NEIGHBORHOOD ATTACHMENT AS A SOURCE OF
INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL

A Thesis in
Sociology
by
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ABSTRACT

Though informal social control has been identified as a key mediator in the relationship between structural disadvantage and crime, little research has focused on neighborhood sources of informal social control. The objective of my research is to explore sources of informal social control, which is defined as the willingness of neighborhood residents to intervene in local problems. Specifically, I examine the role of neighborhood attachment, operationalized as a multidimensional construct, as a source of informal social control. The contributions of cognitive, behavioral, and affective attachment to informal social control are assessed independently and together; also, the mediating effects of attachment on the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control are examined.

I conducted a multilevel analysis using data from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods to obtain neighborhood-level effects while controlling for individual-level compositional differences between neighborhoods. My results indicated that: 1) several dimensions of neighborhood attachment – cognitive, behavioral, and affective – were related to informal social control; 2) behavioral and affective attachment were positively associated with neighborhood levels of informal social control; 3) neighborhood attachment explained some of the associations between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Recent studies of neighborhood effects identify informal social control as a concept in need of theoretical and empirical development and have suggested that informal social control is an important mediator between neighborhood structural conditions and crime. However, despite the substantive significance of this line of research for community control and crime prevention, compelling questions have yet to be addressed. Research has not adequately explored the origins of informal social control or examined neighborhood variations in sources of informal social control.

The objective of my dissertation is to explore sources of informal social control, which is defined as the willingness of neighborhood residents to intervene in local problems. Specifically, I examine the role of neighborhood attachment, operationalized as a multidimensional construct, as a source of informal social control. The contributions of cognitive, behavioral, and affective attachment to informal social control are assessed independently and together; also, the mediating effects of attachment on the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control are examined.

In recent years, studies of “neighborhood effects” have proliferated in the criminological literature. The theoretical foundations for this line of inquiry draw from several seminal works, including Shaw and McKay’s social disorganization approach (1942), Kasarda and Janowitz’s (1974) systemic model of social ties, and, more recently, Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls’ concept of collective efficacy (1997). Central to this line of research is the belief that residents’ use of social ties and the willingness to exercise social control may mediate the relationship
between neighborhood structural characteristics – concentrated disadvantage, immigrant concentration, residential instability – and neighborhood crime and disorder.

Working from the assumption that neighborhood residents wish to live in an area safe and free from crime, informal social control is understood as the effort of those residents to work together to achieve that collective goal (Bursik and Grasmick 1993). Measures related to informal social control have been shown to have positive effects on neighborhood organization (Elliott et al. 1996; Sampson and Groves 1989; Sampson et al. 1997). Results of these studies further suggest that informal social control mediates the adverse effects of negative neighborhood conditions, such as concentrated disadvantage and residential instability, on crime. Neighborhood disadvantage and residential instability have been hypothesized to increase crime and disorder because they disrupt valuable social networks and neighborhood interaction and cooperation.

An emerging line of research is exploring the role of informal social control in connecting neighborhood residents to formal agents of social control outside of the neighborhood. This work follows from Bursik and Grasmick’s (1993) systemic model of crime, which extends social disorganization theory by specifying three levels of control – private, parochial, public – that mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and crime. This model recognizes the importance of local networks, including those of family, friends, neighbors, and outside agencies, in crime prevention and control. Cooperation between neighborhood residents and their ability to organize on the neighborhood’s behalf acts as an important conduit to garner resources outside of the local community, such as law enforcement and political support (Carr 2003).
Despite the theoretical prominence of informal social control for neighborhood organization and well-being, the concept of informal social control remains vague, at best. Empirical researchers have yet to adequately explore the construct “informal social control” or to examine neighborhood sources of informal social control (for an exception, see Silver and Miller 2004; for reviews, see Carr 2003; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003a; Sampson et al. 2002). These sources of informal social control have theoretical and empirical relevance to the extent that they are necessary for the promotion of feelings of residential attachment and for residents’ active engagement in the prevention of local problems, such as teenage misbehavior and crime. Indeed, too often studies have confounded informal social control with behaviors that would more appropriately be considered sources of informal social control. For example, some studies have used measures of neighborhood social ties or neighborhood participation as indicators of informal social control (e.g., Taylor et al. 1984a; Rountree and Warner 1999; Warner and Rountree 1997).

The lack of theoretical and empirical development in understanding sources of informal social control is largely due to an over-reliance on classic social disorganization theory and the systemic model of social ties in neighborhood research. Social disorganization theory, as developed by Shaw and McKay, identified poverty, residential mobility, and ethnic heterogeneity as the leading causes of persistently high rates of crime and delinquency in certain areas of Chicago. For many years, scholars working in the social disorganization tradition focused their empirical efforts on these structural impediments to social organization, and simply assumed the positive role of social ties and informal social control in reducing neighborhood crime rates. With the introduction of the systemic model of neighborhood organization, which views the local neighborhood as a complex system of social and associational ties, the role of
social ties as a mediator between neighborhood structure and crime rates gained theoretical prominence (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; see also, Bursik 1988; Sampson 1987). Also, the systemic model introduced the development of community attachment as an important consequence of local social ties. The systemic model provides a framework for understanding how neighborhood structural conditions lead to increased crime and delinquency rates because they disrupt valuable neighborhood social networks and attachment, ultimately undermining neighborhood informal social control.

Beginning in the late 1980s with Sampson’s work empirically testing social disorganization and systemic theories, the role of social ties and informal social control became more clear (Sampson 1988; Sampson and Groves 1989). Sampson and Groves (1989) found that economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility, and family disruption led to high crime and delinquency rates and that this relationship was mediated by local friendship networks, teenage supervision, and organizational participation. Throughout the 1990s, numerous studies followed in this tradition, explicating the relationship between social ties, informal social control, and crime. In Bellair’s (1997) study of neighbor networks, he found that frequent and infrequent interaction among neighbors were important in reducing certain types of crime. Rountree and Warner (1999) explored the gendered nature of social ties and found that female social ties were effective in reducing violent crime, particularly in neighborhoods with few female-headed households. And Veysey and Messner’s (1999) replication of Sampson and Groves’ (1989) “community structure and crime” model revealed that, as friendship networks and organizational participation increase, crime rates decrease. The systemic model thus provided the dominant theoretical explanation of the relationship between adverse neighborhood structural conditions and crime and disorder. The implications of this theory and research are that local social ties
have positive effects on neighborhood informal social control. Social ties constitute a mechanism through which informal social control is exercised; they transmit behavioral expectancies, common goals and values, and informal sanctions. So, informal social control is due in part to social ties. However, few studies have actually tested this proposition.

Moreover, recent research has begun to suggest that the role of social ties as a determinant of informal social control may be more complex than previously thought (see Kubrin and Weitzer 2003a; Sampson et al. 2002). Specifically, local social ties may be neither necessary, nor sufficient, for neighborhood informal social control; it is the way social ties are activated and engaged that has implications for community attachment and informal social control.

In recent research, Sampson et al. (1997) developed a measure of “collective efficacy,” represented by two components: neighbors’ willingness to intervene for the good of the community, and social cohesion and mutual trust among neighbors. This measure of collective efficacy is consistent with past conceptualizations of social organization because it still describes a neighborhood’s ability to realize common goals, but it moves beyond this conceptualization, as well, by further specifying the environments in which neighborhood social ties are most effective.

Given the disputed contribution of social ties to informal social control, my dissertation seeks to explore other sources of informal social control. Specifically, I explore neighborhood attachment as a source of informal social control. I hypothesize that people who feel more attached to their neighborhood will likely be more invested in the prevention and control of local problems. Several studies in the urban sociology tradition have explored predictors of neighborhood attachment, including social status, local organizational participation, local social
and physical disorder, and length of residence (Austin and Baba 1990; Hunter 1974; Sampson 1988; Woldoff 2002). But few studies have examined the role of attachment as an independent variable, specifically as a source of neighborhood informal social control (for an exception, see Silver and Miller 2004).

**Research Goals**

Empirical research is needed to examine the sources of informal social control in urban neighborhoods and to explore their mediating effects on neighborhood structural disadvantage. In this dissertation, I explore the relationship between structural conditions, residential attachment, and informal social control, at the neighborhood level. I propose that neighborhood attachment – conceptualized as a multidimensional construct – is a primary determinant of neighborhood informal social control, and that neighborhood attachment mediates the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.

A strength of this dissertation research is that the explanatory variables and outcome variable are operationalized and measured at the neighborhood-level of analysis. As will be established in the following chapters, the concepts I explore in this dissertation are appropriately conceived of as neighborhood-level or collective phenomena, rather than mere aggregations of individual-level analogues. The data and statistical methods I employ are specifically designed to assess residents’ perceptions of collective neighborhood processes, including neighborhood attachment and informal social control.

As shown in Figure 1.1, I analyze three dimensions of neighborhood attachment – cognitive attachment, behavioral attachment, and affective attachment – as sources of informal social control. Cognitive attachment is defined as a resident’s ability to name and bound his
neighborhood. Behavioral attachment is comprised of family, friendship and neighbor networks, familiarity with neighborhood residents and outsiders, and organizational participation. Affective attachment is defined as the positive feelings people have about their neighborhood and how they evaluate it as a place to live. As also depicted in Figure 1.1, I then examine the extent to which these dimensions of attachment mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural characteristics and informal social control.

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Model of the Relationship between Neighborhood Structure, Attachment, and Informal Social Control**

The multidimensional conceptualization of attachment that I employ has its roots in Hunter’s work on “symbolic communities” (1974). It is useful to the extent that it differentiates between the thoughts, actions, and feelings that people have about their neighborhoods and how those dimensions affect their willingness to engage in behaviors to control or prevent local
problems. Also, it moves beyond outdated explanations of informal social control that rely on single measures of, or related to, social ties as predictors of informal social control. Few studies have explored sources of informal social control, and no other study has explored attachment as a source of informal social control in such a complete manner.

Organization of the Dissertation

The remainder of this dissertation is organized around the research goals discussed above. In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical and empirical literature on neighborhood effects and describe how neighborhoods matter for social order and crime prevention. First, I discuss research concerning how neighborhoods are defined, by sociologists as well as by local residents. How neighborhood residents cognitively perceive their neighborhood has implications for their identification with and attachment to that neighborhood. I also present recent developments in neighborhood research, including the move beyond the systemic model, the development of the notion of collective efficacy, and the importance of informal social control. Chapter 3 further defines informal social control; this includes examining the function of informal social control, situating informal social control amongst other forms of neighborhood social control, and exploring its limitations. In Chapter 4, I discuss attachment and neighborhood structural characteristics as sources of informal social control. I describe the effects of attachment and structural conditions on informal social control, as well as the proposed mediating effects of attachment on the relationship between those structural conditions and informal social control. I also present my conceptual models and research questions and hypotheses. In Chapter 5, I describe the data, measures, and statistical methods I use to address my research questions. In Chapter 6, the results of my analyses are presented. Finally, Chapter
7 provides a discussion of my results, conclusions based on my research questions, and implications for theory and future research, as well as limitations of this dissertation research.
The influence of social context on individual outcomes is a central precept of social science research. Not surprisingly, then, studies of local neighborhood context have enjoyed a long and productive research tradition in sociology. Specifically, sociologists have sought to understand the influence of the neighborhood’s social structure – population composition, mobility, poverty, for example – on its social organization. This research is grounded in a framework that emphasizes the ecological, social structural, and symbolic dimensions of neighborhood life (Hunter 1974). A basic assumption of this approach is that neighborhoods exhibit collective properties that can be examined and assessed independently of the characteristics of the individuals living there (Hawley 1950; Sampson 1988).

Does Neighborhood Matter?

Research arising from the ecological tradition, however, has had to address the changing nature and role of the local neighborhood. As American cities have become more industrialized and urbanized, the neighborhoods within them have become more complex and more spatially and socially segregated. Because this dissertation focuses on the relationship between neighborhood attachment and residents’ willingness to exercise informal social control, it is important to describe how the characteristics of local neighborhoods affect the collective actions of the residents within them. The theoretical foundations for this line of questioning draw from classic sociological theories of social change, including Ferdinand Tönnies’s ([1887] 2001) description of the shift from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft, Emile Durkheim’s ([1893] 1933)
similar discussion of mechanical and organic solidarity, as well as the work of the Chicago School, including Louis Wirth’s (1938) critique of modern urban life and Shaw and McKay’s (1942) extension of Park and Burgess’ (1925) model of social disorganization.

The central theme in these writings is that the Industrial Revolution and the resulting transition from rural, agrarian societies to urban, industrial city centers fundamentally altered the nature of social relations resulting in a “loss of community.” Tönnies offered a distinction between the intimate, familial-based relationships of small-scale, rural areas – Gemeinschaft – and the impersonal, sparsely-knit relationships of modern cities – Gesellschaft. Durkheim elaborated on Tönnies’ concepts and also described the loss of community that results from the division of labor in society, from the transition from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity referred to the social cohesion and sense of community that existed in small pre-industrial communities; individual differences were minimized, people worked together on similar tasks, and thus shared similar perspectives and values. The shift to organic solidarity was a result of the increasing division of labor in society; the social order was now characterized by a high degree of difference and differentiation, and community cohesion was the result of interdependence and economic need, not similarity and common goals.

A subsequent interpretation of these ideas is found in the work of the Chicago School, including the social disorganization theory of Shaw and McKay (1942) and, more specifically, Wirth’s (1938) theory of urban life. Wirth is best known for his description of an urban culture resulting from the increasing size, density, and heterogeneity of city populations. According to Wirth, this urban culture was characterized by weakened primary relationships, increased social and physical mobility, and a declining significance of the local community. Shaw and McKay blended Wirth’s ideas with Park and Burgess’s ecological observations of Chicago. Their
research showed that neighborhood structural characteristics—poverty, ethnic heterogeneity and residential mobility—disrupted local social networks and impeded a neighborhood’s ability to realize common goals, a condition they referred to as social disorganization.

The preceding assessments of urban life and the relevance of the local neighborhood as a basis for primary social bonds, community attachment, and informal social control present a pretty bleak picture. But as Shaw and McKay’s work demonstrates, perhaps the question is not “does neighborhood matter?” but “how does neighborhood matter?” Fortunately, in recent years, urban sociological theory and research have come a long way in revealing the naïveté of Wirth’s understanding of urban disintegration by providing evidence of the persistence of the neighborhood as a source of collective action. In an empirical test of the Wirthian hypothesis that city size, density, and heterogeneity weaken social ties, Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) refuted that idea. Instead they found that bonds of friendship and kinship continue to exist in the presence of these structural characteristics, with length of residence being a crucial factor explaining the development of those bonds and the assimilation of residents into the “social fabric” of the local community (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). Kasarda and Janowitz’s development of the systemic model marked an important shift, away from theory and research describing the loss of community and toward a new tradition reclaiming the significance of the neighborhood for social ties, local attachment, and informal social control.

Other theory and research further document the viability of the local neighborhood and the many resources that it provides. Ethnographic research conducted throughout the 1950s and 1960s detailed thriving neighborhoods, rich with kinship and friendship ties and a strong sense of community (Gans 1962). Albert Hunter’s (1975) survey research of a Rochester, New York neighborhood demonstrated the persistence of neighboring, social interaction, and sense of
community even in a period of declining use of local facilities such as grocery stores, movie theaters and churches. In related work on Chicago, Hunter (1974) identified three dimensions of the local community and the needs they serve: 1) community as a spatial unit meeting sustenance needs; 2) community as a social unit fostering social ties and interaction; and 3) community as a cultural-symbolic unit of collective identity. Arguably, the role of the neighborhood in providing economic and other functional needs can be questioned. Though it is clear that city dwellers rely less on their local neighborhood for resources such as jobs, entertainment, and shopping, and formal social control agents such as law enforcement and politicians are often located elsewhere, I follow others in arguing that Hunter’s framework is still viable. I will draw on it in the following sections as I discuss the spatial and social basis of local neighborhood attachment and informal social control.

The relevance of Hunter’s framework becomes clearer when considering Sampson’s (1999) discussion of the salience of the local neighborhood for a very important function: informal social control. As mentioned previously, neighborhood residents can work, play, and shop beyond the boundaries of their local neighborhood, traveling to the suburbs, or even the internet, for economic and other personal needs, and they generally rely on close friends and family for psychological support. What the contemporary local neighborhood does provide is a site for the development and maintenance of local norms affirming civility and mutual trust, public safety, local volunteerism, and collective responsibility for neighborhood children (Sampson 1999). Thus, though neighborhood residents may turn to agents of formal social control outside of the locality for resources like law enforcement and political representation, they rely on each other for informal social control. And though local neighborhood characteristics may play a limited role in influencing the ability of formal institutions to prevent
crime and disorder, these same characteristics are integral in determining the efficacy of informal social control in those neighborhoods.

The prior discussion highlights some of the debate about the “community question.” Prior urban sociological research has suggested that increasing urbanization has created neighborhoods marked by residential instability, fleeting social ties, and anonymity. However, other research, particularly criminological research aimed at identifying neighborhood variations in crime and disorder, has provided considerable evidence that neighborhoods continue to be important for crime prevention and control. These studies demonstrate the salience of the local neighborhood as an arena that sustains residents’ social ties, local attachments, and willingness to engage in informal social control. Thus, against the backdrop of urban change, community has been lost and found (Wellman, 1979). For the purposes of this dissertation, the main point is that there is good reason to hypothesize that neighborhoods matter, particularly for informal social control.

