows gross insensitivity to contextual interpretation. Messner’s aggregate finding probably reveals little more than that blacks have a higher offending rate than whites, an effect not clearly attributable to city-level causal factors.
Consequently, it seems that a true test of "macro-sociological" effects of racial composition and other structural factors requires that established correlates of criminal behavior be taken into account. As Hindelang's research has shown, there are extremely strong differentials in offending not only by race, but sex and age as well. As Hindelang (1981: 472) notes, the variabiliy in criminality explained by these characteristics is so great that it is incumbent on sociological researchers to take them into account. This does not imply that we must construct or call upon extant social theory to explain demographic correlates such as age (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983), but rather that we do not attribute to social structure what may be the manifestations of individual-level processes.

Following Hindelang's logic, some of the truly interesting theoretical questions pertain to the contextual effects of racial composition and other ecological characteristics on offending rates for groups homogeneous on individual-level predictors of involvement in criminality. For example, one important question is the extent to which racial composition has an effect on age-race-sex specific offending rates. This does not imply that aggregate crime rates are useless. If we are only interested in the effects of strictly "ecological" variables (e.g., structural density, geographical location) then introducing aggregate-level controls for population compositional variables is probably sufficient (Bryne, 1983). But to the extent we arc interested in the causal effects of city population and economic structure (e.g., racial composition, economic status, family disorganization) on crime rates we must take into account relevant individual and familial-level characteristics.

Few studies have been conducted in criminology within a contextual framework. This is not for a complete lack of effort or insight, however. Data on both individual and aggregate characteristics across a sample of areas that vary on key variables are indeed difficult to obtain. Most contextual studies have been done with self-reported delinquency data, and have been concerned with one issue—the relative effect of aggregate and individual SES. Braithwaite (1979) summarizes the few contextual studies (e.g., Reiss and Rhodes, 1961; Clark and Wenninger, 1962) and concludes that delinquency rates of poor boys are higher in poor slums than in class-mixed areas, which tends to support mainstream poverty theories such as Shaw and McKay. Official arrest data across jurisdictions usually do not contain information on individual income or educational status, and thus have not been able to address such questions. Since self-report data generally yield information confined predominantly to relatively minor infractions, and then only for juveniles, evidence regarding contextual effects of ecological characteristics on homicide, robbery, and other serious crime is quite limited. Perhaps more important, self-report delinquency research has not rigorously explored the causal contextual effects of community characteristics other than poverty.

In sum, only by controlling (or approximately controlling) for individual-level characteristics by which aggregate units differ in their composition will we be in a position reasonably to infer ecological effects. For "pure" ecological variables (e.g., density) that do not have an individual analog it may be that disaggregating the crime rate is not all that important. There is no a priori evidence that population density, for example, differentially influences age-race-sex-specific offending (although it may well). There is, however, a strong possibility that composition variables such as race and economic status, which clearly affect aggregate rates, may also have important contextual effects on demographic-specific offending rates, and that those effects will be different for different demographic subgroups. In the latter portion of this chapter I will discuss empirical strategies to address these contextual questions.

TOWARD A COMMUNITY-LEVEL THEORY OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Another problematic area in the study of communities and crime is the lack of theoretical development in recent years. What we have seen basically are reappraisals and extensions of subcultural theory and strain theory. In particular, Messner (1983) and others (see, e.g., Rosenfeld, 1986) have concentrated on testing subcultural theory, while Blau and Blau (1982) have led the revivalization of the drain depression theory ala Merton. While these perspectives might be quite important, alternative theoretical agendas have been neglected. This section attempts to present the framework of a theoretical model that has as its center not race and class, but community social controls.

