Crime, Class, and Community—An Emerging Paradigm

Economic Deprivation and Neighborhood Crime Rates, 1960–1980

Robert J. Bursik, Jr.   Harold G. Grasmick

The social disorganization model of crime and delinquency generally has argued that the socioeconomic composition of neighborhoods is related to rates of illegal behavior only to the extent that it increases the likelihood of residential turnover and racial/ethnic heterogeneity. Such an orientation reflects the traditional assumption of human ecology that urban areas are characterized by continual processes of residential upgrading as groups become progressively assimilated into the economic structure of the community and have more economic resources at their disposal. However, the validity of the indirect effect hypothesis may have become questionable in the many cities that have experienced a significant economic decline during the last few decades, thereby leading to the creation of an immobile underclass population. We examine here the relative validity of the indirect effect hypothesis in Chicago's neighborhoods during 1960 and 1980. While the findings generally support the traditional indirect effect assumption of social disorganization, they also emphasize the need to consider the economic and political contexts in which these communities are embedded.

The presumed relationship between economic deprivation and the number of crimes committed by the residents of a particular neighborhood is one of the lasting legacies of the research of Clifford Shaw, Henry McKay, and associates (1929, 1942, 1969). As noted by the theoretical explications of Kornhauser (1978), Tittle (1983), and Bursik and Grasmick (1993), their social disorganization framework assumed that this relationship was an indirect one, mediated in turn by the residential instability and heterogeneity of the neighborhood and by the regulatory capacity of the area. Nevertheless, despite the indirect nature of its effect on crime rates, the economic composition of local urban communities was the key ecological fac-

tor that set in operation the dynamics associated with social dis-organization.

The pivotal role of economic factors in the development of social disorganization is derived from the Park and Burgess (1924) model of human ecology which assumed that residential mobility was a function of the degree of assimilation of local populations into the occupational structure of urban areas. Since the initial occupations of immigrant groups were as-sumed to be relatively low paying, these groups tended to be concentrated in economically deprived areas. However, over time, occupational mobility would lead to resettlement in more desirable neighborhoods characterized by higher economic sta-tus, greater stability, and less heterogeneity.[1]

The availability of unskilled jobs in goods-production in-dustries played an important role in shaping these ecological dynamics, for they provided a relatively open entree into the occupational structure. Unfortunately, as industries have been enticed into suburban and rural locations, many residents of modern central-city neighborhoods no longer have easy access to the type of jobs that traditionally provided the opportunity for occupational mobility, especially in the older, Northern cit-ies. Wilson (1987:100), for example, notes that the number of manufacturing jobs declined by 701,700 in the Northeast and North Central regions of the United States between 1970 and 1980.

At the same time, dramatic changes have occurred in the racial composition of many cities. For example, while Wilson (1987:101) notes that the black population of the 33 largest central cities increased by more than 5,000,000 between 1950 and 1980, the white population declined by more than 9,000,000 during the same period. The coupling of such demo-graphic shifts with the noted trend in urban economies has re-sulted in the concentration and isolation of the most disadvan-taged segments of minority populations in central-city neighborhoods of older industrial cities (p. 58), leading to the emergence of an extremely poor "underclass" population that is structurally prohibited from any significant degree of resi-dential upgrading (see Sampson & Wilson 1991). Such dra-matic alterations in the ecological structures and dynamics of many urban areas suggest that the relationship between eco-nomic deprivation and crime rates may have changed signifi-cantly from the indirect effect envisioned by Shaw and McKay. On the other hand, the association may have remained fairly stable despite these new ecological dynamics. We here com-

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[1] The Park and Burgess model assumed the existence of an open market in which housing was available to anyone with sufficient financial resources or credit. However, this has never been the case for many minority groups (see Bursik 1986) and declined generally as a valid assumption since World War II (see Bursik 1989).

pare the structure of relationships between the ecological dy-
namics associated with crime in Chicago during 1960 and 1980
and interpret the results within the contemporary systemic re-
formulation of the social disorganization framework (Sampson
& Groves 1989; Bursik & Grasmick 1993).