Neighborhood research has experienced a resurgence in recent years. Arguably the leader in this revival, Robert Sampson and his colleagues have continued work in the social disorganization tradition, exploring the mediating mechanisms of the relationship between neighborhood structure and crime. Also, the advent of new statistical techniques and datasets have allowed researchers to assess the impact of neighborhood characteristics on a range of outcomes while controlling for individual characteristics within those neighborhoods. These studies document the influence of neighborhoods on behavioral outcomes such as educational attainment, mental health, and delinquency (Ross 2000; Sampson 1997; South et al. 2003).

Before further describing the potentially positive effects of neighborhoods on informal social control, I will first consider the ways in which the concept of neighborhood may be
defined or operationalized. How neighborhoods are defined by social scientists, as well as by local residents, has important implications for the interpretation of neighborhood effects. Neighborhoods may be defined in many ways, according to their objective spatial boundaries or the more subjective social organization and experiences of those living there; this definition should be guided by the research question. Though this dissertation is primarily concerned with the social processes existing within a neighborhood, it is important to understand both the spatial and social dimensions of neighborhood that provide the foundations for community attachment and informal social control. First, I will discuss spatially-based definitions of neighborhood. Then I will discuss the various definitions of neighborhood that are more subjective, based on residents’ perceptions and social constructions.

**Spatial Definitions of Neighborhood**

Spatial definitions of neighborhood rely on geographic and ecological concepts. Broadly speaking, the neighborhood is defined as a geographically-bounded spatial unit and the processes that occur therein are measured using observable characteristics, such as residential mobility, racial composition, occupancy rates and land use. Neighborhood boundaries may be based on governmental or political distinctions – examples include census tracts – and those boundaries may shift depending on the social phenomena being studied (Sampson 1999). These spatially-based definitions are relevant to neighborhood research because they provide an organizing framework within which social scientists can observe social behavior and neighborhood residents can orient social action (Hunter 1974).

This kind of objective assessment of neighborhoods has its roots in the Chicago School of human ecology. The research goals of the Chicago School included identifying characteristics of
local areas that bred crime and disorder; they were looking to shift the academic focus away from “kinds of people” explanations of crime and deviance and instead toward explanations that emphasize “kinds of places.” The Chicago School conceptualized cities as similar to ecosystems found in nature, with people interacting in their urban communities in much the same ways that organisms interact in their natural environments. Human interrelationships were governed by the dynamic processes of community competition, dominance, and succession (Park 1936). The city was viewed as a collection of communities or “natural areas,” territories that resulted from natural city growth and were delineated by physical boundaries such as rivers, highways, and industrial zones (Choldin 1984). Park and Burgess (Park et al. 1925) referred to these natural areas as concentric zones, each of which had its own economic structure, organization, and residential population. The Chicago School’s identification of these concentric zones and their extensive use of mapping revealed the spatial distribution of social problems.

Though the work of the Chicago School was instrumental in the development of social disorganization theory, the use of ecological models of urban life has been criticized as overly simplistic, neglecting the cultural and social dimensions of neighborhoods and the political-economic impact of urbanization on city growth and change. Recent work in defining the concept of neighborhood and assessing its spatial dimensions has focused on two themes. First is that the drawing of geographic neighborhood boundaries is arbitrary and impermanent. Second, and related to the first, is the recognition that neighborhoods are not independent; they are dependent on each other, and also embedded within a larger urban structure (Morenoff et al. 2001; Sampson 1999). Despite these complications, recent studies of neighborhood effects have set out to improve upon prior research. These studies have gone beyond traditional census-based measures by choosing geographic units of analysis that attempt to capture the physical
boundaries and social homogeneity of the neighborhoods of interest. Neighborhoods are measured so as not only to delineate their spatial characteristics but also to capture the demographic characteristics of the people living there. Thus, when assessing neighborhood effects, sociologists can be more certain that they are measuring the collective efforts of groups of people not just arbitrarily thrown together in space but meaningfully stratified along racial and class dimensions. The need to adequately operationalize neighborhoods as not just spatial units but also as places of social action will be discussed in the following section. I will also address this issue further when I present the data used for this dissertation.

**Social Definitions of Neighborhood**

When attempting to define *neighborhood*, it is not enough to identify that neighborhood’s geographic characteristics and boundaries. Spatially-based definitions are useful, but even the scholars of the Chicago School realized that the spatial dimensions of neighborhoods reflect the social processes occurring within them. Also, as mentioned earlier, the neighborhood provides a spatial referent for local attachment and social action (Hunter 1974). Park (1916: 579) defined neighborhood as “a locality with sentiments, traditions, and a history of its own.” The numerous definitions of the neighborhood that have been proposed since then typically include certain minimal elements: “a small residential area, a homogenous population, intimacy of social relations, and some social psychological effects: common behavior patterns, self-consciousness, loyalty” (Choldin 1984: 241). These definitions do mention a spatial component but also emphasize the social importance of the neighborhood, including the social ties, interactions, and attachments that are fostered and sustained there.
Perhaps residents’ definitions and perceptions of their neighborhood are just as important as spatial definitions in understanding the experiences of those living there. Not all residents see their neighborhoods in the same way. Logan and Collver (1983: 432) contended that “residents’ perceptions of what their community and other communities are like are as important to urban theory as the information on objective characteristics on which most urban research is based.” Prior research has investigated variations in how residents define their neighborhoods and the implications these definitions have for local attachment and informal social control.

For example, Suttles (1972) suggests that residents conceptualize and interpret their living space with the use of “mental maps.” Suttles (1972: 22) described the ways in which residents construct these mental maps of urban areas which “need not necessarily correspond closely with the actual physical structure.” He argues that the drawing of these maps and their boundaries provides a social control function; they define the areas within which social contact and cohesion are viable and they regulate movement within and between urban neighborhoods to avoid potential social conflict with antagonistic groups.

Variations in residents’ definitions of neighborhood were further explored in Hunter’s (1974) research on Chicago communities. He explored this variation by assessing residents’ “cognitive image” of their neighborhood, or their ability to identify the neighborhood’s name, its boundaries, and its size. According to Hunter (1974: 68), neighborhood boundaries are more than convenient identifiers; they are components of the “symbolic community,” a shared social construction of the neighborhood that conveys its spatial and social properties as well as its cultural norms. Hunter’s work suggests that how one defines his neighborhood may be related to how much a part of that neighborhood he feels, how he evaluates it and how attached he is to it.
The implications of neighborhood naming, and other cognitive assessments, for neighborhood attachment and informal social control will be further explored in Chapter 4.

Residents’ definitions and perceptions of their neighborhood might also vary depending on demographic characteristics, such as social status, race, or length of residence, among other things. Building on Hunter’s (1974) work, Lee and Campbell (1997: 923) used survey data to assess the extent to which respondents agree on what “neighborhood” means. They asked questions about what one means by “neighborhood,” what they call their neighborhood, its size, and finally, they asked respondents to engage in a cognitive mapping exercise. They found that who one is has a significant impact on how they define their neighborhood. Definitions of neighborhood size varied greatly by sex, race and age. Also, blacks, unemployed, unmarried and long-term residents typically stressed the social dimension of their environment, while young, white, employed, and well-educated residents tend to define the territorial structure of their neighborhood. These findings suggest that those individuals who are locationally constrained view their neighborhoods in terms of more intimate and personal relationships, while those who are mobile and whose day-to-day lives are lived beyond their neighborhoods are less likely to recognize its social qualities. Thus, demographic characteristics such as race and class have implications for residents’ definitions of neighborhood and the social processes occurring therein.

Residents’ evaluations of the nature and consequences of neighborhood structural and social characteristics are also important. The effects of neighborhood characteristics on behavior may be misunderstood if residents’ subjective perceptions of those effects are not taken into account (Lee 2001). Lee (2001: 34) provided the example that “the collective perception of local income inequality could have a bigger impact on trust among neighbors and their willingness to
intervene than does its objective counterpart.” In an empirical test of this hypothesis, Taylor, Gottfredson and Brower (1981) measured the relationship between perceived neighborhood social climate and residents’ “territorial cognitions,” or perceptions of various dimensions of neighborhood life. Specifically, residents were asked how similar their neighbors were to them with respect to education, income, age and the like. Residents in neighborhoods perceived as less homogenous were more likely to report problems related to a lack of neighborhood control, including loitering, physical disorder, and fear of crime.

Thus, it is not enough to objectively measure neighborhood social processes, such as the number of local social ties or behaviors related to informal social control; to truly capture the collective nature of these phenomena, it is necessary to document how residents perceive them. The operational definition of “neighborhood” utilized in this dissertation is a spatial unit containing a relatively homogenous population with respect to key demographic characteristics; in addition, residents’ perceptions of the social processes of interest, including attachment and informal social control, were assessed independently.

**The Effects of Neighborhood**

The preceding sections have documented the continuing significance of neighborhoods as units of social organization and action. But how is it that the resources that neighborhoods promote or inhibit affect outcomes such as social disorder and crime? Researchers’ interest in questions of neighborhood and neighborhood processes has yielded a rich body of evidence regarding the structural determinants of informal social control and its role as a mediator in the relationship between social structure and crime. Much of this evidence derives theoretical support from social disorganization theory and the systemic model of social ties, a model which
posits that social ties are the most important predictors of neighborhood attachment and informal social control (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). (The relationship between attachment and informal social control will be explored in Chapter 4.)

Despite the theoretical significance of the systemic model, recent research has questioned the role of social ties as a determinant of informal social control. Drawing on Coleman’s (1988) theory of social capital, Sampson et al. (1997) have developed the concept of collective efficacy to specify the ways in which social ties and other neighborhood processes contribute to the control and prevention of crime. The following sections discuss the weaknesses of social disorganization theory and the theoretical development of collective efficacy and its relationship to informal social control.

Social Disorganization Theory

Arguably one of the most influential theories of crime and delinquency, Shaw and McKay’s (1942) social disorganization theory posits a relationship between neighborhood structural characteristics, such as poverty and residential mobility, and crime. The authors argued that these neighborhood structural characteristics impeded the ability of neighborhood residents to realize common goals to control and prevent crime, a condition they referred to as social disorganization. Supporting their hypotheses, they found that areas plagued by low economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility, where behavioral norms and values were difficult to communicate and constantly changing, were also those that consistently experienced high rates of crime and delinquency.

Though Shaw and McKay did not suggest a direct causal relationship between neighborhood structure and crime, the mediating mechanism was never explicitly measured. The
protective influences of social organization were implied, not empirically observed. The theory fell out of favor, perhaps due to its overemphasis on structural sources of social disorganization, and its neglect in measuring the intervening social processes hypothesized to shape a neighborhood’s response to its structural conditions. In recent years, however, studies have attempted to extend and test social disorganization theory, and identify the neighborhood mechanisms that mediate the exogenous effects of neighborhood organization on crime (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Kornhauser 1978; Sampson and Groves 1989).

Measuring the Effects of Neighborhood Structure

The Systemic Model

Since Shaw and McKay’s time, the effects of social disorganization on neighborhood social control have been clarified using the systemic model of social ties (Bursik and Grasmick 1993). According to the systemic model, the foundations of neighborhood informal social control are found in social ties (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). The neighborhood is conceptualized as a “complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal associational ties rooted in family life and on-going socialization processes” (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974: 329). Thus, neighborhood stability fosters local friendships and kinships, organizational participation, and feelings of neighborhood involvement (Sampson 1988).

Bursik and Grasmick’s systemic model of crime (1993) integrates social disorganization theory and the systemic model to clarify the relationship between neighborhood structure, social ties, and social control. The authors utilize Hunter’s (1985) private, parochial, and public levels of social control to explain how social networks can be effective in controlling crime at the neighborhood level. Private social control is grounded in intimate familial relationships and
friendships. It is exercised through such actions as criticism, ostracism, and violence. Parochial social control is exercised through networks of neighbors and local institutions, such as schools, churches, and voluntary organizations. Public social control refers to the ability of the neighborhood to solicit resources from agencies outside of the community, such as funding for local social services and law enforcement.

According to this model, in neighborhoods characterized by disadvantage, residential instability, and ethnic heterogeneity, social networks are continually in flux, and social ties are difficult to cultivate and maintain. Due to this lack of primary relationships, informal neighborhood supervision and surveillance of local residents are rare and unlikely, and solicitation of external resources is made difficult; the ability of neighborhood residents to keep themselves self safe and free from crime is undermined.

**Social Capital**

Recently, the role of the systemic model in laying the foundations for neighborhood social organization and control has been questioned. Critics of the systemic model have suggested that neighborhood theory and research need to explicate the ways in which neighborhood social ties are activated or engaged for purposeful social action. Sociologists have begun to use the term “social capital” – analogous to financial capital – to describe the value that social networks provide (Putnam 2000; Rose and Clear 1998; Rosenfeld et al. 2001; Sampson et al. 1997). Though it is defined in many ways, social capital can be thought of as a resource that is derived from and facilitated by social ties (Coleman 1988; Portes 1998). Social capital emphasizes the information and resources that are transmitted through social ties, such as neighboring parents sharing information about one another’s children (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003a). Social capital is created when the structure and organization of social relations between
people facilitates action, “making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible” (Coleman 1990: 300). One of the neighborhood outcomes thought to be facilitated by social capital is informal social control; regular interaction and communication between neighbors are hypothesized to create a sense of community, responsibility, and willingness to prevent local problems among residents. Coleman was clear that social capital is not a characteristic of individuals but, rather, of social organization and relations; it exists within families as well as in the community.

Because Coleman was interested in the community context of childrearing, he proposed family-related dimensions of neighborhood organization that facilitate the availability of social capital. Intergenerational closure describes the extent to which adults and children in the community are tied to one another (Sampson et al. 1999). This fosters neighborhood interaction if, for example, parents know the parents of their children’s friends and are more likely to monitor and supervise children other than their own (Sampson et al. 1999; Gephart 1997). In a related way, informal social control of children is suggested to be an important indicator of the cohesiveness of the neighborhood (Sampson et al. 1999). In a stable, integrated neighborhood, parents may be more likely to watch over not only their own children, but also neighbors’ children. Further, this informal supervision has implications for the control of neighborhood crime and delinquency; if local children feel that the whole neighborhood is aware of their behavior, they may be less likely to misbehave. And, because group activities involving local youths, such as loitering, truancy, and vandalism, are often the predecessors of more serious delinquent and criminal involvement, this informal social control of local children may help to reduce neighborhood crime and delinquency (Sampson 1987).
In neighborhoods rich in social capital, children are supervised, residents are happy with their local surroundings, and streets are safer (Putnam 2000). Conversely, in disadvantaged neighborhoods, the flight of economic capital often also leads to a deficit of social capital (Wilson 1987). In these neighborhoods, higher-income families have fled, neighborhood institutions such as schools, churches, and stores have broken down, and joblessness and poverty have taken hold. Role models disappear, informal neighborhood supervision becomes less prevalent, and residents become less and less willing to feel pride or take responsibility in their neighborhood. Furthermore, neighborhoods like this, where social capital is lacking, become even more vulnerable to the ongoing impact of poverty, unemployment, and family disruption.

**Collective Efficacy**

Social capital and collective efficacy are conceptually related but distinct; if social capital is understood as the “resource potential of personal and organizational networks,” then collective efficacy is viewed as a process of “activating or converting social ties to achieve desired outcomes” (Sampson et al. 1999: 635). Thus, collective efficacy can be understood as the process through which social capital is converted into effective action. This distinction is important, because it highlights a fundamental feature of social ties: they do not always matter for social organization and informal social control. A growing body of evidence indicates that strong social ties in a neighborhood do not inevitably translate into, and may sometimes even inhibit, effective social controls (Wilson 1996; Patillo-McCoy 1999; Bellair 1997). So, neighborhood collective efficacy shifts attention from social ties of the systemic model to a “focus on mechanisms that facilitate social control without requiring strong ties or associations” (Morenoff et al. 2001: 520). As Sampson et al. (1997: 919) assert, it is the “linkage of mutual trust and willingness to intervene for the common good that defines the neighborhood context of
collective efficacy” and the differential ability of neighborhoods to regulate themselves. Importantly, then, collective efficacy is a means by which to measure the mechanisms and processes of social control.

Sampson et al. (1997) have demonstrated the ameliorative effects of collective efficacy using survey data from over 8000 residents in Chicago neighborhoods. The authors measure of “collective efficacy,” is represented by two components: social cohesion and mutual trust among neighbors, and neighbors’ willingness to intervene for the good of the community (Sampson et al. 1997). As stated previously, this measure of collective efficacy is consistent with past conceptualizations of social organization because it describes a neighborhood’s ability to realize common goals, but it moves beyond this conceptualization as well, further specifying the environments in which neighborhood social ties are most effective. That is, in neighborhoods characterized by mutual trust and solidarity among residents, those residents will be more willing and better able to realize common goals and maintain order. On the other hand, in neighborhoods plagued by fear and mistrust, where rules of behavior are unclear or non-existent, residents may be unwilling to engage in behaviors to prevent crime and disorder. Collective efficacy was found to have a significant and negative relationship with neighborhood violence, even when controlling for neighborhood disadvantage and prior rates of violence.

**Informal Social Control**

So, if social capital is conceptualized as the resource potential of social ties within a neighborhood, then collective efficacy is the neighborhood’s ability to mobilize these ties to achieve an effective outcome. However, collective efficacy is comprised of two components, one of which is informal social control. Informal social control is defined as the “effort of the community to regulate itself and the behavior of residents and visitors to the neighborhood to
achieve this specific goal” (Bursik 1988: 15). It is found in the social networks of the community; when communities are socially organized, they are able to transmit and maintain traditional norms and standards of behavior (Sampson and Groves 1989). When communities are disorganized, social ties are attenuated, anonymity is prevalent, and the willingness and ability of local residents to supervise and take responsibility for local problems is unlikely.