In what is probably the most exhaustive review of delinquency theories in many years, Kornhauser (1978) concludes that Shaw and McKay's theory is basically a community-level control theory. In Kornhauser's explication of the Shaw and McKay model, the ecological segregation of communities characterized by low economic status, heterogeneity, and mobility results in ineffective culture and social structure, which in turn leads to weak controls that account for
delinquency. Generally speaking, the social disorganization of an area refers to the community's ability to realize its common values (1978: 63). Implicit in this conception is the assumption that communities (and society at large) form a consensus on such basic human values as health, life, order, economic sufficiency, education, and family stability. Since Shaw and McKay showed that crime rates were correlated with the occurrence of other social problems such as truancy, economic dependency, and mental disorders, Kornhauser suggests that such communities were unable to implement and express the true values of their residents. In contrast to subcultural perspectives, it is the inability to realize common values that is the underlying cause of delinquency, not variation in the context of values defining what is morally valid.

Kornhauser's (1978: 83-188) review of the ecological literature indicates that many studies support the findings that crime is concentrated in areas characterized by low economic status, heterogeneity, and residential mobility. However, recently emerging research on juvenile delinquency (Simcha-Fagan and Sampson, 1982) and victimization (Sampson, 1983a) reveals that family disorganization (e.g., percentage divorced, percentage female-headed families) has stronger effects on crime and delinquency than economic status or racial composition. Other research by Sampson (1983a, 1983b) also indicates that the structural density of the physical environment (e.g., percentage of multiple-dwelling units) has a direct effect on victimization rates, independent of mobility, economic level, racial composition, and other neighborhood characteristics.

Despite the number of aggregate-level empirical findings, Kornhauser notes that criminologists have done little to account for the variables that mediate the effect of community characteristics: "Neither Shaw and McKay nor those who succeeded them have systematically investigated the variables that link aggregate characteristics of communities and delinquency" (1978: 188). Unfortunately, then, much of the theorizing in the ecological arena has rested on conjecture and speculation.

Kornhauser (1978) has presented a beginning attempt to formalize a theory of community social control that explicitly takes into account intervening processes. She focuses largely on the effects of economic status, heterogeneity, and mobility on formal community controls. The following section extends and modifies her theory in two ways. First, I focus less on economic status and more on the dimensions of family disorganization, mobility, and density. Second, I attempt to specify some of the mediating effects of informal rather than formal social control. The main thesis is that the independent social effects (i.e., independent of individual characteristics) of neighborhood characteristics on delinquency are transmitted primarily through the capacity of a community to exercise informal social controls.

As Kornhauser (1978) has consistently emphasized, social control refers to the ability of a community to realize common values. Janowitz (1975) has noted that scholars often mistakenly equate social control with social repression, socialization, and conformity. According to Janowitz, in the most fundamental sense social control refers to the capacity of a society to regulate itself according to desired principles and values (1975: 82). The opposite of social control can be thought of as coercive control, where a society or community relies predominantly on force and repression to ensure conformity. Perhaps the equation of social control with social repression has been the reason many criminologists link social control theories of deviance (such as Hirschi's, 1969) with conservative ideology (see, e.g., Bookin-Weiner and Horowitz, 1983; Taylor et al., 1973). But, as Janowitz argues, the original meaning of social control is tied to the efforts of individuals, groups, institutions, and communities to realize collective (as opposed to forced) goals (1975: 87). Given this conception of social control, the sociologist's task is to identify and quantify the effect of variables that facilitate or hinder the group pursuit of collective moral goals (1975: 88). Janowitz emphasizes that social control does not rest exclusively on normative conceptions of social organization and society. Instead, Janowitz (1975: 88) argues that "the continuing relevance of social control theory reflects the fact that its assumptions and variables incorporate the ecological, technological, economic, and institutional dimensions of social organization." Hence social control theory is concerned not just with conformity or "internalization of norms" (see Empey, 1978: 230-232), but with the external efforts of collectives to achieve common interests.

Weak social controls take many forms but can generally be classified into two types—formal and informal. Although incorporating both types of social control in her model, Kornhauser places great emphasis on the functioning of formal institutions (e.g., school, community organizations, police) in regulating human behavior and preventing delinquency. As she notes, "Social disorganization produces weak institutional controls, which loosen the constraints on deviating from conventional values" (1979: 31). For example, in Kornhauser's (1978: 73) model the effects of low economic status, heterogeneity, and mobility are hypothesized to result in inadequate institutional resources,
isolation of institutions, institutional instability, institutional incapacity to provide routes to valued goals, and institutional discontinuities in socialization and control.