The Role of Economic Deprivation in Social Disorganization Models

The literature that has considered the degree to which
neighborhood economic composition is related to crime has
been characterized by two conceptually distinct approaches.
The first has emphasized the degree of economic inequality
within local communities. While such internal variation in the
availability of economic resources has been recognized within
urban sociology at least since the publication of Zorbaugh's
classic *The Gold Coast and the Slum* in 1929, surprisingly few re-
cent studies have examined the effects of economic inequality
at the neighborhood level.[2] The important exceptions, Messner
and Tardiff (1986) and Patterson (1991), have failed to find a
significant relationship between inequality and crime. Given
Wilson's (1987) argument concerning the flight of affluent fam-
ilies from the central city, such findings are not theoretically
unexpected since these dynamics should lead to a decreasing
level of inequality within urban neighborhoods over time.

Many more studies have focused on a conceptually different
approach to the economic issue that operationalizes depriva-
tion relative to some fixed physical or physiological standards
of well-being (Braithwaite 1979; Messner 1982) rather than to
the overall distribution of economic status. Whereas the ine-
quality frameworks generally are referred to as relative ap-
proaches, the fixed-standard orientation typically is referred to
as an absolute approach. Not only do we consider such an ori-
entation to be much more consistent with Wilson's underclass
hypothesis, but it is identical to the conceptualization underly-
ing Shaw and McKay's traditional social disorganization frame-
work.

Many contemporary discussions of the relationship of abso-
lute deprivation to crime entail neighborhood dynamics much
like those found in Shaw and McKay and, therefore, represent
variations of the indirect effect hypothesis. Wacquant and Wil-
son (1989), for example, argue that the economic marginaliza-
tion and deterioration of black neighborhoods has had devas-
tating effects on the ability of local communities to act as agents

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[2] There certainly are many more studies of neighborhood inequality in the corpus
of criminological literature. However, since the underclass argument of Wilson is
highly period dependent, we have restricted our attention to the most recent work. The
same consideration will be reflected in our discussion of absolute deprivation.

of social control. In support of this position, they present data (pp. 22–24) suggesting that there is a decline in attachment to and identification with the neighborhood, fewer social ties with other community residents, and an overall loss of strength within such economic contexts. Similarly, Bluestone and Harrison (1982) note that the closing of manufacturing plants typically is accompanied by strained family and social relationships and a general decline in social cohesion in the affected communities.[3]

On the other hand, a growing body of work suggests that the economic and political dynamics associated with the emergence of the underclass are reflected in a direct effect of absolute deprivation on crime. The possibility that deprivation has such an effect presents a historically fascinating challenge to the traditional social disorganization model, for it suggests that it may be necessary to supplant Park and Burgess's "desirable space" ecological model with the "sustenance activity" orientation found in the ecological theory of Amos Hawley (1944, 1950).[4] While Hawley acknowledged that the dynamics emphasized by Park and Burgess should be part of a general ecological model (see, e.g., Hawley 1944:404), and discussed the regulatory capacities of commensalistic relationships (1950: 219), he expanded their orientation by emphasizing the distribution of sustenance activities that give rise to an urban structure of interdependent relationships (ibid., p. 180). From this perspective, crime is an alternative means of gaining economic and social sustenance from the environment (see Bursik & Grasmick 1993:65–70).

Sullivan's (1989) discussion of a Brooklyn neighborhood during the late 1970s and early 1980s provides a rich description of how attempts to derive economic sustenance from the social environment can lead directly to criminal involvement. Many youths in that community were skeptical of the relevance of education to their future in the labor market and left school to obtain work prior to graduation. However, given their relative lack of conventional employment credentials, the positions that were available tended to be unstable, with undesirable working conditions and no chance for advancement. Since a significant proportion of these jobs were never officially re-

[3] Taylor and Covington (1988) present an alternative indirect model in which absolute deprivation is assumed to increase the levels of perceived relative deprivation. However, they do not include measures of the prevalence of such perceptions in their model. Therefore, it is impossible to determine whether their data more fully support the existence of a primarily indirect or direct effect of absolute deprivation on crime rates.