In my dissertation research, I have separated informal social control from the other component of collective efficacy, social cohesion and mutual trust, because informal social control is more relevant to my research questions. Informal social control is about behaviors, and I am exploring neighborhood attachment as a predictor of those behaviors. It would be difficult to explore attachment as a source of social cohesion and mutual trust because the two are heavily confounded. Also, informal social control has received more theoretical attention in the neighborhood effects literature, so my dissertation is an attempt to provide a much-needed empirical contribution to this body of work. For these reasons I am focusing on informal social control, not collective efficacy.

This review of neighborhood mechanisms of socialization and organization – the systemic model, social capital, collective efficacy, and informal social control – has illustrated the complex and interrelated nature of these mechanisms. Neighborhood residents are differentially able to tap into these resources to achieve and maintain social control, and ultimately keep themselves safe and free from crime, deviance and disorder. In the following section I discuss the theoretical significance of informal social control for studies of neighborhood crime.
CHAPTER 3
INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL

The primary focus of this dissertation is informal social control, or the willingness and ability of neighborhood residents to regulate their behavior and work together to achieve and maintain neighborhood safety and order. The relevance of informal social control for neighborhood crime control is rooted in the broader concept of neighborhood social control. As defined by Janowitz (1976: 9-10), social control is “the ability of a social group or collectivity to engage in self-regulation.” In effect, neighborhood social control describes the ability of residents to utilize primary and secondary networks, as well as external resources, to keep themselves safe and free from crime. So, if neighborhood disorganization is understood as the inability of local residents to work together to realize common goals, then neighborhood organization may be thought of as neighborhood residents’ ability to develop and maintain effective social controls (Sampson 1999).

Levels of Social Control

Neighborhood social control is defined on several levels. As described in the earlier discussion of Bursik and Grasmick’s systemic model of crime (see Chapter 2), levels of neighborhood social control are distinguished by the origins of their control, and also by the needs and services each level of social control provides. Public, or formal, social control is rooted in government resources, including law enforcement, politics, and economic development, and is a function of the networks between neighborhood residents and these outside agencies. Informal social control, including private and parochial control, is grounded in
family and friendship ties, as well as neighborhood networks and community groups (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Hunter 1985). Private social control has its roots in the family, where social control is exercised through the availability and threatened withdrawal of sentiment, social support, and esteem (Hunter 1985). Parochial social control is found in networks between neighborhood residents and local voluntary neighborhood organizations and institutions, such as stores, churches, and schools. The resources that parochial social control provides include regulatory functions such as the collective supervision of local youth by neighborhood residents, and intervention when trouble occurs. Parochial social control also involves meeting the sustenance needs of the local neighborhood, such as shopping, education, and local recreation (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Rose and Clear 1998). Together, private and parochial social control comprise what is generally referred to as *informal* social control.

Though there are important distinctions to be made between the various levels of neighborhood social control, and each has its limitations, their interdependence should not be ignored. In first describing private, parochial, and public levels of social control, Hunter (1985) carefully delineated the relationships between them and argued that one cannot be expected to maintain neighborhood order without the other. Parochial controls operate more effectively in neighborhoods characterized by strong private controls. For example, the ability of the neighborhood PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) to function as an agent of parochial social control is enhanced when parents of neighborhood children know each other, interact with each other, and share information. Parochial control may also replace private controls in situations where those controls are no longer viable. As children grow into teenagers and their activities move outside of the family and into the neighborhood, increased parochial control may help to curb teenage misbehavior and its consequences.
Formal social control is also more accessible and more effective in the presence of strong informal social controls. In recent work, Carr (2003) has recommended that research investigating the positive effects of informal social control focus on neighborhood residents’ ability to organize at the parochial level to garner external resources and connect with public agencies of social control outside the neighborhood. In an ethnographic study of one Chicago neighborhood, Carr (2003) described the process by which neighborhood residents and voluntary organizations solved local problems, such as crime, with the help of external institutions. Carr suggested that this cooperation between local residents and external actors, such as police officers and local government officials, represents a new type of informal social control, which he referred to as “the new parochialism.”

Also, private and parochial social controls are beginning to be seen as important contributors to formal social control as public agencies, along with neighborhood residents, look for new ways to combat rising crime and disorder. The demand for social control is shifting to this more informal level as the resources of law enforcement agencies are increasingly focused on more innovative responses to neighborhood crime, such as community policing, and the role of police officers as neighborhood guardians is seen as tenable only in the context of strong local bonds and collaboration between neighborhood residents and the police (Greene and Taylor 1988; Hunter 1985). Recent research indicates that these informal relationships between local residents and police may be effective in improving neighborhood quality even in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Reisig and Parks 2004).

Though the criminal justice system is often considered the ultimate agent of social control in urban neighborhoods, several studies have demonstrated the ineffectiveness of such formal social control when its relationship to informal social control is absent or weakened (Carr
2003; Rose and Clear 1998; Silver and Miller 2004). For example, Rose and Clear (1998) have suggested that an over-reliance on formal agents of social control, namely incarceration, may disrupt social networks and ultimately result in weak informal social controls. Also, Silver and Miller (2004) have shown that satisfaction with neighborhood police resources is positively related to informal social control. Thus, cooperative relationships between police officers and neighborhood residents may encourage collective attempts at the prevention of local problems.

As I articulated in the previous chapter, neighborhoods are hypothesized to be important settings for social action, including formal and informal social control. The inter-relationships between levels of social control highlight the significance of private and parochial, or informal, social control for neighborhood safety and order. I suggest that informal social control is the basis for other forms of social control and can be understood as a vital link to resources of formal social control. Formal social control, such as police intervention, may only be effective in neighborhoods characterized by a high degree of informal social control, where residents communicate with each other, take responsibility for local problems, organize locally, and work collaboratively and voluntarily with agents of formal social control. In the following section I describe the unique contributions of informal social control to neighborhood organization.

The Role of Informal Social Control

As stated previously, in contrast to public, or formal, forms of social control, informal social control describes the capacity of neighborhood residents to collectively regulate their behavior in accordance with common goals (Sampson et al. 1997). It is the willingness of local residents to intervene for the common good – social order, safety – of the neighborhood. According to Sampson (1987: 104), “a community oriented approach to informal social control
rests on the assumption that the only truly effective means of maintaining public norms is by neighbors assuming responsibility for one another.” Examples of informal social control include recognizing and sharing information about strangers in the neighborhood, supervising neighborhood children and teenagers and admonishing their misconduct, and intervening in neighborhood disturbances.

Thus, a primary benefit of informal social control is the control of neighborhood deviance, disorder, and crime. Presumably, the willingness and ability of neighborhood residents to supervise and regulate local behaviors, and sanction deviations from established norms of safety and civilized conduct, will result in less deviance. Conversely, the appearance in the neighborhood of minor forms of deviance and disorder, what Hunter (1985) refers to as incivilities, might signal to local residents, particularly delinquency-inclined youths, that other residents are indifferent to what goes on in their neighborhood and take little responsibility for actions occurring there (Sampson 1987). In neighborhoods where informal social control has deteriorated in such a way, it may appear that minor deviant behavior is tolerated, and even that new avenues of deviance are readily available to be explored without the fear of punishment.

Within a social disorganization framework, informal social control is understood as a central link between neighborhood structural characteristics (i.e. disadvantage, residential instability, immigrant concentration) and social disorder (Silver and Miller 2004). Several recent studies have demonstrated the positive effects of informal social control in reducing neighborhood crime and deviance. Generally these studies have utilized indirect measures of informal social control, such as neighborhood organizational participation or sense of responsibility to the neighborhood. Studying 63 neighborhoods in Baltimore, Taylor et al. (1984a) found that residents’ sense of neighborhood responsibility and participation in
neighborhood organizations were significantly and negatively related to neighborhood violence, controlling for other relevant neighborhood characteristics. Also, in a study of 553 residents of 12 New York City neighborhoods, Simcha-Fagan and Schwartz (1986) reported a significant negative relationship between rates of neighborhood organizational participation and self-reported delinquency. In a survey of 300 communities in Great Britain, Sampson and Groves (1989) found that local friendship networks and organizational participation were negatively associated with robbery and stranger violence, while the prevalence of unsupervised teenage groups had a positive effect on these crimes. In a 1996 study of 1,045 families from Denver and Chicago, Elliott et al. (1996) developed a broad measure of informal social control – mutual respect, institutional controls, social control, and neighborhood bonding - and found that it mediated the effects of neighborhood disadvantage on adolescent development.

It is important to note that informal social control, as described in my dissertation, is particularly focused on child-centered activities. As discussed previously, a relationship between local youth misbehavior and neighborhood disorder is predicted by prior theory and research. Social disorganization and routine activities theories propose a link between unsupervised youth groups, unstructured youth socializing, and aggregate rates of delinquency and deviance (Osgood and Anderson 2004; Osgood et al. 1996; Sampson and Groves 1989). And because minor disturbances involving neighborhood children, such as loitering and vandalism, often lead to more serious delinquency and crime, it is suggested that the supervision and socialization of local youth have important implications for preventing and controlling neighborhood crime and deviance (Bursik 1988).

Together, the studies presented above demonstrate the positive effects of neighborhood informal social control in reducing neighborhood crime and delinquency and mediating some of
the effects of neighborhood disadvantage. However, these studies are not without their limitations. As mentioned previously, they tend to rely on measures of informal social control, such as social ties or organizational participation, that are more appropriately considered sources of informal social control. In this dissertation, I not only rely on an outcome measure of informal social control that accurately captures the range of behaviors related to neighborhood control over youth deviance, but I also fully specify the thoughts, behaviors, and feelings—referred to here as neighborhood attachment—that are hypothesized to be sources of informal social control.

**Culture and Informal Social Control**

It is important to highlight the normative nature of social control and its implications for neighborhood informal social control. The assumption here is that there is a consensus of goals, all supporting neighborhood safety and order. Past studies of neighborhoods and crime have assumed that residents will work together to keep their local neighborhoods safe and free from crime. Some criminological scholars have questioned this assumption. Though the issue of neighborhood culture is not new (see Kornhauser 1978; Shaw and McKay 1942), recent work has brought culture to the forefront of studies of neighborhood disorganization in suggesting that the development and maintenance of cohesive neighborhood value systems may be untenable in certain disadvantaged neighborhoods (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003a; Warner 2003). Such neighborhoods are plagued by conditions of poverty, violence, and crime, conditions which may exacerbate residents’ concerns about personal safety and breed distrust of agents of formal social control, including the police. Ethnographic research supports the decline of collective attempts at informal social control in these neighborhoods, and the emergence of a set of opposing values
and beliefs oriented toward personal protection, including the use of violence (Anderson 1999; Sampson and Wilson 1995).

There are two competing explanations of the role of culture in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003a; Warner 2003). In the subcultural model, originally presented by Shaw and McKay (1942), residents of poor, residentially unstable, and ethnically diverse neighborhoods are faced with a range of competing value systems, some of which support delinquency, violence, and other illegal behavior and imply that such unconventional behavior can bring respect and prestige. A more recent approach, the cultural attenuation model, suggests that the cultural source of neighborhood crime rates is not in competing values, but rather in weakened conventional values (Kornhauser 1978; Warner 2003). This model focuses on neighborhood structure, particularly neighborhood disadvantage and residential instability, as an impediment to the visibility and viability of conventional values; conventional values are hypothesized to be present, though the means through which residents are able to realize them may be limited or non-existent, thus weakening the shared belief in those values. Kornhauser (1978) argued that weakened values partly define social disorganization; that is, neighborhoods with attenuated culture cannot effectively exercise informal social control.

Conclusions drawn from this theory and research are not simple. Empirical research suggests that even when opposing subcultures exist in disadvantaged neighborhoods, conventional values regarding neighborhood safety are also present (Elliott et al. 1996; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003b; Sampson and Jeglum-Bartusch 1998). However, neighborhood structural conditions make it difficult for residents to realize these conventional values and exercise informal social control. Warner (2003) has demonstrated that residents’ perceptions of weakened conventional values in the neighborhood, such as the importance of education,
honesty, and respect of elders, are negatively related to neighborhood informal social control, and that this cultural attenuation is more prevalent in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Thus, it is not the disappearance of core values of neighborhood safety that has negative consequences for informal social control, but the structural impediments to realize those values. (I will discuss structural impediments to the exercise of informal social control in Chapter 4.)

In my dissertation research, I argue that the desire of neighborhood residents to live in a crime-free neighborhood is virtually universal. Though I recognize the cultural heterogeneity of contemporary urban neighborhoods, I maintain that even in such conditions, residents largely agree on wanting safe streets and are willing, though not always able, to work together to achieve this goal. Accordingly, my research focus is not on cultural variations in informal social control but on the sources of informal social control, including neighborhood attachment. However, the impact of neighborhood culture should not be ignored here, as it might be confounded with other measures in my model. Unfortunately, I cannot measure neighborhood culture or cultural attenuation in this dissertation; to do this, I would need measures of residents’ perceptions of the presence of conventional values in their neighborhood, measures which the dataset I am using does not provide. Because the empirical research regarding neighborhood culture points to the significance of neighborhood structural conditions for determining the prevalence of conventional values, it is likely that the effects of neighborhood culture will be most heavily confounded with neighborhood structural conditions, particularly concentrated disadvantage (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003a; Sampson and Wilson 1995; Warner 2003). This limitation to my dissertation research will be further discussed in Chapter 7.
CHAPTER 4

SOURCES OF INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL

In the preceding chapters I have argued that the local neighborhood is a viable unit of social action, and I have provided evidence that informal social control is arguably one of the most important forms of neighborhood social action. In this dissertation, I suggest that neighborhood attachment is an important source of neighborhood informal social control because attachment helps to facilitate neighborhood responsibility and investment. Accordingly, as depicted conceptually in Figure 1.1 (page 7), I hypothesize that neighborhood attachment – cognitive, behavioral and affective – will be positively related to neighborhood levels of informal social control. Further, I hypothesize that neighborhood attachment will help to explain some of the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.

To illustrate, imagine a place in which residents share knowledge of their neighborhood, including its name, and that residents know each other by name, acknowledge each other in the street, help each other with home repairs, and are involved in local organizations. In such a neighborhood, residents are likely to exhibit high levels of satisfaction with neighborhood life and feel a sense of investment, mutual obligation and willingness to intervene to prevent and control local problems: “I’m going to stop those kids from shooting firecrackers in my neighbor’s yard, because I know that my neighbor would do the same for me. This neighborhood is such a great place in which to live, and I want to keep it that way.” On the other hand, in a neighborhood where residents cannot agree on the boundaries that make up their neighborhood, are unaware or ashamed of its name, and where residents do not know each other, and interact and help each other only infrequently, there is less likely to be a sense of
satisfaction, pride or investment in the neighborhood or feelings that intervention in local problems would be reciprocated by other neighbors: “I’m not going to try to stop those kids shooting firecrackers next door; I don’t even know if they are my neighbors’ kids and I don’t care anyway. This neighborhood is a dump and I cannot wait to leave it.”

In this chapter, I will discuss sources of neighborhood informal social control, including cognitive, behavioral and affective attachment, specifically addressing the potential direct effects of these forms of attachment on informal social control. I will also discuss the potential mediating effects of neighborhood attachment on the relationship between neighborhood structure and informal social control.

**Neighborhood Attachment**

Studies of neighborhood attachment have a rich tradition in urban sociology. This research suggests that, at the neighborhood level, local characteristics will affect how attached people become to their local environment, and, further, that how attached people are to their neighborhood may influence how involved or invested they are in local activities. Though prior research examining neighborhood attachment has tended to rely exclusively on measures that capture residents’ feelings about their neighborhood, it has more recently been suggested that neighborhood attachment should be operationalized as a multi-dimensional construct (Fischer et al. 1977; Hunter 1974; Riger and Lavrakas 1981; Taylor et al. 1985; Woldoff 2002). This multi-dimensional approach to measuring neighborhood attachment reflects the fact that neighborhoods themselves are multi-dimensional, providing, among other things, sustenance needs, a place for neighborly interactions, and a sense of identity (Hunter 1974).
The distinction between different forms of attachment is also consistent with the concept of the “community of limited liability” (Hunter 1974; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). This concept recognizes that today’s neighborhood residents are often able to travel outside of their local neighborhood for many needs such as entertainment, employment, and shopping, yet still rely on their local neighborhood and its residents to fulfill certain utilitarian needs, including safety or protection of their home and children (Janowitz 1952; Suttles 1972). Thus, according to the concept of the community of limited liability, neighborhood attachment may vary within and across neighborhoods; residents develop local attachments, but only to the extent that the neighborhood fulfills their utilitarian needs. In my dissertation, I argue that neighborhood attachment is an integral part of the causal structure that provides such utilitarian needs, including neighborhood informal social control.

A strength of my dissertation research is that I will examine the associations between several dimensions of neighborhood attachment and neighborhood levels of social control. Specifically, I will explore the effects of three dimensions of neighborhood attachment – cognitive, behavioral, and affective – on informal social control. This multidimensional conceptualization of neighborhood attachment is useful because it highlights the distinction between behaviors of residents in their neighborhoods and the feelings about the neighborhood that may or may not accompany those behaviors. In the following sections, I discuss the effects of cognitive, behavioral, and affective attachment on informal social control.