For both Kornhauser and Shaw and McKay, poverty is the prime determinant of the inability of community institutions to provide an effective system of formal social controls. Parallel to the case for individual delinquency, poverty has long been a "master" variable in ecological research. Yet the fact that recent research reveals a relatively weak direct effect on poverty on both official crime and victimization rates (see, e.g., Sampson, 1983b; Messner, 1982) raises some questions regarding the role of economic status in impeding efforts at community social control. Is poverty in fact the most important determinant of the lack of institutional resources, institutional instability, and overall institutional ineffectiveness? If so, do the latter represent the most relevant type of social control in today's society with respect to delinquency? A brief review of community literature in the following section indicates that the increasing bureaucratization, urbanization, and differentiation of modern society has transformed the nature of formal institutions, rendering them less autonomous in their capacity for social control. As a result, the evidence suggests that informal social control has assumed increased importance in today's society. The following section examines how the changing nature of community has reduced the effect of ecological characteristics on formal social controls.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF COMMUNITY

One of the underlying assumptions of Kornhauser's (1978) community control model is that territorial communities are the basis of collective action. Social disorganization is thus defined as the inability of the community to act together to realize common values. However, Tilly (1973) and others have raised a pointed and troubling question: Do communities act? Tilly's review suggests that communities have been transformed into extralocal and national networks of power and communication. By focusing exclusively on territorial communities, Tilly (1973: 212) argues that classical urbanization theorists failed to notice the nonterritorial relations that have replaced them. In particular, modern communication and transportation systems have transformed institutional relations, divorcing them from spatial considerations. While formal institutions may be located in and provide services to local communities, they are in large part controlled by city, state, and national networks of power.

Duffee's (1980) analysis of the community context of criminal justice in America supports these observations. Following Warren (1978), Duffee (1980: 152) describes the vertical dimension of community structure as the extent to which a local social unit is tied to dependent on a nonlocal system for performance of its locality-relevant functions. In contrast, the horizontal dimensions of community refers to the degree to which various groups, organizations, and systems within a community are interrelated for the performance of community functions (1980: 152). Communities that depend on higher governmental structures for the performance of formal social control functions are influenced by a relative strong vertical dimension. Although communities exhibit both vertical and horizontal dimensions, Duffee's (1980: 153) summary is clear: "The major conclusion from observing contemporary American communities is that the horizontal dimension has tended to weaken and the vertical dimension has tended to strengthen dramatically in the last fifty years." Similar to Tilly, Duffee argues that industrialization, urbanization, and bureaucratization are the predominant forces that have tended to make communities dependent on vertical linkages for performance of social control functions, hence making communities less autonomous. In commenting on the transference of power from the community to extralocal structures, Duffee (1980: 153) concludes:

Social control functions are increasingly state and federal concerns, as are many social participation and mutual support activities. This trend has tended to mean that various local units charged with the delivery stages of different functional activities have less in common with each other, or to local citizenry, than to superstructures at the state and national levels to which they belong.

In short, the evidence suggests that communities have declined in the sense of serving as the basis for indigenous collective action to realize common values. The changing nature of community has obvious implications for the role of formal institutions in organizing to prevent delinquency. As Tilly (1973) notes, "deliberate community organization as a tactic for engineering change is only likely to work under an unusual set of conditions." Such conditions rarely arise in the case of delinquency prevention. Indeed, how can a community realize common goals
through collective institutional action when exogenous factors control the very institutions located in the community? The argument being presented does not deny the importance of formal social controls in preventing delinquency. Rather, the main point is that in a modern, differentiated society, indigenous community characteristics have attenuated effects on social controls exerted by formal institutions, many of which have vertical linkages to outside the community. In other words, much of the variation in formal social controls is determined by larger community, interurban, state, and national forces rather than by neighborhood characteristics. In contrast, there is much evidence to suggest that the community has strong influences on informal social control.

**INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL**

A community-oriented approach to informal social controls rests on the assumption that the only truly effective means of maintaining public norms is by neighbors assuming responsibility for one another (see Greenberg et al., 1982). Examples of informal social control are neighbors taking note of and questioning strangers, watching over each other's property, assuming responsibility for supervision of youth activities, and intervening in local disturbances. Greenberg et al. have reviewed a wide body of research concerned with identifying what characteristics are associated with the willingness of residents to assume responsibility and intervene in public disturbances. They conclude that the "willingness to intervene is linked with the familiarity, security, and responsibility that are connected with the neighborhood setting. In contrast, residents of neighborhoods where most people are strangers to one another may be more likely to intervene than in an unfamiliar location" (1982: 9). This supports Fischer's (1981) distinction between the public and private spheres of city life. While urbanization may not negatively affect interpersonal ties with friends and personal associates, it does tend to produce fear, distrust, and unwillingness to intervene in public encounters. At the intraurban level, Fischer's thesis suggests that neighborhood characteristics will have a stronger effect on the public sphere of life noted by Greenberg et al. than on the private world of interpersonal relations.

For example, structural density seems to have direct implications for neighborhood settings of familiarity, security, and responsibility. Sampson (1983b) argues that as structural density increases the capacity for guardianship is decreased, and thus security and familiarity are hindered. Multiple-dwelling unit structures offer increased criminal opportunities while reducing surveillance capabilities. Moreover, even when surveillance is physically possible, Newman (1972) argues that as the number of households sharing common living space increases, residents are less able to recognize neighbors and be concerned about, and to engage in guardianship activities (see also Roncek, 1981: 88). By increasing anonymity while decreasing effective means of surveillance, structural density serves to impede informal social control.

Residential mobility also has implications for formal neighborhood social control. A neighborhood with high population turnover has a greater proportion of residents who are strangers to one another than areas with a stable, long-term population. As Greenberg et al.'s (1982) research shows, residents are less likely to intervene in an event incident when it occurs in the context of an anonymous setting with strangers. Residents are also less likely to assume guardianship responsibilities for their neighbors when they hardly know them. Thus informal social control activities such as watching over neighborhood property, taking note of neighborhood activities, and intervening in local disturbances are likely to be impeded by neighborhood residential mobility.

Residential mobility has also been shown to affect adversely community attachment and local social bonds, which are closely linked to Greenberg et al.'s (1982) notion of responsibility. Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) tested a systemic model of community that examined formal and informal networks of social control. As Kasarda and Janowitz (1974: 329) explain:

In the systemic model, community organization is treated as an essential aspect of mass society. It is a structure which has ecological, institutional, and normative dimensions. The local community is viewed as a complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal associations tied rooted in family life and ongoing socialization processes.

Kasarda and Janowitz's systemic model posits residential mobility as the key exogenous factor influencing community behaviors and attitudes. The major intervening variables are friendship and kinship bonds and formal and informal associational ties within the local community. They argue that "residential mobility operates as a barrier to the development of extensive friendship and kinship bonds and widespread local associational ties" (1974: 330). Kasarda and Janowitz's empirical
analysis supported the systemic model. They found that length of residence was the strongest positive predictor of local social bonds and community attachment. When length of residence increases, so does attachment to area, identification and feelings of responsibility for one's neighborhood, and informal networks of friends. In fact, Kasarda and Janowitz (1974: 336) found that residential mobility alone explained more of the variance in local social bonds and community sentiments than did the combined effects of population size, density, social class, and stage in life cycle. Although Kasarda and Janowitz did not operationalize measures of family structure, their theoretical orientation suggests that family disorganization also has negative consequences for community social bonds. The cornerstone of their perspective is that the local community is a complex system of networks "rooted in family life and ongoing socialization processes" (1974: 329). By implication, a breakdown in family ties and the isolation of family from the community would lead to attenuated local social bonds, community sentiment, and organizational participation. Kornhauser (1978) similarly suggests that the family life of a community can have important implications for social organization. She argues that even in the absence of voluntary associations, stable families are able to link youth to the community. Kornhauser (1978: 81, emphasis added) emphasizes the important role that the family plays in the socialization of youth: "It can provide contacts with economic institutions, aid in doing school work, and knowledge of recreational facilities: it can perform many other functions that link the child to institutions, thus enabling him to employ institutional routes to valued goals and consequently hindering him more effectively to conventional institutions. By parent's efforts, both individual and collective, nonfamily institutions are made more responsive to the child's needs."