[4] Despite the ecological intellectual heritage of the social disorganization perspective, the theoretical implications of the urban dynamics that underlie Hawley's model of human ecology rarely have been considered from within the disorganization context, although they lie at the heart of the routine activities model as developed by Felson and Cohen (1980).

corded, many of these youths did not qualify for unemploy-
ment compensation if a position was terminated suddenly (Sul-
livan 1989:60–64). As a result, many of the local youths became
involved in a systematic series of thefts and other economically
motivated illegal activities that were coordinated through mem-
bership in local gangs (p. 117).

Moore (1988:8) also has argued that the shrinking number
of employment opportunities can lead to the institutionaliza-
tion of gang activities in economically deprived neighbor-
hoods. While a significant proportion of gang members may
mature out of such behavior (as also noted by Sullivan), some
fraction retain their gang affiliation well into adulthood due to
the lack of financial alternatives. Some of the children from this
fraction are recruited into gangs during adolescence, and the
process of gang formation and maintenance continues to
reproduce itself.

The findings of recent studies testing the viability of the di-
rect effect hypothesis are inconsistent.[5] Curry and Spergel
(1988) conclude that the degree of poverty in a neighborhood
is directly related to both the general delinquency rate and the
rate of gang-related homicides; these findings are supported by
the research of Taylor and Covington (1988) concerning homi-
cides in general. Yet the direct relationship between percent-
age poor and the homicide rate presented in Messner and
Tardiff (1986) is not significant. Likewise, Sampson and Groves
(1989) present evidence that the socioeconomic composition of
a local community has no direct effect on community rates of
personal violence and property theft/vandalism. Therefore,
there has been a great deal of divergence in the findings of
studies that have examined this issue.

A number of reasons may be proposed for such differ-
ences.[6] As noted by Patterson (1991:761), the unit of analysis
used in neighborhood studies presents very severe operational
problems. Traditional studies in the social disorganization
framework have defined the neighborhood in a wide variety of
ways, such as local community areas, census tracts, police dis-
tricts, and electoral wards (see Bursik & Grasmick 1993:chs.
1–2). For example, in the four studies discussed in the preced-
ing paragraph, the units of analysis include empirically deline-
ated neighborhoods (Taylor & Covington), neighborhoods that
are assumed to be symbolically meaningful (Messner &
Tardiff), officially/administratively defined communities (Curry

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[5] A number of studies have examined the effect of economic deprivation on
neighborhood rates of victimization (see, e.g., Smith & Jarjoura 1988; Sampson &
Groves 1989; Patterson 1991). However, since the focus of this article is on rates of
offending behavior, these findings are not considered in detail.

[6] For a similar discussion of divergent findings concerning economic deprivation
at the city, SMSA, and state level, see Land et al. 1990.

& Spergel), and electoral wards and polling districts (Sampson & Groves). As Bailey (1985) has clearly illustrated, the level of aggregation used in an analysis of crime rates can dramatically affect the statistical patterns that emerge. Therefore, some of the differences found in these studies may simply represent the effects of variation in the unit of analysis.

A second source of divergence may represent the nature of the urban systems in which these neighborhoods are embedded (Taylor & Covington, Baltimore; Messner & Tardiff, New York City; Curry & Spergel, Chicago; Sampson & Groves, England and Wales, including London). The economic and ecological upheavals Wilson discussed are not consistently distributed among U.S. or British cities. Frey and Speare (1988) note that while many U.S. areas lost manufacturing jobs during the 1970s, other areas experienced significant growth in both population and the number of such jobs. For example, Los Angeles was a growing metropolis between 1950 and 1980, increasing from 1,970,358 residents to 2,968,258, while the population of Chicago declined from 3,360,962 to 3,005,072 people during that period. While manufacturing continued to play a central role in Los Angeles's economy during that period (the number of manufacturing establishments grew from 7,502 to 8,647 and the number of workers they employed increased from 268,800 to 327,600 between 1954 and 1984), this has not been the case in Chicago (which experienced a decrease from 10,288 to 5,203 establishments and from 615,700 to 277,000 employed workers during the same period). However, while such a consideration may serve as an appropriate caution against the validity of generalizations that sometimes have been drawn from findings derived from neighborhoods within a single urban system, it does not appear to provide much of a basis for resolving the differences observed between Chicago, Baltimore, and New York, for all these cities experienced significant declines in the number of manufacturing establishments and related employees between 1967 and 1982 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1973, 1983).