Cognitive Attachment

As described in an earlier chapter of this dissertation, cognitive perceptions of the local neighborhood, such as neighborhood size or name, are more than simple descriptors; they reflect
what Hunter calls the symbolic identity of the neighborhood (1974). Hunter hypothesized that “a person’s identification of his community may be expected to tap his identification with the community” (Hunter 1974: 95). Thus, the ways in which residents perceive their neighborhood – its name and size – may serve to orient them in space as they identify the areas in which they interact, express attachment, and exercise informal social control. In this dissertation, cognitive attachment is comprised of the presence of a neighborhood name, and the degree of consensus among residents regarding the neighborhood’s size.

**Naming the Neighborhood**

The extent to which neighborhood residents are aware of or able to agree on a name for their local area is assumed to reflect the residents’ sense of collective identity and investment in their neighborhood. It has been suggested that neighborhood naming is an indicator of neighborhood attachment because, when people are attached to a neighborhood, they are more likely to identify it by name (Taylor, Gottfredson and Brower 1984b). In studies of Baltimore street blocks, Taylor et al. (1984b; Taylor, Gottfredson, and Shumaker 1984) found that neighborhood naming was associated with other dimensions of neighborhood attachment, including social ties and positive evaluations and sentiments about the neighborhood. Taylor et al. (1985) also found that, on street blocks where residents could supply a neighborhood name, police were called less frequently and fear of crime was low. Thus, it could be argued that, in neighborhoods where residents can supply a name, they are more likely to feel a sense of investment and, thus, may be more willing to engage in informal social control aimed at preventing disorder and crime.
Theory and research investigating neighborhood size as an indicator of neighborhood attachment have produced varied results. Some studies have found that perceptions of smaller neighborhood size reflect more positive sentiment about the neighborhood and positive evaluations about the neighborhood as a place to live (see Wasserman 1982; Lee and Guest 1983); others have found that neighborhoods perceived as larger were associated with more positive local sentiment, but ambivalent evaluations of the neighborhood as a place to live (see Hunter 1974); finally, others find no effect of size on neighborhood evaluations (see Stinner et al. 1990). Thus, the research investigating relationships between residents’ perceptions of neighborhood size and neighborhood attachment offer no clear conclusions.

This is not surprising, given that the theory guiding this research suggests that neighborhood size is relevant as an indicator of neighborhood attachment because, much like a neighborhood name, it reflects residents’ shared or collective identity of the neighborhood (Hunter 1974). However, perhaps a better point to be explored is the use of neighborhood size consensus as an indicator of neighborhood attachment. Recent research has examined the degree of consensus and dissensus among residents’ perceptions of the physical identity of their neighborhoods; a study of Nashville neighborhoods indicates considerable variability in residents’ assessments of neighborhood size (Lee 2001; Lee and Campbell 1997). I argue that a consensus on neighborhood size may serve as a kind of proxy for a collective “mental map” of the neighborhood. Mental maps are cognitive representations of peoples’ living space, including its shape and boundaries (Suttles 1972). To the extent that neighborhood residents can agree on their neighborhood’s size, this agreement may reflect similarities among their mental representations of what area constitutes the neighborhood. In this way, consensus among
residents in estimating the size of their neighborhood may reflect agreement in their mental maps, which may in turn indicate a shared sense of identity regarding their neighborhood. Moreover, as Suttles (1972) argues, these mental maps serve a social control function for neighborhood residents because they use these maps to demarcate areas, including their neighborhoods, within which they are willing and able to interact with other residents and intervene in local problems.

I argue that cognitive attachment, as measured by residents’ awareness of neighborhood names and consensus on neighborhood size, captures the shared collective identity of a neighborhood. This collective neighborhood identity helps to orient neighborhood residents in space as they determine the areas within which they are willing and able to interact, surveil, and exercise informal social control. Thus, the first hypothesis to be examined in my dissertation research is:

**Hypothesis 1a**: Cognitive attachment, including the presence of a neighborhood name and consensus on neighborhood size, will be positively related to neighborhood informal social control.

**Behavioral Attachment**

In this section I examine the contributions of behavioral attachment to informal social control. Behavioral attachment is conceptualized as observable behaviors engaged in by neighborhood residents that indicate their degree of integration into neighborhood life, including social ties, neighbor familiarity, neighboring, and local organizational participation. Each of these indicators of behavioral attachment is expected to facilitate collective participation and responsibility in the neighborhood, and thus enhance informal social control.
Social Ties

According to the systemic model, community attachment and informal social control are rooted in social ties, including networks of family and kin as well as friends and neighbors. The systemic model treats the neighborhood as a “complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal associational ties rooted in family life and on-going socialization processes” (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974: 329). These ties form the “social fabric” of communities and, according to the model, are an essential determinant of neighborhood attachment and informal social control (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974: 329). In neighborhoods where social ties are dense, residents are more likely to interact with neighbors and participate in activities with them. In addition, behavioral norms and expectations, as well as informal sanctions against violations of those expectations, are more easily enforced, thus facilitating informal social control (Bursik and Grasmick 1993).

However, recent research has called into question the significance of social ties for informal social control (Carr 2003). As noted earlier, Sampson and colleagues (1997) identified a neighborhood mechanism, collective efficacy, which they argued facilitates social control in the absence of strong social ties. Sampson and colleagues’ emphasis is on the social climate of the neighborhood, and the extent to which it facilitates mutual trust and solidarity among residents (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003a). However, Sampson and colleagues’ results suggest that social ties (as well as a measure of neighborhood social interaction) contribute indirectly to neighborhood social control. Other studies questioning the role of social ties rely on measures that arguably do not reflect “social ties” but would be more appropriately described as “neighboring” or “neighbor interaction” (Bellair 1997; Warner and Rountree 1997). I explore the relationship between neighboring and informal social control in a later section.
I argue that it is possible that having friends and relatives in the neighborhood is a form of neighborhood attachment that facilitates informal social control (Hunter, 1974; Guest and Lee 1983b). Residents who report having friends and relatives living in their neighborhood are likely to feel more invested in the neighborhood and more responsible for the activities that occur there, for their own well-being, as well as for that of their kith and kin.

**Organizational Participation**

The systemic model also suggests that participation in neighborhood organizations is an indicator of neighborhood attachment that may enhance neighborhood informal social control (Sampson and Groves 1989). I suggest that organizational participation reflects the extent to which local residents choose to be involved and invested in neighborhood activities and work together to solve local problems.

Several studies have attempted to assess the impact of neighborhood organizational participation on informal social control. In a test of social disorganization theory, Sampson and Groves (1989) developed a measure of organizational participation and found it to be inversely associated with robbery and stranger violence. Similarly, other studies have found that neighborhood residents’ participation in neighborhood organizations has an inverse effect on neighborhood violence and self-reported delinquency (Simcha-Fagan and Schwartz 1986; Taylor et al. 1984a). Thus, I include organizational participation as a form of behavioral attachment in this dissertation.

In addition, I present two other neighborhood indicators of behavioral attachment that are conceptualized as reflecting the degree of cohesion and cooperation in the community and that may influence informal social control. These characteristics are familiarity with neighbors and neighboring behaviors.
Familiarity

Few theoretical or empirical studies of neighborhood informal social control have explored the role of familiarity among neighborhood residents as a source of informal social control. However, those that have been done suggest that informal surveillance of neighborhood activities by residents is an essential component of informal social control (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Silver and Miller 2004). Arguably, the ability to distinguish neighborhood residents from strangers is integral to effective surveillance, intervention in local disturbances, and thus informal social control.

Moreover, the ability of residents to identify others living in their neighborhood is an important indicator of neighborhood interaction and neighborhood cohesion. Familiarity between residents may be a reflection of the extent of interaction among local residents. Familiarity is also likely to increase the sense of cohesion among residents, thus increasing their sense of attachment. Further, familiarity may contribute to feelings of mutual obligation between residents because local residents who are familiar with their neighbors are more likely to be aware that they and their behavior are known by other residents. For example, in a study of urban street blocks, Taylor (1997) found that, in areas where neighbors are better acquainted, they are better able to recognize outsiders and are more likely to feel responsible for local events. This ability to distinguish neighborhood residents from outsiders may also promote feelings of neighborhood safety (Taylor 1997). In neighborhoods where residents recognize and take note of suspicious strangers, and inform their neighbors when such persons are noticed, other neighbors may become more willing to do the same. Thus, familiarity among neighborhood residents is hypothesized to promote informal social control.
Neighboring

In addition to the general presence of social ties and familiarity, another form of behavioral attachment consists of more structured activity in the form of neighboring behaviors. Typically, residents get to know their neighbors and then interact and socialize with them in the neighborhood. Manifestations of neighboring behavior include borrowing tools, helping with home repairs, watching each other’s homes, sharing meals and the like. The effect of these behaviors on the establishment of neighborhood informal social control was described by Freudenburg (1986: 31) as follows: “People who know one another often work out interpersonal agreements for achieving desired goals…made possible by the fact that the people involved are personally acquainted.”

The influence of neighboring behaviors on enhancing neighborhood informal social control has been demonstrated in a few key studies. In a 1958 study of social networks in impoverished Cambridge, Massachusetts neighborhoods, Maccoby et al. found that neighbors in high delinquency neighborhoods were less likely to know one another or share similar interests. Using data from 100 Seattle census tracts, Warner and Rountree (1997) measured neighboring using a scale that included “borrowing tools,” “had lunch or dinner with neighbors,” and “helped neighbors with problems.” Their neighboring measure had a significant inverse effect on assault rates. In an examination of serious crime in 60 urban neighborhoods, Bellair (1997) reported that frequent and infrequent interaction with neighbors (getting together once a year or more) had significant inverse effects on burglary, motor vehicle theft and assault rates. Though these studies suggest the importance of neighboring behaviors for controlling crime, they generally suffer from small sample sizes and unclear or unidimensional measures of neighboring behavior.
(see also Bolland and McCallum 2002; Elliott et al. 1996; Patterson 1991; Smith and Jarjoura 1988; Warren 1969).

Moreover, past empirical research has been vague or incomplete about the process by which social ties encourage neighboring behaviors. Some studies conceive of neighboring behaviors as a natural outgrowth of the strong and intimate social ties that characterize neighborhoods. However, more recent work, depicting urban neighborhoods as communities of limited liability, present neighboring as something that is done selectively, and only for the purposes of protecting one’s status and serving one’s economic and familial needs (Guest and Lee 1983b). Regardless of the purpose of neighboring, I argue that it is an important indicator of investment in neighborhood life and will therefore serve as an important predictor of informal social control.

I hypothesize that behavioral attachment, including residents’ social and organizational ties, neighbor familiarity, and neighboring behaviors, reflects their involvement and investment in their local neighborhood. Neighborhood investment, in turn, is hypothesized to increase the likelihood that residents will take responsibility for local problems and exercise informal social control. Consequently, the second hypothesis I will examine is:

**Hypothesis 1b:** Behavioral attachment, including residents’ social and organizational ties, neighbor familiarity, and neighboring behaviors will be positively related to neighborhood informal social control.

**Affective Attachment**

In addition to cognitive and behavioral dimensions, my dissertation examines the affective dimension of attachment to one’s neighborhood. This affective dimension of neighborhood attachment is made up of an evaluative component and a sentimental component.
The distinction between evaluation and sentiment has been suggested in prior research by Hunter (1974), Guest and Lee (1983a), and Woldoff (2002), and reflects the difference between residents’ objective assessments of their neighborhood and residents’ emotional feelings about their neighborhood.

**Evaluation of the Neighborhood**

The evaluation component of neighborhood attachment indicates the degree to which residents are satisfied with the neighborhood as a place to live. It is conceptualized as an assessment of objective characteristics of the neighborhood, such as housing stock, local services, and crime rates, and is a more rational and less emotional judgment than neighborhood sentiment, which is described below (Guest and Lee 1983a). In a study investigating some of the correlates of neighborhood evaluation, Guest and Lee (1983a) found that quality housing, a lack of nearby commercial property, and social and organizational ties were associated with more positive evaluations. Also, a recent study of local stressors in Nashville neighborhoods found that physical and social disorder was associated with low evaluations of the neighborhood (Woldoff 2002). I expect that positive neighborhood evaluations will be associated with more informal social control because these positive evaluations arguably reflect the better quality of life in a neighborhood and the investments that people have in keeping the neighborhood a positive place to live. When residents are willing to maintain their neighborhood’s quality, as well as their quality of life within it, they should also be willing to work together to prevent and control local problems, thus facilitating informal social control.

**Sentiment toward the Neighborhood**

Beyond evaluating a local neighborhood as “good” or “bad” based on objective qualities, residents may experience more emotional reactions to their neighborhood. This sentimental
attachment is defined as a positive (or negative) feeling about one’s neighborhood (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). The literature regarding sentimental attachment to the neighborhood has a long tradition; several studies (see Hunter 1974, 1975; Guest and Lee 1983a, 1983b; Ahlbrandt 1984) have examined the ways in which social ties, neighboring, and other local activities foster feelings of community affect. In a study of Chicago residents in 1967-1968, Hunter (1974) demonstrated how residential stability and local social activities, such as friendship ties, shopping, and organizational participation, positively influenced sentiment, measured by feeling attached to the local community. Ahlbrandt’s (1984) work in Pittsburgh found positive effects of neighboring and social ties on neighborhood sentiment. Other research has shifted the focus to structural sources of neighborhood sentiment, by looking at the effect of neighborhood crime and disorder on sentiment. Woldoff (2002) examined the ways in which social disorder inhibits neighborhood attachment, conceptualized as sentiment and evaluation of the neighborhood, neighboring behaviors, and local problem-solving.

Affective attachment, as measured by residents’ evaluations and sentiments about their neighborhood, reflects residents’ satisfaction and pride in their neighborhood as a place to live. Arguably, when people feel positively about their neighborhood, and take pride in living there, they may be more willing to prevent and control local problems. Thus, the third hypothesis I will examine in my dissertation is:

**Hypothesis 1c:** Affective attachment, including evaluations about the neighborhood and sentiment toward the neighborhood, will be positively related to neighborhood informal social control.
Neighborhood Structure

Prior sociological and criminological research has found an association between neighborhood structural characteristics and measures of informal social control (Elliott et al. 1996; Sampson et al. 1997; Sampson and Groves 1989; Silver and Miller 2004). This research is grounded in social disorganization theory which, as described previously, suggests that neighborhood structural characteristics, including concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration, impede the ability of local residents to realize common goals to control and prevent crime (Shaw and McKay 1942). Lower levels of informal social control, in turn, increase the likelihood of crime. Accordingly, measures of concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration are often included in studies of neighborhood social organization and are typically found to have significant effects on crime and victimization (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Sampson and Groves 1989; Shaw and McKay 1942).

According to social disorganization theory, residents of urban neighborhoods are differentially able to exercise informal social control aimed at keeping themselves safe from crime, deviance, and disorder. Much of the research conducted in this tradition focuses on neighborhoods that are defined as structurally disadvantaged. Structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods are characterized by high levels of poverty and other forms of socio-economic deprivation, residential instability and immigrant concentration. High levels of residential instability, along with the presence of immigrant groups reflecting ethnic and linguistic diversity, will disrupt the abilities of neighborhood residents to interact, communicate, and realize common values and behavioral expectations. Furthermore, residents in these neighborhoods, who are faced with scarce resources, physical disorder, and the constant threat of crime, are likely to interpret these signs of disorder as an indication that neighborhood social controls have broken
down (Sampson 1987; Skogan 1990). Once neighborhood social control becomes weak and the neighborhood is viewed as one of uncertain rules, residents may be discouraged from participating in cooperative and collective actions (Ross et al. 2002; Sampson et al. 1997: 919). However, in neighborhoods that are structurally advantaged, where residents know one another, are aware of each other’s actions, and are better able to communicate behavioral expectations, residents may be more likely, and even feel obligated, to mobilize and intervene for the collective good. These neighborhoods thus provide the best environments for neighborhood attachment and informal social control. Accordingly, the fourth hypothesis I will test in my dissertation is:

**Hypothesis 2a:** Neighborhood structural conditions, including concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration, will be inversely related to neighborhood informal social control.

Neighborhood Attachment and the Relationship between Neighborhood Structure and Informal Social Control

Although researchers have long hypothesized a link between neighborhood structure and informal social control, few studies have explored this link empirically (for an exception, see Silver and Miller 2004); and none has examined the possibility that neighborhood attachment, conceptualized along cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions, might play a role in this link. In this section, I will describe the role that neighborhood attachment might play in mediating the relationship between neighborhood structure and informal social control. I will argue that neighborhood structural characteristics, including concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration, affect informal social control by inhibiting the dimensions of neighborhood attachment on which informal social control is based.
In order to understand the relationship between neighborhood structural context, attachment, and informal social control, it is useful to review the concept of the community of limited liability. As described previously, this concept provides a useful framework for understanding how neighborhood residents form local attachments that may become the basis for informal social control. The concept of the community of limited liability captures the distinction between types of attachment by describing communities in which residents may establish social and associational ties, often for purely utilitarian purposes such as safety or the protection of their children, yet are “prepared to leave…if local conditions fail to satisfy their immediate needs or aspirations” (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974: 329). Residents of structurally disadvantaged and unstable urban neighborhoods commonly adopt this approach to community life; often confronted by signs of economic disinvestment, physical disorder, and crime in their neighborhoods, these residents anticipate the day when they can move away, and are thus unlikely to feel fully invested in or attached to their neighborhood (Anderson 1999; Silver and Miller 2004). Thus, in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods, we would expect to find lower levels of informal social control due to the attenuated attachments that are characteristic of those neighborhoods.