Following Kornhauser's logic, pronounced family disorganization in an area will disrupt what she refers to as the "collective" efforts of families to link neighborhood youth to the wider society. The informal nature of collective family social control has not often been studied. Indeed, the effects of the family have largely been studied from the viewpoint of "children under the roof." That is, the effect of the behavior of parents is studied only on the delinquency of their own children. But children and adolescents are often supervised, watched, and even reprimanded by other than their own parents. As Skogan and Maxfield (1981: 105) note: "In integrated areas adults keep an eye on children, and the whole community eyes strangers carefully. . . People with a stake in the community and its future 'police' events there with vigor." Thus in areas with a cohesive family structure (and usually low mobility) parents often take on responsibility not just for their own children, but for other youth in the community as well. The fundamental fact that delinquency is a group phenomenon (see, e.g., Zimring, 1961) may attest to the efficacy of this strategy. By supervising and keeping track of youth other than their own, parents are maintaining some degree of control over group activity that accounts for well over half of all delinquency (Zimring, 1981). Indeed, intervening in group processes (see Short and Strodbeck, 1965) may be the only effective means of controlling delinquency. At a very basic level, two-parent households provide increased supervision, not only for their own property (Cohen and Felson, 1979) but for public activities in the neighborhood. For example, acts such as truancy by local youth are more likely to be noticed, particularly if one parent is home during the day.

In contrast, in an anonymous setting with frequent population turnover and a high proportion of divorces or working single mothers, there is a reduced likelihood of noticing and acting on the truancy and delinquency of neighborhood youth. The informal social control exercised by the community is thus weakened, as youths are free to determine their behavior without the supervision or interference of parents, neighbors, and concerned residents. Cohesive family structures are probably effective not because they are able to intervene in such actual crime and delinquency, but because they are aware of and intervene in group activities (e.g., truancy, "hanging out") that are usually the predecessors of involvement in more serious delinquent activities. There is some empirical support for these notions. Sampson (1983a) showed that of all neighborhood characteristics studied, family disorganization was the strongest predictor of juvenile group offending. That is, juveniles tended to offend in groups more often in neighborhoods characterized by high family disorganization than low family disorganization.

Ironically, further support for this argument is found in the very nature of delinquent activities. The fact that what delinquency does occur in settings of two-parent households and stable populations is
concealed attests to the strength of informal neighborhood social controls. Back lots, woods, forts, and basements are often the scene of adolescent delinquency in suburban-type communities, away from the stream of community life. The ubiquitous street life in lower-income, high-density, disorganized urban areas provides a sharp contrast. Groups of youth milling around street corners in midday performing "mildly" delinquent acts such as drinking and gambling is a common sight not likely to elicit much notice. Consider, for example, Rainwater's study of the Pruitt-Igoe housing projects in St. Louis, which contained a lower-income, mobile population with a high degree of female-headed households. Rainwater (1970: 276) notes that while children in the middle-upper classes keep their deviant activities secret from parents, adults in the projects ignore children they see engaged in smoking, gambling, and other adultlike behavior. In effect, concealment of deviance is not really necessary because neighborhood standards relate mostly to personalistic rather than public norms (see also Suttles, 1968: 78).