There is little research about the effects of cognitive attachment on informal social control in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods. However, one could argue that the stigmatizing effects of living in a disadvantaged neighborhood may make residents reluctant to identify with it. Such residents may borrow a neighborhood name from a less disadvantaged neighborhood or simply not designate a place name at all (Lee and Campbell 1997). It is also possible that one’s cognitive attachment to their neighborhood will not translate into informal social control. Though residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods may be able to identify their
neighborhood in terms of name and size, this identification may only be reflective of the neighborhood’s “bad reputation,” with few implications for collective engagement in the prevention of local problems. In this dissertation, I will examine the extent to which neighborhood structural conditions, including concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration, affect neighborhood levels of cognitive attachment and, as a result, influence informal social control. Thus, the fifth hypothesis I will examine is:

**Hypothesis 3a:** Cognitive attachment will mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.

Evidence about the effectiveness of behavioral attachment in disadvantaged neighborhoods suggests that neighborhood structural conditions limit social ties and other forms of behavioral attachment and thus reduce informal social control. Nonetheless, the role of social ties in enhancing informal social control has been questioned in recent research. Some studies suggest that these ties are limited in producing informal social control because they often connect to people in similarly disadvantaged situations and thus cannot compensate for or overcome negative neighborhood contexts such as poverty and social isolation (Barnes 2000; Granovetter 1983). Other research has suggested that it is not the number of social ties that matters, but the quality of those ties (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003a). If this qualitative dimension is not considered, the effect of social ties may be misinterpreted. In fact, neighborhood social control may actually be undermined in neighborhoods where social ties connect law-abiding residents to non-law-abiding residents, such as drug dealers and gang members (Pattillo 1998). Few studies have assessed the quality of social ties, but in a recent exception, Rankin and Quane (2000), asked respondents how many of their close friends hold steady jobs, are on public assistance, and are college graduates. Neighborhood poverty predicted all three measures, leading the researchers to
conclude that residents of poor neighborhoods are socially isolated and “lack contact with persons with the knowledge, experience, and most important, the valuable social connections to aid them in their efforts to improve their life circumstance” (Rankin and Quane 2000: 141).

Though this qualitative dimension of social ties is a new and emerging research question, most current neighborhood surveys, including the one I am using as a source of data for this dissertation, are more concerned with social ties that are hypothesized to enhance informal social control, such as ties between friends and relatives. As described previously in a discussion of Bursik and Grasmick’s systemic model of crime (see Chapter 2), social networks are constantly changing and social ties are difficult to foster and maintain in neighborhoods characterized by high levels of disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration. Moreover, residents in these disadvantaged neighborhoods “tend to be more suspicious of each other, to perceive less commonality with each other, and to feel less control over their neighborhoods” (Greenberg and Rohe 1986). Accordingly, I hypothesize that the number of social ties will be lower in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods, thereby reducing informal social control.

The effectiveness of neighborhood behavioral attachments may also influence public social control, a neighborhood’s ability to acquire resources from outside the neighborhood (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Carr 2003). Disadvantaged neighborhoods often suffer from economic disinvestment and are thus likely to be characterized by a weak institutional base, including a lack of businesses, schools, service agencies, and the like, and more dependence on outside resources (Rankin and Quane 2000). But because these neighborhoods are also characterized by few local social ties and interactions, residents are unlikely to establish a foundation, through the use of such things as parent-teacher organizations, bible study groups or community watch
groups, to develop ties to these external resources and agencies, including police and other agents of formal social control (Warner and Rountree 1997).

I suggest that residents living in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods will be less likely to establish social and organizational ties, recognize strangers or other outsiders in the dense and crowded city streets, or interact with their neighbors. Thus, I expect these disadvantaged neighborhoods to be characterized by less behavioral attachment and, consequently, lower levels of informal social control. Accordingly, the sixth hypothesis I will examine is:

**Hypothesis 3b:** Behavioral attachment will mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.

Several studies have investigated the influence of physical and social disorder on *affective attachment* and demonstrated that they hinder the development of affective attachment to one’s neighborhood (Skogan 1990; Woldoff 2002). Ahlbrandt (1984) found that lower-income neighborhoods in Pittsburgh were characterized by more local social ties; however, neighboring, emotional attachment, and satisfaction with the neighborhood were lower than in higher-income neighborhoods. Taylor (1996) further suggests that attachment will be weaker in lower-class communities because neighborhood use-value, such as housing quality and access to amenities and services, is lower. In a recent criminological study, Silver and Miller (2004) find a large mediating effect of emotional attachment on the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control. Because residents will likely feel less satisfaction and pride in living in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods, I expect these disadvantaged neighborhoods to elicit less affective attachment and, as a result of this, less informal social control. Thus, the seventh hypothesis I will test in my dissertation is:
Hypothesis 3c: Affective attachment will mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.

Summary of Conceptual Model, Research Questions and Hypotheses

In the previous sections, I have reviewed theoretical and empirical research that supports my hypothesis of a positive relationship between cognitive, behavioral and affective dimensions of neighborhood attachment and informal social control. Further, I have argued that disadvantaged neighborhoods are likely to be characterized by limited attachment. Accordingly, I expect these neighborhoods to exhibit lower levels of informal social control.

A summary of my hypotheses is shown in Figure 1.1 (page 7). As shown, I will assess the direct effects of cognitive, behavioral, and affective attachment on informal social control. I will also explore the mediating effects of attachment on the relationship between neighborhood structure and informal social control. The following is a summary of the research questions and hypotheses to be explored in this dissertation (described in detail above):

Research Question 1: What dimensions of neighborhood attachment affect informal social control?

Hypothesis 1a: Cognitive attachment will be positively related to neighborhood informal social control.

Hypothesis 1b: Behavioral attachment will be positively related to neighborhood informal social control.

Hypothesis 1c: Affective attachment will be positively related to neighborhood informal social control.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control?
**Hypothesis 2a:** Neighborhood structural conditions – concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration – will be negatively related to neighborhood informal social control.

**Research Question 3:** Does neighborhood attachment mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control?

**Hypothesis 3a:** Cognitive attachment will mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.

**Hypothesis 3b:** Behavioral attachment will mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.

**Hypothesis 3c:** Affective attachment will mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.
CHAPTER 5
DATA, MEASUREMENT, AND METHODS

Data and Sample

PHDCN Community Survey

The primary source of data for this dissertation is the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) Community Survey. The Community Survey of the PHDCN was conducted in 1995 and contains information on 8,782 Chicago residents’ assessments of the social and structural characteristics of their neighborhoods. The Survey had three stages of sampling: city blocks within neighborhood clusters, dwelling units within city blocks, and adult residents within dwelling units. Interviews were conducted in the residents’ homes. The final response rate was 75 percent and the final number of respondents available for analysis was 7,380 residents nested within 342 neighborhood clusters. (Missing data are discussed in a later section of this chapter.)

The data, user guide, codebook, and data collection instrument for the PHDCN are available through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). The census-based neighborhood structural characteristics variables were obtained from Robert Sampson.

U.S. Census and Chicago Police Department Homicide Data

Tract-level census data from the 1990 Census of Population and Housing are used to provide neighborhood structural characteristics, including concentrated disadvantage, residential stability, and immigrant concentration. The use of aggregated demographic data from the census
is common in studies of neighborhood effects (for a review, see Sampson, Morenoff and Gannon-Rowley, 2002). Using census data has several advantages. First, the Census is not a sample. Also, the Census is collected independent of the PHDCN Community Survey. Finally, census data were collected five years prior to the PHDCN Community Survey, thus permitting temporal sequencing between the effects of neighborhood structural characteristics and respondents’ neighborhood assessments reported in the Community Survey. Another data source external to the PHDCN Community Survey, Chicago Police Department homicide data from 1991-1993, is also used. These homicide data consist of aggregate homicide counts geocoded to match the neighborhood clusters within which the homicide incidents occurred.

**Operationalizing Neighborhood**

For the PHDCN, neighborhoods were operationalized by combining the 847 census tracts in the city of Chicago into 343 “neighborhood clusters.” The neighborhood clusters were defined by geographic boundaries, prior knowledge of local Chicago neighborhoods and community areas, and cluster analyses of relevant census data. This sampling design and operationalization of neighborhood clusters, including geographic, historical, and statistical analyses of Chicago census tracts, goes beyond traditional census-based studies of neighborhood effects to create units of analysis that are “as ecologically meaningful as possible” (Sampson et al. 1997: 919). The resulting clusters of approximately 8000 people each “are relatively homogenous with respect to racial/ethnic mix, socioeconomic status, housing density, and family structure” and are smaller than the community areas of Chicago but “large enough to approximate local neighborhoods” (Sampson et al. 1997: 919; Sampson et al. 1999: 638).
Other advantages to using the PHDCN for my dissertation include it being the largest study of its kind to date and one of the few surveys to include such a full range of measures that tap my independent variable of interest, neighborhood attachment. Finally, as discussed previously (see Chapter 2), the measures included in the PHDCN are designed to capture residents’ perceptions of collective neighborhood processes, including neighborhood attachment and informal social control, rather than reflect simple reports of individual resident’s behavior.

**Measurement**

Before describing the measurement of neighborhood-level explanatory variables, neighborhood structural characteristics, and individual-level control variables, I will review my conceptual model. As depicted in Figure 1.1 (page 7), I hypothesize that a multi-dimensional conceptualization of neighborhood attachment, comprised of cognitive, behavioral and affective dimensions, will be positively related to neighborhood levels of informal social control. Further, I hypothesize that neighborhood attachment will help to explain some of the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.

**Neighborhood-level Explanatory Variables**

Three neighborhood-level explanatory variables representing cognitive, behavioral, and affective neighborhood attachment were included in the analyses. Other variables at the neighborhood level include variables representing neighborhood structural characteristics.

Each neighborhood-level attachment scale consists of individual-level items and scales created as follows. First, I computed the individual-level items and scales, and then I computed the mean value of these individual-level variables for each neighborhood cluster. To create each
attachment scale at the neighborhood level, I computed means of the z-scores of each aggregated individual-level variable (see Sampson et al. 1997; Sampson et al. 1999). Thus, each neighborhood-level attachment scale is a neighborhood-level measure computed from the means of standardized, aggregated individual-level items and scales.¹ (Descriptive statistics of all neighborhood-level variables are presented in Chapter 6.)

Cognitive Attachment

The scale representing Cognitive Attachment was calculated as the mean of z-scores for the following two aggregated items:

The variable Neighborhood Name asks residents if their neighborhood has a name and was coded as 1 (‘no’), 2 (‘don’t know’), and 3 (‘yes’). At the individual level, thirteen percent of neighborhood residents reported that their neighborhood did not have a name, 16 percent reported that they did not know its name, and 63 percent reported that their neighborhood did have a name. (See Table 5.1 for descriptive statistics of all individual-level variables which make up the neighborhood-level attachment variables). The decision to include “Don’t Know” responses in this variable was made to preserve cases from residents who were perhaps hesitant to report their neighborhood name due to a lack of pride or investment in that neighborhood. As discussed in Chapter 4, this reluctance to identify a neighborhood name may have implications for informal social control, particularly in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

¹ Although I also conducted factor analyses of the attachment variables which resulted in factors that were highly correlated (above .9) with the neighborhood attachment scales I computed using the method described above, I chose to utilize the computed scales because they are easily re-created and thus are robust across a range of studies related to this dissertation topic.
TABLE 5.1: Descriptive Statistics for Individual-level Items and Scales

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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</thead>
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<td>95</td>
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<td>32.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighboring Behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Sentiment</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variable representing Neighborhood Size Consensus was calculated by obtaining the inverse of the coefficient of variation (the ratio of the standard deviation to the mean) for an item asking residents to estimate how many blocks their neighborhood includes. Thus, a higher number means more consensus on size among neighborhood residents. The individual-level mean of this item was 32.3 blocks. Thus, neighborhood residents perceive their neighborhood as consisting of approximately 32 blocks.

At the neighborhood-level, the two aggregated items included in the Cognitive Attachment scale, neighborhood name and size consensus were correlated at 0.38 (P<.001).

Behavioral Attachment

The scale representing Behavioral Attachment was calculated as the mean of z-scores for the following four scales, after aggregating them to the neighborhood level by calculating a mean value for all respondents in a neighborhood cluster:

The variable Social Ties was calculated as an average of two items asking the number of friends and relatives that residents reported living in the neighborhood (each measure was coded 0, 1-2, 3-5, 6-9, 10+). On average, individual residents reported having 2.5 friends and relatives in their neighborhood.
**Neighbor Familiarity** is represented by a 3-item scale measuring residents’ familiarity with other residents and outsiders. The first and second item asked residents to identify the number of adults or children they know or recognize by sight, 1 being ‘none’ to 4 being ‘a great many.’ The third item asked residents how difficult they find it to identify outsiders, ranging from 1 = ‘very difficult,’ to 4 = ‘very easy.’ The individual-level mean of this scale was 2.7, indicating that residents, on average, report being able to identify many adults and children, and find it somewhat easy to identify outsiders.

**Neighboring Behaviors** is represented by a 5-item scale. Residents were asked how often 1) do you and people in your neighborhood do favors for each other, 2) do you and other neighbors watch each other’s property, 3) do you and people in your neighborhood ask each other for advice, 4) do you and people in your neighborhood have parties or other get-togethers, and 5) do you and people in your neighborhood visit in each other’s home or in the street. The responses ranged from 1 = ‘never,’ to 4 = ‘often.’ The individual-level mean of the neighboring scale was 2.5, meaning that, on average, residents report performing neighboring behaviors somewhere between rarely and sometimes.

**Organizational participation** is represented by a 6-item scale. Residents were asked a series of yes/no questions about whether they belonged to any local organizations including churches, neighborhood watch groups, block groups, business or civic groups, ethnic clubs, and local political organizations. The individual-level mean for this scale was 0.91, indicating that, on average, individual residents reported being involved in about one local organization.

At the neighborhood level, alpha for the four items in the **Behavioral Attachment** scale was 0.71.
**Affective Attachment**

The scale representing *Affective Attachment* was calculated as the mean of z-scores for the following two aggregated variables:

To represent *Evaluation of the Neighborhood*, residents were asked how their neighborhood compares with others in the city, coded as 1 (‘worse’), 2 (‘about the same’), and 3 (‘better’). At the individual level, eleven percent of neighborhood residents reported that their neighborhood was worse than others in the city, 33 percent reported that it was about the same, and 41 percent reported that their neighborhood was better than others in the city.

To represent sentiment about one’s neighborhood, the variable *Neighborhood Sentiment* was measured by calculating the mean of two items. The first item asked residents “On the whole, do you like or dislike this neighborhood as a place to live?”; values ranged from 1 = ‘dislike it a lot,’ to 4 = ‘like it a lot.’ This variable representing neighborhood sentiment is similar to measures used in prior studies of neighborhood affective attachment (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; Sampson 1988; Silver and Miller 2004). The second item asked residents to “suppose that for some reason you HAD to move away from this neighborhood. Would you miss the neighborhood not at all, not much, somewhat, or very much?” The individual-level mean for the sentiment scale was 3.0, indicating that, on average, residents like their neighborhood and would miss it somewhat if they moved.

At the neighborhood-level, the two variables in the *Affective Attachment* scale, evaluation and sentiment, were correlated at 0.76 (P<.001).

**Neighborhood Structure**

Following prior research and theory, I included three variables to represent neighborhood structural characteristics. These variables were calculated using data from the 1990 Census. I
used factor loadings as weights to construct scales for these variables (see also Sampson et al. 1997; Morenoff 2001). *Concentrated disadvantage* is a factor comprised of percentage of families in poverty, percentage of families receiving public assistance, percentage of unemployed individuals, percentage of female-headed families with children, and percentage of residents who are black. *Residential instability* is defined as the percentage of residents five years or older who did not live in the same house five years earlier, and the percentage of homes that are renter-occupied. *Immigrant concentration* includes the percentage of Latino and foreign-born residents.

In addition to these neighborhood structural characteristics, I control for the prior homicide rate within each neighborhood cluster. Homicide is the most accurately reported crime, and it is theoretically and empirically linked to many other forms of crime and social disorder (Morenoff et al. 2001; Skogan 1990). The use of homicide data measured temporally prior to the survey-based items helps to eliminate any potential spurious effects between the explanatory variables and informal social control due to the effects of violent crime in the neighborhood. For example, in neighborhoods with high levels of violence, which also tend to be highly disadvantaged, residents may feel unsafe, and may be unlikely to feel attached to the neighborhood, or be unwilling to engage in behaviors associated with informal social control. Controlling for the prior homicide rate removes this potential confound.

**Informal Social Control**

The dependent variable in this study, *Informal Social Control*, is measured by a 4-item scale. Residents were asked about the likelihood that their neighbors could be counted on to intervene if 1) children were skipping school and hanging out on a street corner, 2) children were
spray painting graffiti on a local building, 3) children were showing disrespect to an adult, and 4) a fight broke out in front of their house. Responses ranged from 1 = ‘very unlikely,’ to 5 = ‘very likely.’ The individual-level mean for this scale was 3.37, indicating that, on average, individual residents reported that other neighborhood residents would be slightly likely to intervene in local disturbances.

At the individual level, alpha for the four items in the *Informal Social Control* scale was 0.80.

**Individual-level Control Variables**

Though this study is concerned with neighborhood-level processes, it is important to control for compositional differences between neighborhoods in the kinds of people they contain. This will allow us to separate the effects of neighborhood characteristics from the effects of characteristics of people within those neighborhoods. Thus, the following individual-level control variables were computed: dummy variables for male, black, Hispanic, and married, as well as variables representing age, socioeconomic status (first principal component of education, income, and occupational prestige), the number of moves in the past 5 years, length of residence in the neighborhood, and whether the respondent owns his/her home. (Descriptive statistics for individual-level control variables are presented in Chapter 6).

---

2 Though other studies using these data have used a measure of informal social control which includes an item asking residents how likely their neighbors would be to organize against the closing of a local fire station, I omitted this item because it does not reflect *informal* social control over neighborhood disorder and deviance. However, when I performed the analyses presented here with the social control measure with the fire station item included, I obtained results identical to those reported below (available from author).

3 HLM requires the dependent variable to be measured at the individual level; however, the neighborhood level coefficients produced by each model will reflect changes in the mean level of perceptions of informal social control across neighborhood clusters.
Missing Data

The PHDCN scale items had quite a bit of missing data at the individual level, ranging from about 8 percent for the informal social control scale to 25 percent for the neighborhood size item. My analyses focus on neighborhood-level scales that are based on these individual-level variables, so I must be concerned with the amount of missing data at the individual level and how these missing data may affect my neighborhood-level coefficients. For example, missing data at the individual level may introduce a source of bias into my models, to the extent that neighborhoods with large amounts of missing data may be qualitatively different from those neighborhoods that do not have large amounts of missing data.

To address the issue of missing data at the individual level, I developed several rules. First, for each individual-level item that was used to make up a neighborhood-level attachment scale (including neighborhood name, size consensus, and evaluation), missing values were not replaced. Instead, missing data for these individual-level items were handled using a single imputation method described in the following paragraph. Then, for each individual-level scale that was used to make up a neighborhood-level attachment scale (including social ties, neighbor familiarity, neighboring, organizational participation, and sentiment), I used item-mean replacement to impute values for cases with valid data on at least 50 percent of the items comprising the scale. For example, if a respondent had answered items 1-3 of the 5-item neighboring scale, the values for items 4 and 5 were imputed with item-mean replacement. Also, I computed the scale mean only for those cases with 50 percent or more of the items making up the scale, including those items that were item-mean replaced.

Next, to impute missing values for those cases which still had missing data after item-mean replacement, I used a regression-based single imputation method available with the SPSS
statistical software package (SPSS Missing Value Analysis). This imputation provided predicted values for each individual-level item and scale that made up a neighborhood-level attachment scale. I then assessed the differences between neighborhood-level means with these imputed data versus neighborhood-level means without the imputed data. To do this, I aggregated the individual-level variables to the neighborhood level and compared the neighborhood-level attachment scale variable means with imputation to the means without imputation. Using t-tests, no significant differences in the means were found (results available upon request), so I utilized the neighborhood-based measures without imputation in my analyses.

Limitations of the Data

A few limitations of the data used in this dissertation should be noted. First, the PHDCN data are cross-sectional. Though the design of my analyses is improved by using homicide data and census data that are measured prior to the PHDCN survey items, all of the survey items are measured at the same point in time. The use of cross-sectional data complicates the assessment of causal ordering. My model relies on the assumption that neighborhood structure affects neighborhood attachment which affects informal social control. However, I must be careful about ignoring potential reverse causality. It is possible that informal social control influences attachment; that is, residents may report higher levels of neighborhood attachment because they perceive their neighbors as willing to intervene in local problems.

Though I cannot be definitive about assessing causality in my research, I can justify my work as an important step towards assessing causality. That is, because I am using what is arguably the best data source for my research questions, if I found no associations between my variables, this would suggest that the causal relationships hypothesized in my research do not
exist. However, if I do find associations to support my research hypotheses, this would lend support to the theoretical arguments outlined in the previous chapters, providing justification for further exploring these relationships in future research.

Also, external validity is limited in my dissertation research because the PHDCN data were collected only in the city of Chicago. Though Chicago has several advantages, including well-established neighborhoods, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity, and a rich history of urban sociological and criminological research, it is quite possible that the social, political and economic development of Chicago’s neighborhoods are unique to Chicago and affect its neighborhoods’ residents in ways that cannot be generalized to other cities. The implications of these limitations will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

**Statistical Methods**

**Multilevel Analyses**

I conduct a multilevel analysis of the PHDCN Community Survey. The multilevel design of the data allows me to analyze the effects of the neighborhood-level variables while taking into account compositional differences between neighborhood clusters. Hierarchical linear modeling will be used to correct for the lack of independence among nested observations (HLM; Bryk and Raudenbush 1992). Since my research questions focus on neighborhood-level phenomena, I will build models that include individual-level controls and neighborhood-level explanatory variables to predict mean levels of neighborhood attachment and informal social control across neighborhood clusters.
Equations

The level 1 model, including individual-level covariates and an independently, normally distributed error term with variance $\sigma^2$ is depicted as:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Male} + \beta_2 \text{Hispanic} + \beta_3 \text{Black} + \beta_4 \text{Age} + \beta_5 \text{Married} + \beta_6 \text{Moves} + \beta_7 \text{SEI} + \beta_8 \text{Length} + \beta_9 \text{Own Home} + r$$

The level 2 models which estimate the effects of three structural characteristics on levels of neighborhood attachment while controlling for the neighborhood homicide rate, are depicted as:

Model A (predicting Cognitive Attachment):

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} \text{Concentrated Disadvantage} + \gamma_{02} \text{Residential Instability} + \gamma_{03} \text{Immigrant Concentration} + \gamma_{04} \text{Homicide Rate} + u_0$$

Model B (predicting Behavioral Attachment):

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} \text{Concentrated Disadvantage} + \gamma_{02} \text{Residential Instability} + \gamma_{03} \text{Immigrant Concentration} + \gamma_{04} \text{Homicide Rate} + u_0$$

Model C (predicting Affective Attachment):

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} \text{Concentrated Disadvantage} + \gamma_{02} \text{Residential Instability} + \gamma_{03} \text{Immigrant Concentration} + \gamma_{04} \text{Homicide Rate} + u_0$$

The level 2 models which estimate the effects of three structural characteristics and neighborhood attachment on perceived levels of neighborhood informal social control, while controlling for the neighborhood homicide rate, are depicted as:

Model A:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} \text{Concentrated Disadvantage} + \gamma_{02} \text{Residential Instability} + \gamma_{03} \text{Immigrant Concentration} + \gamma_{04} \text{Homicide Rate} + u_0$$

Model B:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} + \gamma_{02} + \gamma_{03} + \gamma_{04} + \gamma_{05} \text{Cognitive Attachment} + u_0$$
**Model C:**

\[ \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} + \gamma_{02} + \gamma_{03} + \gamma_{04} + \gamma_{05 \text{ Behavioral Attachment}} + u_0 \]

**Model D:**

\[ \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} + \gamma_{02} + \gamma_{03} + \gamma_{04} + \gamma_{05 \text{ Affective Attachment}} + u_0 \]

**Model E (full model):**

\[ \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} + \gamma_{02} + \gamma_{03} + \gamma_{04} + \gamma_{05 \text{ Cognitive Attachment}} + \gamma_{06 \text{ Behavioral Attachment}} + \gamma_{07 \text{ Affective Attachment}} + u_0 \]

**Centering**

Centering of independent variables is a particularly important concern for multilevel modeling because the interpretation of coefficients in the model will depend on the choice of centering method. Although centering does not affect model fit, predicted values, or residuals, the interpretation of relationships between independent and dependent variables will often depend on the choice of centering. In group mean centered models, the explanatory variables are centered around their group mean, in this case, the neighborhood mean; group mean centering effectively eliminates all between-neighborhood variation in the explanatory variables. In grand mean centered models, the explanatory variables are centered around the overall or sample mean.

In my analyses, all independent variables were centered around their grand mean. This means that my neighborhood-level coefficients will be interpreted as mean levels of neighborhood informal social control adjusted for individual-level, or compositional, differences in the neighborhoods.

**Error terms**

The multilevel modeling used in this dissertation allows for person-specific and neighborhood-specific error terms to be estimated. For every independent variable, as well as
the intercept, an error term can be included or omitted. If included, the effect of that variable is treated as random, meaning that the effect of the independent variable can vary across higher levels. Thus, any effect at the individual-level (level 1) can be specified to vary across neighborhoods (level 2).

Because my analyses are designed to examine only neighborhood-level effects, and I do not hypothesize that the effects of the individual-level variables will vary across neighborhoods, I only include a random effect for the level 2 intercept. Thus, only the intercept will vary across neighborhoods, but the individual-level coefficients are fixed across neighborhoods. Substantively, this means that the relationships among my set of predictors are hypothesized to be the same in each neighborhood, but that each neighborhood has a different level (or intercept) from which the relationships are measured.

**Sensitivity Analyses**

In addition to the multilevel analyses examining the relationship between neighborhood attachment and informal social control across the full range of neighborhood clusters in the PHDCN, I will conduct sensitivity analyses by examining this relationship in neighborhoods differentiated along structural dimensions, including concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration. The purpose of these analyses is to assess the stability of the main effects hypothesized in my conceptual model across neighborhoods characterized by varying levels of concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration.
CHAPTER 6
RESULTS

In the following chapter, I present the results of my analyses. First, I will briefly describe
the descriptive statistics for the neighborhood- and individual-level variables included in my
analyses. Next, I will present the results obtained from the multilevel analyses predicting
neighborhood levels of informal social control. Finally, I will present the results from the
sensitivity analyses which assess the stability of my hypothesized main effects across a range of
neighborhoods.

Descriptive Results

Table 6.1 contains descriptive statistics for the neighborhood-level and individual-level
variables. The neighborhood-level variables showed considerable variation across the
neighborhood clusters. The cognitive attachment variable ranged from a minimum of
-2.35 to a maximum of 1.67. The behavioral attachment variable ranged from -1.75 to 2.94. The
affective attachment variable ranged from -2.47 to 1.95. Regarding the neighborhood structural
variables, concentrated disadvantage ranged from -1.65 to 3.81, residential instability ranged
from -2.38 to 2.04, and immigrant concentration ranged from -1.63 to 3.07. Thus, the
neighborhood clusters exhibited a considerable amount of variation in levels of neighborhood
attachment, disadvantage, mobility, and ethnic composition.

Regarding the individual-level variables, 41% of the respondents were male, 26% were
Hispanic, 41% were black, 42% were married, the average age was 50 years, 45% owned their
homes, the average length of neighborhood residence was 12.2 years, and the average number of
moves per respondent in the previous five years was approximately 1. Also, as mentioned in
Chapter 5, the mean for the dependent variable, informal social control, is 3.37, with values
ranging from 1 to 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 6.1: Descriptive Statistics for Analytical Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhood Level (n=342)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentrated Disadvantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Concentration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide Rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Individual Level (n=7,380)**                           |
| Informal Social Control                                  | 1.00  | 5.00 | 3.37 | 1.00 |
| Male                                                     | 0.00  | 1.00 | 0.41 | 0.49 |
| Hispanic                                                 | 0.00  | 1.00 | 0.26 | 0.44 |
| Black                                                    | 0.00  | 1.00 | 0.41 | 0.49 |
| Age                                                      | 24.00 | 107.00 | 49.52 | 16.72 |
| Married                                                  | 0.00  | 1.00 | 0.42 | 0.50 |
| SES                                                      | 17.00 | 97.00 | 44.25 | 18.06 |
| Number of Moves                                          | 0.00  | 11.00 | 0.96 | 1.39 |
| Length of Residence                                      | 0.00  | 91.00 | 12.15 | 12.91 |
| Own Home?                                                | 0.00  | 1.00 | 0.45 | 0.50 |

Table 6.2 presents the neighborhood-level correlations among the independent variables
representing dimensions of attachment. These correlations indicate that, although the variables
are significantly related to each other, the moderate to weak positive relationships justify treating
these variables as separate dimensions of attachment. (All neighborhood-level correlations are
presented in the Appendix.)
Table 6.2: Neighborhood-Level Correlations Among Dimensions of Attachment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cognitive Attachment</th>
<th>Behavioral Attachment</th>
<th>Affective Attachment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Attachment Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>342.00</td>
<td>342.00</td>
<td>342.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Attachment Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>342.00</td>
<td>342.00</td>
<td>342.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Attachment Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>342.00</td>
<td>342.00</td>
<td>342.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multivariate Results

Attachment

Table 6.3 present the results of the HLM analyses predicting neighborhood levels of each dimension of attachment. The neighborhood-level coefficients produced by each model reflect changes in the mean level of dimensions of attachment across neighborhood clusters. Though my main theoretical focus is on the neighborhood-level variables (the upper portion of the table), each model also includes controls for person-level characteristics.

These analyses consisted of three models predicting neighborhood attachment, and thus demonstrate the main effects of neighborhood structural characteristics on cognitive, behavioral, and affective attachment. Referring back to Figure 1.1 (page 7), these preliminary analyses are an important step in assessing the magnitude of the relationships between neighborhood structural characteristics and attachment, and thus the extent to which neighborhood attachment may potentially mediate the effects of neighborhood structure on informal social control.

In Model A, I examine the effects of neighborhood structure on behavioral attachment.
As shown in Table 6.3, concentrated disadvantage and immigrant concentration were significantly and inversely related to cognitive attachment. As suggested in Chapter 4, these results indicate that neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage and high levels of immigrant concentration exhibit lower levels of cognitive attachment.

In Model B, I examine the effects of neighborhood structure on behavioral attachment. Residential instability was significantly and inversely related to behavioral attachment, indicating that, in neighborhoods with transient residents and many renter-occupied units, behavioral attachment will be low.

In Model C, I examine the effects of neighborhood structure on affective attachment. Concentrated disadvantage and immigrant concentration were significantly and inversely related to affective attachment. Thus, neighborhoods characterized by greater socioeconomic disadvantage and immigrant concentration exhibited lower levels of affective attachment.
Table 6.3: Hierarchical Linear Models Predicting Attachment (Standard Errors in Parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood-Level Variables</th>
<th>Cognitive Attachment</th>
<th>Behavioral Attachment</th>
<th>Affective Attachment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.002 (0.030)</td>
<td>0.008 (0.011)</td>
<td>0.023 (0.015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentrated Disadvantage</td>
<td>-0.209 *** (0.056)</td>
<td>0.016 (0.021)</td>
<td>-0.227 *** (0.028)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Instability</td>
<td>-0.017 (0.032)</td>
<td>-0.067 *** (0.013)</td>
<td>0.015 (0.016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Concentration</td>
<td>-0.088 * (0.035)</td>
<td>-0.009 (0.014)</td>
<td>-0.089 *** (0.018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide Rate</td>
<td>-0.090 (0.060)</td>
<td>-0.002 (0.023)</td>
<td>-0.179 *** (0.030)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neighborhood Variance Explained\(^a\) 18% 16% 68%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual-Level Controls</th>
<th>Cognitive Attachment</th>
<th>Behavioral Attachment</th>
<th>Affective Attachment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.000 (0.011)</td>
<td>0.026 (0.015)</td>
<td>0.027 (0.018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>-0.124 *** (0.018)</td>
<td>0.035 (0.025)</td>
<td>0.137 *** (0.029)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-0.023 (0.022)</td>
<td>-0.001 (0.029)</td>
<td>0.002 (0.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.000 (0.000)</td>
<td>-0.006 *** (0.001)</td>
<td>0.003 *** (0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0.012 (0.011)</td>
<td>0.118 *** (0.016)</td>
<td>0.003 (0.019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Moves</td>
<td>0.001 (0.004)</td>
<td>-0.053 *** (0.006)</td>
<td>-0.031 *** (0.007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>0.002 *** (0.000)</td>
<td>0.001 ** (0.000)</td>
<td>0.002 ** (0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years in neighborhood</td>
<td>0.004 *** (0.001)</td>
<td>0.014 *** (0.001)</td>
<td>0.005 *** (0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Home</td>
<td>0.074 *** (0.013)</td>
<td>0.204 *** (0.019)</td>
<td>0.113 *** (0.022)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(* p < .05 \quad ** p < .01 \quad *** p < .001 \)

\(a\) The denominator for this calculation is the neighborhood level variance component, controlling for person level characteristics.

Informal Social Control

Because I am conducting multilevel analyses that assess the effects of neighborhood-level variables while controlling for individual-level variation between neighborhood clusters, I first determined the amount of variance in my outcome measure, informal social control, which existed between and within the 342 neighborhood clusters. For the null model, with no covariates included, the between-neighborhood variance component was 0.126 (p<.001), indicating significant variation in levels of informal social control between neighborhoods. The within-neighborhood variance component was 0.873. Thus, more than 12% of the variance in informal social control was between rather than within neighborhood clusters (.126/(.126+.873)).
Next, I added individual level controls to the null model to determine how much of the 12% variation was due to compositional differences between neighborhoods. Adding these controls reduced the between-neighborhood variance component to 0.091 (p<.001), while the within-neighborhood variance component was unchanged at 0.87. These results indicate that only 28% of the between neighborhood variance in informal social control in the null model was due to compositional differences in the kinds of people the neighborhoods contained (([0.126-0.091]/0.126). Accordingly, a large amount of the observed between-neighborhood variation in informal social control is due to residents’ collective sense of their neighbors’ willingness to engage in informal social control, independent of their own individual characteristics, such as gender, race, age, marital status, and the like.

Table 6.4 presents the results of the HLM analyses predicting neighborhood levels of informal social control. The neighborhood-level coefficients produced by each model reflect changes in the mean level of perceptions of informal social control across neighborhood clusters. Though my main theoretical focus is on the neighborhood-level variables (the upper portion of the table), each model also includes controls for person-level characteristics.