Public displays of drinking, drug taking, graffiti, gambling, and other signs of disorder have been labeled by Hunter (1978) as incivilities. The public presence of incivilities sends a signal that not only are "minor" forms of deviance tolerated, but that the scope of neighborhood social control is too weak that new frontiers of deviance are ripe to be explored. Greenberg et al. (1982: 3) argue that incivilities and signs of disorder are expected to result in increased crime and delinquency because youths recognize such deterioration and "assume that residents are so indifferent to what goes on in their neighborhood that they will not be motivated to confront strangers, intruders, or the police." Thus the lack of informal social control in a community may have direct effects on individual behavior by creating a context where deviance has free reign. While delinquency can and indeed does occur in stable family areas of single-unit homes (i.e., low structural density), much of it is concealed and out of public view, in itself suggesting that informal social controls are effective. Youths in such a neighborhood may have as much to lose if the neighbors observe their delinquency as if their own parents do. If youths feel or correctly determine that the "eyes of the community" are on them, then they are forced to reduce, eliminate, or conceal their delinquent involvement, lest they risk apprehension. By contrast, if an adolescent's (or more likely a group of adolescents) behavior in high density, mobile, disorganized urban areas does not elicit public attention or action, then he or she (or they) are, to that extent, free to deviate. The norms of informal public social control in the community are simply too weak to bind him or her to conventional behavior.

In summary, the argument developed is that neighborhood characteristics such as family disorganization, residential mobility, and structural density weaken informal social controls. Specifically, informal social controls are imposed by weak local social bonds, lowered community attachment, anonymity, and reduced capacity for surveillance and guardianship. Other factors such as poverty and racial composition also probably affect informal control, although as argued earlier their influence is in all likelihood indirect. Residents in areas characterized by family disorganization, mobility, and building density are less able to perform guardianship activities (see especially Cohen and Felton, 1979; Cohen et al., 1981), less likely to report general deviance (e.g., incivilities) to authorities, to intervene in public disturbances (see Fischer, 1981), and to assume responsibility for supervision of youth activities. The result is that deviance in general is tolerated and public norms of social control are not effective.

This conception of informal social control does not imply that individual-level controls or institutions of formal social control (e.g., schools, police) are unimportant. Rather, I am suggesting that consideration of informal community social control in conjunction with personal and institutional controls may add to a fuller understanding of delinquency. Indeed, at the individual level, Hirschi (1969) has already established the importance of attachment to family and school, commitment, involvement, and belief in bonding youth to society. At the community level, Kornhauser (1978) has detailed the institutional instability, isolation of institutions, and inadequate institutional resources that result from low economic status, mobility, and heterogeneity. Given this considerable empirical and theoretical foundation already established at the level of personal and institutional sources of social control, the present chapter has attempted to shed some new light on mechanisms of informal social control. The declining nature of community institutional autonomy outlined earlier seems to give the informal control approach particular relevancy.

DISCUSSION

The theoretical perspective advanced here has several advantages not the least of which is consistency with recent research on urbanism,
neighborhoods, and social networks. Early community social control theorists (Shaw and McKay) and even Kornhauser to a large extent assumed that factors such as low economic status and mobility increased crime by destroying social ties among friends and neighbors in the community, which in turn loosened control networks. That is, the decline in primary relations among people in a community was hypothesized to be a key ingredient underlying weak social controls. This notion is of course similar to the classic Wirthian hypothesis at the urban level. Wirth (1938) argued that the complexity, overstimulation, and density found in the urban environment strained social relations. The urbanite was presumed to be impersonal and superficial, and this estrangement was hypothesized to affect family life and intimate bonds in the community. Similarly, poverty and mobility were hypothesized by Shaw and McKay and Kornhauser to weaken intimate social bonds and interpersonal relations in the community.

Recent research tends to suggest that the Wirthian hypothesis is naive. Social networks and psychological well-being are alive and well in cities (Gans, 1962; Wellman, 1979). As Tilly (1973: 212) notes, "Those who saw decay, eclipse, and disintegration of community life with the growth of cities were probably concentrating too hard on territorial communities, and failing to notice the nonterritorial forms which replaced them." The research of network theorists (see, e.g., Granovetter, 1973; Wellman, 1979) has shown that contrary to the assumption of decline in primary relations, modern urbanites have substituted nonspatial communities for spatial communities; metropolitan residents build viable sets of social relations that are dispersed in space (Tilly, 1973: 211). Modern urbanites, for example, may not know their neighbors intimately, but they are quite likely to have interpersonal networks spread throughout the city, state, and even across the country (see Wellman, 1979). If urbanization, heterogeneity, and mobility do not have the expected negative effect on intimate social ties, then how do they weaken social controls?