My analyses consisted of five models predicting informal social control. Referring back to Figure 1.1 (page 7), I am interested in the main effects of attachment on informal social control, and the mediating effects of attachment on the relationship between neighborhood structure and informal social control. Model A includes the structural characteristics (concentrated disadvantage, immigrant concentration, residential instability) and controls for the homicide rate. Models B-D add each dimension of attachment one at a time. Model E includes all dimensions of attachment together.
Table 6.4: Hierarchical Linear Models Predicting Informal Social Control (Standard Errors in Parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood-Level Variables</th>
<th>Model A</th>
<th>Model B</th>
<th>Model C</th>
<th>Model D</th>
<th>Model E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3.398 (0.016)</td>
<td>3.398 (0.016)</td>
<td>3.399 (0.015)</td>
<td>3.399 (0.014)</td>
<td>3.400 (0.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentrated Disadvantage</td>
<td>-0.126 *** (0.030)</td>
<td>-0.128 *** (0.031)</td>
<td>-0.122 *** (0.028)</td>
<td>-0.010 (0.030)</td>
<td>-0.044 (0.031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Instability</td>
<td>-0.109 *** (0.018)</td>
<td>-0.109 *** (0.018)</td>
<td>-0.036 (0.020)</td>
<td>-0.085 *** (0.017)</td>
<td>-0.048 * (0.019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Concentration</td>
<td>-0.064 ** (0.020)</td>
<td>-0.065 ** (0.021)</td>
<td>-0.073 *** (0.019)</td>
<td>-0.029 (0.019)</td>
<td>-0.050 * (0.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide Rate</td>
<td>-0.134 *** (0.032)</td>
<td>-0.135 *** (0.032)</td>
<td>-0.141 *** (0.030)</td>
<td>-0.063 * (0.030)</td>
<td>-0.084 ** (0.030)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Attachment</td>
<td>-0.007 (0.022)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.051 ** (0.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Attachment</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.169 *** (0.025)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.101 ** (0.028)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Attachment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.241 *** (0.028)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.198 *** (0.031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Variance Explained&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual-Level Controls</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.011 (0.022)</td>
<td>-0.010 (0.022)</td>
<td>-0.009 (0.022)</td>
<td>-0.012 (0.022)</td>
<td>-0.011 (0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0.051 (0.036)</td>
<td>0.050 (0.036)</td>
<td>0.056 (0.036)</td>
<td>0.059 (0.036)</td>
<td>0.057 (0.036)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.032 (0.041)</td>
<td>0.032 (0.041)</td>
<td>0.039 (0.041)</td>
<td>0.066 (0.041)</td>
<td>0.060 (0.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0.003 (0.023)</td>
<td>0.003 (0.023)</td>
<td>0.001 (0.023)</td>
<td>0.004 (0.023)</td>
<td>0.002 (0.023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Moves</td>
<td>-0.039 *** (0.009)</td>
<td>-0.039 *** (0.009)</td>
<td>-0.038 *** (0.009)</td>
<td>-0.039 *** (0.009)</td>
<td>-0.038 *** (0.009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years in neighborhood</td>
<td>0.001 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.001 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.000 (0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Home</td>
<td>0.127 *** (0.027)</td>
<td>0.127 *** (0.027)</td>
<td>0.131 *** (0.027)</td>
<td>0.133 *** (0.027)</td>
<td>0.134 *** (0.027)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* <sup>p < .05</sup> ** <sup>p < .01</sup> *** <sup>p < .001</sup>

<sup>a</sup> The denominator for this calculation is the neighborhood level variance component, controlling for person level characteristics (.091).
As shown in Model A of Table 6.4, each of the neighborhood structural characteristics was significantly and inversely related to informal social control. Neighborhoods characterized by greater immigrant concentration and residential instability and a higher crime rate exhibited less informal social control. In addition, neighborhoods characterized by greater socioeconomic disadvantage exhibited lower levels of informal social control. At the individual level, number of moves and home ownership were significantly related to respondents’ perceptions of neighborhood informal social control in the expected directions. Model A explained 56% of the between-neighborhood variance in informal social control that remained after controlling for person level characteristics.

The remainder of Table 6.4 (Models B through E) examines the effects of dimensions of neighborhood attachment. Model B includes the cognitive attachment variable. Recall that cognitive attachment is a scale consisting of two variables, neighborhood name and neighborhood size consensus. Though not statistically significant, cognitive attachment was negatively related to informal social control. Adding cognitive attachment to the model did not increase the between-neighborhood explained variance. Also, comparing the coefficients for the structural variables before and after adding the cognitive attachment variable shows no evidence of mediation. That is, the coefficients for the structural variables remained largely unchanged after the cognitive attachment variable was added to the model. Though I hypothesized that neighborhood cognitive attachment, and thus informal social control, would be lower in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods due to residents’ hesitance to identify those

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4 I further examined this negative relationship by estimating a model which included a squared term for cognitive attachment, in addition to the linear term, to test for a curvilinear relationship. The squared term was significant in this model, indicating that the relationship between cognitive attachment and informal social control is negative to a point, and then becomes positive. However, once all variables of interest were controlled for (Model E), the effect of cognitive attachment squared was not significant. Thus, with statistical controls, cognitive attachment had no curvilinear relationship with informal social control.
neighborhoods, this does not appear to be the case. Neighborhood cognitive attachment does not account for the low levels of informal social control present in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Next, I examine the effect of behavioral attachment on neighborhood levels of informal social control. Behavioral attachment was measured as a scale including social ties, neighbor familiarity, neighboring behaviors, and neighborhood organizational participation. As shown in Model C, behavioral attachment was significantly and positively related to informal social control. Together, social ties, familiarity among residents, neighboring behaviors, and organizational participation contribute positively to neighborhood levels of informal social control. Adding this attachment variable to the model increased the between-neighborhood explained variance to 66%. Also, comparing the coefficients for the structural variables before and after adding the behavioral attachment variable shows evidence of mediation. Specifically, the variable for residential instability was reduced by 67% and became non-significant when behavioral attachment was added to the model. As hypothesized, and in accordance with the systemic model of social ties, this finding suggests that it may be difficult for residents to engage in informal social control in neighborhoods characterized by high levels of residential instability, where social ties and other forms of behavioral attachment are weak. Thus, behavioral attachment accounts for some of the low levels of informal social control observed in residentially unstable neighborhoods.

In Model D, I examine the effect of affective attachment on informal social control. Recall that affective attachment is a scale consisting of two variables representing neighborhood evaluation and neighborhood sentiment. Neighborhood affective attachment was significantly and positively related to informal social control. Thus, levels of informal social control are
higher in neighborhoods in which residents are generally satisfied with their local environment and feel positively about living there. Adding sentiment to the model increased the between-neighborhood explained variance to 71%. Also, comparing the coefficients for the structural variables before and after adding the affective attachment variable shows evidence of mediation. The coefficients for concentrated disadvantage, immigrant concentration, and residential instability were all reduced. The coefficient for disadvantage was reduced by 92% (from -0.126 in Model A to -0.010 in Model D) and became non-significant, the coefficient for residential instability was reduced by 22% (-0.109 to -0.085) and the coefficient for immigrant concentration was reduced by 54% (from -0.064 to -0.029) and became non-significant. These results indicate that low levels of affective attachment are a key factor contributing to the low levels of informal social control observed in neighborhoods characterized by concentrated disadvantage, residential instability and immigrant concentration. Also, as hypothesized, these results suggest that residents who feel little satisfaction, positive sentiment, or pride in their neighborhoods are unlikely to take responsibility or intervene in the prevention of local problems.

Interestingly, the coefficient for the homicide rate control variable was reduced by 53% (from -0.134 in Model A to -0.063 in Model D). Though this variable is included in the model to eliminate the potential spurious effects of violent crime in the neighborhood, it is interesting to note the strong mediating effect of affective attachment on the relationship between the neighborhood homicide rate and informal social control. Thus, it appears that affective attachment accounts for some of the low levels of informal social control present in neighborhoods with high levels of violent crime.
Finally, I examine the net effect of each of the attachment variables on neighborhoods levels of informal social control by including all of them in the model together. As shown in Model E of Table 6.4, all three attachment variables were significant. Cognitive, behavioral and affective attachment were related to informal social control, independent of the effects of neighborhood structural characteristics. Also, the inclusion of all three attachment variables in the model reveals a potential suppressor effect; once the effects of behavioral and affective attachment were controlled, the negative effect of cognitive attachment on informal social control became significant. Though suppressor effects are often difficult to interpret, one possible reason for this effect is the small bivariate correlation that exists between cognitive attachment and informal social control \( (r=0.29, P<.001) \), despite a fairly strong correlation between cognitive attachment and affective attachment \( (r=0.44, P<.001) \), the latter of which is also strongly correlated with informal social control \( (r=0.73, P<.001) \).

As just stated, cognitive attachment was inversely related to informal social control, indicating that residents’ inability to name their neighborhood or agree on its size are associated with higher levels of informal social control. This finding contradicts the hypothesized relationship and suggests that, for residents who are unable to demonstrate knowledge of their neighborhood’s name and size, this uncertainty may actually encourage them to engage in collective efforts and activities to promote and strengthen local informal social control. Further, the negative effect of cognitive attachment on informal social control, which co-occurs with the positive effects of behavioral and affective attachment, indicates that the positive influence of

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5 An investigation of the partial correlation coefficients among cognitive, behavioral, and affective attachment and informal social control also revealed suppression effects. That is, as stated above, the bivariate correlation between cognitive attachment and informal social control was 0.28 (P<.001). However, the partial correlation became negative (partial \( r=-0.11, P<.05 \)) when I controlled for behavioral attachment and affective attachment.
one form of neighborhood attachment on informal social control does not necessitate a positive influence from another form of attachment. This finding provides support for exploring dimensions of attachment separately as I did in this dissertation.

Also, a comparison of the coefficients for the structural variables – disadvantage, immigrant concentration, residential instability – before and after the inclusion of all of the attachment variables (Models A and E) indicates considerable evidence of mediation. The coefficients for disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration were reduced. The coefficient for disadvantage was reduced by 65% (from -0.126 in Model A to -0.044 in Model E), the coefficient for residential instability was reduced by 56% (from -0.109 to -0.048), and the coefficient for immigrant concentration was reduced by 22% (from -0.064 to -0.050).

The results in Model E suggest that neighborhood attachment is a key factor explaining variations in neighborhood levels of informal social control. Specifically, low levels of neighborhood behavioral and affective attachment contribute to low levels of informal social control observed in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods. Adding all of the neighborhood attachment variables to the model increased the between-neighborhood explained variance to 74%.

**Sensitivity Analyses Results**

I conducted a set of sensitivity analyses, as described in Chapter 5, to assess the stability of my results across the range of neighborhood clusters, characterized by varying levels of concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration.

To do this, I created nine subsets of the neighborhood clusters that represented neighborhoods of low, mean, and high levels of concentrated disadvantage, residential
instability, and immigrant concentration. Neighborhood clusters characterized as “low” had values on the structural characteristic variable that were more than one standard deviation below the mean. Neighborhoods characterized as “mean” had values on the structural characteristic variable that ranged from one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean. Neighborhood clusters characterized as “high” had values on the structural characteristic variable that were more than one standard deviation above the mean. The results indicate that the hypothesized main effects of attachment and neighborhood structure on informal social control are fairly stable across neighborhoods differentiated by low, mean, and high levels of concentrated disadvantage, residential instability and immigrant concentration, with certain notable exceptions discussed below and highlighted in Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5. Because the sample sizes vary across the analyses, I focus primarily on the magnitude of the coefficients in the models rather than the p-values associated with them.

Table 6.5 presents the relationships between neighborhood attachment, structure, and informal social control across low, mean, and high neighborhood disadvantage. Regarding the attachment variables, the negative effect of cognitive attachment on informal social control is much stronger in neighborhoods of high disadvantage. As stated previously, residents’ inability to name their neighborhood or form a consensus about its size may actually encourage and strengthen informal social control. In this way, it is possible that informal social control is a response to local uncertainty about the neighborhood’s identity. Also, in neighborhoods of low and high disadvantage, the positive effects of behavioral attachment on informal social control are stronger than the effects of affective attachment. This is inconsistent with the full model, in

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6 Although none of the coefficients shown in the sensitivity analyses results represent significant interaction effects at the neighborhood level, I briefly discuss differences in the coefficients where such differences seem interesting theoretically.
which the effect of affective attachment is stronger than the effect of behavioral attachment. In these neighborhoods of high and low disadvantage, social and participation-oriented activities appear to be more important for neighborhood informal social control than how one feels about living in that neighborhood. Perhaps, in highly disadvantaged neighborhoods, residents may be willing to engage in behavioral attachment in order to facilitate neighborhood informal social control to keep themselves safe, and yet feel unsatisfied and discontented with their neighborhood as a place to live. This argument draws support from the concept of the community of limited liability, in which residents may form partial attachments in their neighborhood to the extent that those attachments fulfill certain utilitarian needs, and yet be prepared to move out when the neighborhood stops meeting those needs, or when they are financially able to do so.

Table 6.5: Sensitivity Analysis Across Levels of Concentrated Disadvantage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood-Level Variables</th>
<th>Full Model N=342</th>
<th>Low Disadvantage N=58</th>
<th>Mean Disadvantage N=224</th>
<th>High Disadvantage N=60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3.400 (0.014)</td>
<td>3.755 (0.027)</td>
<td>3.399 (0.017)</td>
<td>3.062 (0.041)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Attachment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Attachment</td>
<td>0.101 ** (0.028)</td>
<td>0.203 ** (0.067)</td>
<td>0.061 (0.033)</td>
<td>0.163 * (0.079)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Attachment</td>
<td>0.198 *** (0.031)</td>
<td>0.113 (0.075)</td>
<td>0.257 *** (0.036)</td>
<td>0.056 (0.083)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Disadvantage</td>
<td>-0.044 (0.031)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Instability</td>
<td>-0.048 * (0.019)</td>
<td>-0.020 (0.040)</td>
<td>-0.058 * (0.024)</td>
<td>-0.034 (0.088)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Concentration</td>
<td>-0.050 * (0.020)</td>
<td>-0.096 (0.098)</td>
<td>-0.049 * (0.023)</td>
<td>-0.059 (0.096)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide Rate</td>
<td>-0.084 ** (0.030)</td>
<td>0.032 (0.063)</td>
<td>-0.090 ** (0.032)</td>
<td>-0.151 (0.123)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001

Table 6.6 presents the results of the sensitivity analysis examining the relationships across neighborhoods differentiated by low, mean, and high levels of residential instability.
Regarding the attachment variables, in neighborhoods of low residential instability, the effect of
cognitive attachment on informal social control becomes positive. This is inconsistent with the
full model, but consistent with one of my hypotheses. In neighborhoods with more long-term
residents, those residents are able to identify their neighborhood, and draw on that neighborhood
identity to promote informal social control. Finally, the positive effects of behavioral attachment
on informal social control in neighborhoods of high residential instability are 74 percent stronger
than those effects in the full model (from 0.101 to 0.176). Thus, though behavioral and affective
attachments may be difficult to foster in neighborhoods where residents are constantly moving
and out, to the extent that those attachments do exist, they are important sources of informal
social control.

Table 6.6: Sensitivity Analysis Across Levels of Residential Instability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hierarchical Linear Models Predicting Informal Social Control (Standard Errors in Parentheses)</th>
<th>Full Model</th>
<th>Low Residential Instability</th>
<th>Mean Residential Instability</th>
<th>High Residential Instability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=342</td>
<td>N=66</td>
<td>N=226</td>
<td>N=50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood-Level Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3.400 (0.014)</td>
<td>3.786 (0.026)</td>
<td>3.329 (0.019)</td>
<td>3.265 (0.033)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Attachment</td>
<td>-0.051 ** (0.020)</td>
<td>0.014 (0.052)</td>
<td>-0.048 * (0.024)</td>
<td>-0.073 (0.064)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Attachment</td>
<td>0.101 ** (0.028)</td>
<td>0.079 (0.053)</td>
<td>0.105 ** (0.033)</td>
<td>0.176 * (0.086)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Attachment</td>
<td>0.198 *** (0.031)</td>
<td>0.233 ** (0.082)</td>
<td>0.151 *** (0.040)</td>
<td>0.298 *** (0.061)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Disadvantage</td>
<td>-0.044 (0.031)</td>
<td>-0.106 (0.114)</td>
<td>-0.091 * (0.039)</td>
<td>0.030 (0.076)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Instability</td>
<td>-0.048 * (0.019)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Concentration</td>
<td>-0.050 * (0.020)</td>
<td>0.049 (0.074)</td>
<td>-0.095 *** (0.023)</td>
<td>0.017 (0.063)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide Rate</td>
<td>-0.084 ** (0.030)</td>
<td>-0.008 (0.062)</td>
<td>-0.074 (0.039)</td>
<td>-0.066 (0.077)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05   ** p < .01   *** p < .001

Table 6.7 presents the results of the sensitivity analysis examining the relationships
across neighborhoods differentiated by low, mean, and high levels of immigrant concentration.

Regarding the attachment variables, in neighborhoods of low immigrant concentration, the
negative effect of cognitive attachment on informal social control is consistent with the full model, though the effect is 67 percent stronger (from -0.051 to -0.085). Perhaps the ethnically homogenous composition of these neighborhoods makes it more likely that residents will be able to agree on their neighborhood’s identity, even though this neighborhood identification is unlikely to translate into informal social control. Also, the effects of cognitive and behavioral attachment on informal social control switch signs in neighborhoods of high immigrant concentration, with cognitive attachment becoming positive and behavioral attachment becoming negative, in contrast to the full model. Cognitive attachment has a positive effect on informal social control in neighborhoods of high immigrant concentration, which is consistent with one of my hypotheses. However, behavioral attachment has a negative effect on informal social control in these neighborhoods, indicating that social ties, neighboring, and the like do little to promote informal social control in ethnically heterogeneous neighborhoods.

Table 6.7: Sensitivity Analysis Across Levels of Immigrant Concentration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood-Level Variables</th>
<th>Full Model N=342</th>
<th>Low Immigrant Concentration N=55</th>
<th>Mean Immigrant Concentration N=229</th>
<th>High Immigrant Concentration N=58</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3.400 (0.014)</td>
<td>3.335 (0.035)</td>
<td>3.464 (0.016)</td>
<td>3.216 (0.039)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Attachment</td>
<td>-0.051 ** (0.020)</td>
<td>-0.085 (0.065)</td>
<td>-0.061 ** (0.023)</td>
<td>0.034 (0.060)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Attachment</td>
<td>0.101 ** (0.028)</td>
<td>0.107 (0.077)</td>
<td>0.134 *** (0.033)</td>
<td>-0.075 (0.075)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Attachment</td>
<td>0.198 *** (0.031)</td>
<td>0.158 (0.082)</td>
<td>0.213 *** (0.035)</td>
<td>0.147 (0.098)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Disadvantage</td>
<td>-0.044 (0.031)</td>
<td>-0.198 * (0.088)</td>
<td>-0.032 (0.035)</td>
<td>-0.038 (0.128)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Instability</td>
<td>-0.048 * (0.019)</td>
<td>-0.018 (0.046)</td>
<td>-0.035 (0.022)</td>
<td>-0.065 (0.097)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant Concentration</td>
<td>-0.050 * (0.020)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide Rate</td>
<td>-0.084 ** (0.030)</td>
<td>0.063 (0.101)</td>
<td>-0.083 * (0.036)</td>
<td>-0.089 (0.071)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001
Summary of Main Findings

Based on my research questions and hypotheses, the following are the main findings from these analyses:

1. Behavioral and affective attachment are positively related to neighborhood levels of informal social control.

2. Cognitive attachment is negatively related to neighborhood levels of informal social control.

3. Neighborhood structural conditions – concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration – are negatively related to neighborhoods levels of informal social control.

4. Behavioral and affective attachment mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and levels of informal social control.

5. These results are robust across the range of neighborhood clusters characterized by varying levels of concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration.
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

With the proliferation of studies of neighborhood effects, sociologists are seeking to understand the links between community structural characteristics, individual attitudes and behaviors, and social disorder. I sought to contribute to the study of neighborhood effects by addressing a key gap in the literature: though we postulate, and some studies demonstrate, that informal social control matters for crime prevention and control, we do not know where it comes from. This research was motivated by a desire to understand the complex role that neighborhood attachment plays in producing informal social control in urban neighborhoods.

In this chapter, I will review my research questions and findings, including the empirical evidence supporting and contradicting my hypotheses. I will also discuss the theoretical implications of my dissertation research and directions for future research. Finally, I will describe potential limitations of this research.

Review of Research Questions and Findings

In this dissertation, I examined three research questions: 1) What dimensions of neighborhood attachment affect informal social control? 2) What is the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control? and 3) Does neighborhood attachment mediate the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control? Accordingly, I empirically examined neighborhood cognitive, behavioral, and affective attachment as sources of informal social control. I also examined the effects of neighborhood structural conditions on informal social control. Finally, I assessed the extent to
which neighborhood cognitive, behavioral, and affective attachment mediated the relationship between neighborhood structural conditions and informal social control.

After controlling for individual-level compositional effects, I found support for my hypothesis that neighborhood structural conditions – concentrated disadvantage, immigrant concentration, residential instability – were significantly and negatively associated with neighborhood levels of informal social control. I also found support for my hypothesis that neighborhood behavioral and affective attachment were positively related to informal social control. These findings indicate that neighborhoods characterized by extensive friend and neighbor networks, familiarity among residents, local organizational participation, and residents’ positive evaluations and sentiment about the neighborhood exhibit higher levels of informal social control.

As hypothesized, neighborhood attachment also explained a substantial portion of the effects of the neighborhood structural characteristics. The effects of all of the neighborhood structural variables were reduced, and the effect of concentrated disadvantage was rendered non-significant when the neighborhood attachment variables were added to the model. These findings provide important evidence that the low levels of informal social control observed in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods are the result of limited attachments among residents in these neighborhoods. In these neighborhoods, high levels of disadvantage, residential instability and immigrant concentration are suggested to not only disrupt valuable neighborhood social networks and interaction, but also diminish residents’ feelings of pride, satisfaction or responsibility in their neighborhood. This lack of neighborhood investment then makes it unlikely that residents will be willing to intervene in the prevention of local problems.
Interestingly, cognitive attachment – residents’ ability to identify their neighborhood’s name and agree on its size – was inversely related to informal social control, even when controlling for neighborhood structural conditions, and behavioral and affective attachment. This finding contradicts my hypothesis about the relationship between cognitive attachment and informal social control. I hypothesized that cognitive attachment, reflecting residents’ identification with their neighborhood, would be positively related to their willingness to intervene in the prevention of local problems in the neighborhood.

No other research has explored the role of cognitive attachment in promoting informal social control. Also, though my hypothesis was derived from Hunter’s (1974) work on “symbolic communities” in Chicago, his work only looked at demographic variations in residents’ cognitive images of their neighborhoods, and did not go further to explore the effects of those cognitive images on neighborhood informal social control. I suggest that my findings indicate that residents’ uncertainty about their neighborhood’s name and size might work to foster efforts to strengthen and promote neighborhood informal social control. That is, the perceived ambiguity about the neighborhood’s name and boundaries possibly encourages neighborhood residents to engage in behaviors, including informal social control, that provide an alternative source of neighborhood collectivity and identity.

Implications for Neighborhood Theory and Research

This dissertation advances our understanding of the development of informal social control in neighborhoods by clarifying the role of attachment, conceptualized as a multidimensional neighborhood-level construct comprised of cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions. Results indicate that in neighborhoods where attachment is high, (e.g., local ties and
organization participation are strong, neighboring behaviors are common, familiarity among residents is easy, and residents feel good about living there), residents may feel encouraged, or even obligated, to engage in behaviors that sustain and promote the neighborhood as a positive place to live. Results also indicate that residents of structurally disadvantage neighborhoods are unlikely to develop these forms of neighborhood attachment, and, as a result, are unlikely to feel invested in their neighborhood or be willing to prevent or intervene in local problems.

This dissertation also indicates several useful directions for neighborhood theory. First, I employed a multidimensional conceptualization of attachment that has its roots in classic urban sociological research, specifically Hunter’s (1974) work on “symbolic communities,” as well as the concept of the community of limited liability (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). To my knowledge, though several urban sociological studies have treated attachment as a multidimensional construct (for a review, see Woldoff, 2002) and criminological research has suggested that neighborhood attachment is an important predictor of informal social control (see Silver and Miller 2004), no other studies have explored attachment as a source of informal social control in such a complete way. The multidimensional conceptualization of neighborhood attachment is useful to studies of informal social control because it distinguishes between the thoughts, feelings, and actions that residents may have about their neighborhoods and how those dimensions of attachment may translate into residents’ willingness to engage in the prevention of local problems.

Second, my dissertation research shows that community is not “lost,” that the social nature of neighborhood life is still viable, and that it has important implications for neighborhood crime prevention and control. However, the social nature of neighborhood life may be more complex than previously thought. Neighborhood research in the social disorganization tradition
has generally relied on the systemic model of social ties to explain the mechanisms mediating the effects of neighborhood structural conditions on crime rates. However, work conducted by Sampson and his colleagues has generated a new line of research questioning the role of social ties. This work attempts to specify the content of social ties, and how those ties may be activated and engaged to promote neighborhood informal social control. Sampson and his colleagues use the concept of collective efficacy to describe the process by which neighborhood social capital is converted into meaningful social action, including informal social control. Social ties are viewed as a necessary, but not sufficient condition for neighborhood informal social control. Thus, the theoretical innovation of collective efficacy lies in differentiating the “process of activating or converting social ties to achieve desired outcomes from the ties themselves” (Sampson et al. 1999: 635, italics in the original).

In my dissertation research, I have been able to demonstrate support for the systemic model of social ties, as well as the collective efficacy framework. (It is important to remind readers here that I have separated the components of Sampson et al.’s (1997) collective efficacy scale, and focused my theoretical and empirical attention on informal social control. Informal social control describes residents’ willingness to take social action, arguably the most important facet of collective efficacy, and I sought to examine neighborhood attachment as a source of that action.) My measure of behavioral attachment includes an indicator of social ties, as well as other measures of neighborhood social interaction, and I find empirical support for its positive effects on informal social control. Further, my model of neighborhood attachment reveals that affective attachment is another significant predictor of neighborhood informal social control. Moving beyond the influence of simple social and associational neighborly ties and interactions, my results indicate that it is just as important that residents feel positive, satisfied, and invested
in their neighborhoods for them to be willing to engage in behaviors to promote neighborhood safety and crime prevention. Thus, my dissertation research suggests a much-needed transition from the systemic model of social ties to other explanations of the mechanisms mediating the relationship between neighborhood structural disadvantage and crime – including collective efficacy – that attempt to clarify how residents use social ties, and other forms of social capital, to achieve neighborhood safety, crime prevention, and control.

Though I have focused my attention on the relationship between neighborhood attachment and informal social control in this dissertation, future research should explore the ways in which attachment may contribute to the relationship between informal and formal social control and also facilitate other forms of social control. As described in Chapter 4, the presence of strong informal social controls often helps to promote formal social control. For example, recent ethnographic work by Carr (2003) suggests that residents’ ability to organize at the parochial level and garner external resources can be an important source of crime prevention and control. To the extent that neighborhood attachment promotes informal social control, it may also be a useful precursor to residents’ cooperation with formal agents of social control, such as police and political authorities.

Alternatively, the presence of formal social controls in the neighborhood, including the police, may exert important effects on neighborhood attachment and the exercise of informal social control (Rose and Clear 1998; Silver and Miller 2004). For example, high levels of satisfaction with the police, in conjunction with high levels of neighborhood attachment, have been shown to be related to residents’ willingness to exercise informal social control (Silver and Miller 2004).
Though adequate measures of formal social control were lacking in this dataset, neighborhood residents could be asked about their participation in local organizations, the ability of those organizations to bring in resources such as after-school programs, job placement centers, and increased law enforcement, and the relationships between those local organizations and outside agencies. Arguably, cooperative, neighborhood-based relationships between informal and formal agents of social control, facilitated by strong local attachments, will yield the most positive effects on neighborhood crime prevention and control (Bursik and Grasmick 1993). Alternatively, in neighborhoods where agents of formal social control are seen as ineffective and regarded with skepticism and mistrust, or where formal social control is organized and administered largely outside of the neighborhood, residents may be unlikely to feel responsible for or invested in the promotion of neighborhood safety and will be unwilling to take action to prevent local problems.

In an exploration of the community of limited liability concept, research could also test the hypothesis that, in certain neighborhoods, residents may establish utilitarian attachments, such as social ties and neighboring behaviors, in order to connect with external agents of formal social control (Granovetter 1983). Perhaps in more affluent neighborhoods, where residents wish to protect their home and local investments, they may seek to foster ties with neighbors and neighborhood leaders that lend them access to police officers, political representatives, and local investors. In such cases, neighborhood attachment may not necessarily encourage informal social control but may, nonetheless, be integral for the exercise of formal social control.

Neighborhood research should also consider the limits of neighborhood informal social control. The measure of informal social control utilized in this dissertation is specifically focused on minor forms of youth-related deviance. However, future research should explore the
point at which behaviors become too severe or too unsafe to warrant informal intervention and may necessitate some form of formal social control. Further, when levels of social or physical disorder reach a point that they threaten the safety of neighborhood residents, their children, and their property, it is likely that no amount of neighborhood attachment will facilitate informal social control.

The limits of informal social control may be examined by developing measures that include more adult-oriented forms of disorder, as well as more serious forms of local disturbances, including but not limited to drug dealing, gang activity, and domestic violence. Studies attending to this issue should start with qualitative neighborhood research designed to objectively examine the forms and levels of disorder to which neighborhood residents are exposed. Only with an understanding of the types of behaviors residents are being asked to control can social scientists begin to assess residents’ willingness to do so.

Limitations of this Dissertation Research

Though my dissertation indicates several useful directions for neighborhood theory and research, it is not without its limitations. These limitations are not unique to my research, and include the lack of key explanatory variables, the measurement of neighborhood structural characteristics, the cross-sectional design of the data, and generalizability to cities outside of Chicago.

First, I was not able to measure neighborhood culture in my dissertation. Recent research has suggested that neighborhood culture, or, more specifically, cultural attenuation, may be an important source of neighborhood crime rates (Warner 2003). This research suggests that residents’ perceptions of weakened conventional values in the neighborhood are inversely related
to informal social control. Though the dataset I use in my dissertation does not include such measures of resident’s perceptions of neighborhood values, I draw on prior theory and research to suggest that the negative effects of neighborhood culture are most likely confounded with the effects of neighborhood disadvantage, thus potentially overestimating the negative effects of neighborhood disadvantage on informal social control (Kornhauser 1978; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003a; Sampson and Wilson 1995). As discussed previously, the effects of neighborhood disadvantage and disinvestment disrupt the networks and resources that residents utilize to transmit and enforce common values, including the prevention and control of crime. Disadvantage also may make certain conventional forms of economic advancement untenable, thus increasing the likelihood that residents will embrace more unconventional means of achieving success and respect (Anderson 1999; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003a).

Even if the effects of concentrated disadvantage on informal social control are overestimated in this dissertation, the significant effects of neighborhood attachment on informal social control remain compelling. Nonetheless, future research should continue to explore the separate effects of neighborhood cultural and structural conditions on informal social control, the causal relationship between the two, as well as cultural variations in informal social control.

Another potential limitation of my dissertation research is the inability to separate race effects from the effects of concentrated disadvantage. A considerable amount of research focuses on the relevance of neighborhood disadvantage and racial composition for a variety of outcomes. Measures of poverty and neighborhood racial composition have long been included in studies of community organization and are typically found to have positive effects on crime and victimization (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Shaw and McKay 1942). More recent studies have documented the impact of macroeconomic and neighborhood segregation mechanisms that have
concentrated poor African Americans in inner cities and conditions of perpetual poverty, crime, and disorder (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Elliott et al. 1996; Massey and Denton 1993; Wilson 1987). Following from this, recent research examining structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods, including this dissertation, have included a measure of “percent black” as an indicator of that disadvantage (Sampson et al. 1997). Thus, studies of neighborhood effects may confound the effects of neighborhood socioeconomic composition and racial composition on a range of outcomes. More research is needed to disentangle the effects of neighborhood disadvantage and racial context as they influence the conditions that give rise to informal social control.

Also, future neighborhood studies should explore other measures of neighborhood structural conditions that go beyond the census-based measures – disadvantage, residential instability, immigrant concentration – traditionally included in studies of neighborhood effects. Some prior studies (Brooks-Gunn et al. 1993, Sampson et al. 1999) have included measures of neighborhood affluence when analyzing structural characteristics and neighborhood outcomes. The argument here is that the effects of neighborhood poverty may obscure any ameliorative effects of neighborhood affluence and that “affluence may be more that just the absence of disadvantage” (Morenoff et al. 2001).

Other research has begun exploring the effects of neighborhood social and physical disorder on crime rates by employing more objective, observational methods, such as systematic social observation (Raudenbush and Sampson 1999). Future research should extend these ideas by exploring structural variables including neighborhood land use patterns, street and sidewalk networks, and signs of property investment, including home repair, garden plots, and the like. Other minor forms of neighborhood disorder and deviance, such as loud music and other noise,
littering, and improper pet care and clean-up, should also be assessed. These observable signs of neighborhood investment and disinvestment may have important implications for residents’ feelings of neighborhood attachment and willingness to engage in behaviors to promote informal social control.

As discussed previously in Chapter 5, the use of cross-sectional data in this dissertation complicates the assessment of causal ordering. Though the relationships in this dissertation are justified by prior theory and research, it is possible that neighborhood informal social control might work to promote attachment. To the extent that neighborhood residents take pride in their neighborhood, engage in forms of informal social control, and perceive other residents as just as proud and willing to address local problems, these perceptions of neighborhood informal social control may facilitate feelings of affective attachment, including an increase in positive neighborhood sentiment and evaluations of the neighborhood and its resources. Further, the cooperation engendered by informal and other social control efforts, such as the formation of local voluntary associations and relationships with agents of social control, may help to enhance behavioral attachment in the form of increased neighborly interaction and familiarity.

Neighborhood-level longitudinal data are needed to explore potential reciprocal relationships between neighborhood attachment and informal social control. Longitudinal data could also be used to examine the effects of changes over time in levels of neighborhood disadvantage, crime rates, and other forms of disorder on neighborhood attachment and informal social control.

A final limitation to this dissertation research (also discussed in Chapter 5) is the potential lack of generalizability to cities outside of Chicago. The historical legacy of neighborhood research in the city of Chicago, including well-established neighborhoods of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity, makes it an ideal location for this kind of research.
However, additional research is needed to explore the causes and consequences of neighborhood informal social control in smaller cities and newer cities, whose neighborhood development and growth patterns may be quite different from the patterns long-observed in the city of Chicago.
REFERENCES


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“Community size, individual social position, and community attachment.” *Rural Sociology* 55:494-521


# APPENDIX

## Neighborhood-Level Correlations

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