Fischer's (1975, 1983) theory of urbanism provides a means to distinguish conceptually the consequences of community structure for social control. Fischer (1983) makes explicit the distinction between the public and private spheres of social life. In the urban "world of strangers" (Lofland, 1973) the urbanite typically has the capacity to know people categorically, to place them by appearance and behavior in one of many urban subcultures (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity, lifestyle—see also Suttles, 1968). But as Fischer (1981: 307) argues, this is a situational, not a psychological, style, and says nothing about attitudes and action in the private sphere. City dwellers have not lost the capacity for "deep, long-lasting, multifaceted relationships," but have gained the capacity for surface, fleeting relationships that are restricted. Consequently, Fischer (1981: 308) argues that "urbanism does not estrange individuals from familiar and similar people. Conversely, urbanism's effects are specified; estrangement occurs in the public sphere—less helpfulness, more conflict—but not in the private one—personal relations and psychological well-being."

Drawing on Fischer's distinctions and applying them to the intraurban level allows us to state explicitly what was implicitly assumed in the theoretical framework above: The effects of neighborhood characteristics on crime and delinquency operate primarily on the public domain of informal social control. Persons in low-income, high-density, high-mobility neighborhoods have friends, kinship networks, and social ties much like their counterparts in well-to-do areas with stable populations, low density, and cohesive family structures. What differs in the former type of environment is the attenuation of public social controls exercised by the community at large. This distinction allows for the fact that interpersonal primary relations are often found in ghetto areas where disorganization is supposedly high. Indeed, a fundamental and repeated criticism of disorganization and social control theories has been that slum residents have rich primary relations (see, e.g., Feagin, 1973). But as Kornhauser and Fischer have noted, these sorts of relations pertain to the private world or to small primary groups in neighborhoods, and does not extend to the arena of public norms and the efficacy of social control.

Perhaps without realizing it, other observers have also discovered this basic theme in discussing what it is that most does in a community. When I speak of the concerns for 'community,' I refer to a desire for the observance of standards of right and seamy conduct in the public places in which one lives and moves, those standards to be consistent with—and supportive of—the values and life styles of the particular individual. Around one's home, the places where one shops, and the corridors through which one walks there is for each of us a public space wherein our sense of security, self-esteem, and propriety is either reassured or jeopardized by the people and events we encounter. Viewed this way, the concern for community is less the 'need' for 'belonging' (or ... the need
Indeed, Wilson’s observations go right to the heart of Kornhauser’s basic position—we do not need community so much to satisfy our private and interpersonal needs, which are best met elsewhere, but to express and realize common values and standards. In this sense, what a community-level theory of social control has to offer is the specification of the effects that neighborhood characteristics have on the capacity and ability of community residents to implement and maintain public norms.

In sum, the underlying premise of this chapter is that community structure has an effect on criminal behavior that is not fully accounted for by individual characteristics. I think that Fischer (1975) provides the most reasonable statement of the utility of theoretical arguments that hinge on the demonstration of structural effects independent of individual-level characteristics. In accounting for his development of a subcultural theory of urbanism, Fischer acknowledges that nonecological variables (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity) are probably more important than ecological ones in explaining stress and coping behavior. Similarly, delinquency and crime are multi-determined, and the effects of neighborhood characteristics are probably relatively small compared to the effects of such predictors as sex, race, attachment, and so on. If community (or urbanization) effects are small, why study them? A clue is found in Fischer’s (1975: 1337) intellectually honest answer:

The subcultural model does not . . . imply that . . . ecological factors have large, practical, or policy relevant effects. By far the more important influences of behavior are the nonecological ones. The real implication is theoretical.

Indeed, the empirical demonstration of autonomous effects of community structure on criminal behavior would be an important theoretical breakthrough. How large these effects might be remains to be seen. If we are to be honest, though, we should probably admit that the search for such effects is driven by theoretical rather than practical concerns. The following section concludes this essay with an overview of empirical strategies by which we might validate the importance of community in the study of crime and delinquency.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that prior research does not provide us with adequate knowledge of the relationship between community characteristics and processes of informal social control, and of the autonomous effects of neighborhood characteristics on criminal behavior. Despite this somewhat gloomy assessment, there are several empirical strategies that may be fruitfully pursued.

First, analysis of demographically disaggregated arrest rates present a useful alternative to analysis of contextual data, given that the latter are quite rare in criminology. Indeed, data on both individuals and communities across a sample of areas that vary on key characteristics is almost nonexistent. Although arrest data do not provide detailed information on individual-level characteristics, they do provide what Hindelang (1981) has shown to be the strongest individual-level correlates of serious criminal offending—age, race, and sex. Moreover, Hindelang (1981) has demonstrated that UCR arrest data and victimization are quite compatible concerning these correlates for serious personal crimes. Although there are undoubtedly variations in arrest practices across cities, one can explicitly introduce measures to control for differential police effectiveness (e.g., arrest/offense ratio, clearance rate, police per capita). Once these CJS effects are taken into account, Hindelang’s research provides a strong basis for assuming that differentials in arrest rates for serious crimes reflect differential involvement in offending. Utilizing these assumptions and procedures, Sampson (1984b) analyzed the effects of such city characteristics as poverty, inequality, racial composition, and police arrest probabilities on age-race-sex specific homicide rates for large U.S. cities. This investigation will, it is hoped, shed light on some of the contextual propositions derived from current theory.

However, we cannot be content merely to analyze arrest and census data, useful though such an adventure might be. By far the most important empirical task seems to be the measurement of the processes that mediate the effect of community characteristics on individual behavior. As Kornhauser’s (1978) exhaustive review of ecological research demonstrates, criminologists have for the most part simply inferred the existence of intervening processes, even though the correlation of crime with ecological characteristics may be consistent with many different theoretical perspectives. One obvious reason for this tendency is that ecological research overwhelmingly relies on census
data, which do not provide measures of the constructs presumed to account for the phenomenon at hand. For example, above I overviewed a theoretical model that posited mediating effects of such processes as guardianship, informal social control, and community attachment. Demonstration of the validity of such a model requires more than just conjecture, it requires empirical validation. Fortunately, inroads are being made in this area, which may bespeak a more rigorous empirical stance on the part of ecologically minded researchers in the future.

7

Sports and Delinquency

RODNEY STARK
LORI KENT
ROGER FINKE

At least since the Duke of Wellington remarked that "the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton," it has widely been believed that participation in athletics builds character, self-confidence, and discipline. In keeping with this belief, sports have always been a major element in programs aimed at delinquency prevention or at reforming delinquents. Groups such as the Boys Clubs, Police Athletic Leagues, and even the Boy Scouts, explicitly assume a link between athletics and delinquency.

However, in recent years, social scientists, ever-ready to challenge conventional wisdom and traditional values, have reinterpreted the relationship between athletics and delinquency. It isn't that sports help boys go straight, they argue, rather sports simply filter out the delinquent boys. Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck (1950) claimed that delinquent boys dislike competitive activities and therefore tend to shun organized athletics. In similar style, Yiannakis (1976) argued that delinquents tend to drop out of sports programs. Surely, it would not strain credulity to suppose that coaches might reinforce such tendencies by discouraging or even by cutting boys given to disruptive behavior or with unsavory reputations. If these revisionist notions are correct, then correlations between athletic participation and nondelinquency are not causal, or if they are, the causation runs in the opposite direction (delinquency causes elimination from sports). In this perspective, participation in youth soccer would not keep boys straight, but would be taken as an indication that they are straight.