A third basis of incomparability is the one we feel is most crucial for understanding the inconsistencies appearing in the literature—the measurement of economic deprivation and related dynamics of social disorganization. We turn our attention to this issue in the next section.

The Measurement of the Model Components

Two measurement issues have been especially problematic in the analysis of economic deprivation, social disorganization, and crime. The first entails deprivation itself. Many researchers have utilized very general measures of socioeconomic status.

Sampson and Groves, for example, derive a scale of neighborhood SES that combines the percentage who have gone to college, the percentage employed in professional or managerial positions, and the percentage with a high income.

While they conclude that socioeconomic composition is unrelated to crime, it often has been noted that the variation most pertinent to the analysis of economic deprivation and crime may be concentrated in the lowest tail of the economic distribution (Gordon 1967; Clelland & Carter 1980). This especially is the case if the statistical associations related to the emergence of an underclass are the focus of one's research, for it is by definition the most disadvantaged segment of the population. Thus, it is interesting to note that Curry and Spergel's scale combines the unemployment rate and the percentage below the poverty level with more general indicators of socioeconomic status; likewise, a central component of Taylor and Covington's scale involves the distribution of poverty. Recall that both studies present evidence of a significant direct effect of economic deprivation on crime. Therefore, there is some evidence that the characteristics associated with underclass neighborhood status are related to neighborhood crime and delinquency rates. Thus, a valid examination of the issues must be based on indicators that measure such deprivation in a reliable and valid manner.

The second measurement issue is much trickier to address, yet on it rests the resolution of the competing direct and indirect hypotheses. A complete evaluation of the relative validity of these two models requires that they are specified as fully as possible; included are not only the appropriate indicators of economic deprivation but also measures that represent the full range of neighborhood regulatory capacities that lie at the heart of the social disorganization framework (see the related argument of Land et al. 1990:934).

Although the works of Smith and Jarjoura (1988) and Patterson (1991) are based on victimization rates, their findings exemplify the inferential problems that may arise due to an incomplete specification. Both studies utilize the same set of data gathered from 57 neighborhoods in three SMSAs. At the zero-order level, there is a significant correlation of .374 between the burglary rate and the percentage of residents with low income levels (Smith & Jarjoura 1988:58).

The effect of economic deprivation on burglary continues to be significant when indicators of residential mobility and racial heterogeneity are introduced into the model (Smith & Jarjoura 1988:Table 3). If Smith and Jarjoura had considered only these three variables, they would have been forced to conclude that deprivation has a direct effect on burglary. However, the introduction of additional ecological variables (such as pop-

ulation density, age structure, and household composition)
reduces the direct effect of deprivation to zero, while the direct
effects of mobility and heterogeneity continue to be significant.
Patterson's analysis also concludes that there is no direct effect
of deprivation on burglary rates. However, using a specification
of the full model that is minimally different from that of Smith
and Jarjoura (reflecting the inclusion of the Gini coefficient),
Patterson concludes that racial heterogeneity also is unrelated
to burglary, a conclusion clearly departing from that of Smith
and Jarjoura despite the fact that it is based on the same data
set.

This illustration highlights the variation in conclusions that
may result simply from a failure to fully specify a model. How-
ever, while the solution is extremely simple theoretically, it
poses enormous practical problems. It is fairly easy to collect
indicators of the ecological dynamics pertinent to the social dis-
organization framework (i.e., socioeconomic composition, eco-
nomic deprivation, residential instability, and population heter-
ogeneity) from published census materials. However, data
pertaining to the regulatory capacity of the neighborhood are
not readily available from published sources (see Bursik &
Grasmick 1993:ch. 2). Thus, most large-scale studies of urban
systems have been forced to assume that processes of neigh-
borhood control intervene between the ecological dynamics
and crime, and many of the inferences drawn from such re-
search are based on "conjecture and speculation" (Sampson
1987:100).

The findings of Sampson and Groves (1989) have a special
importance within the context of this limitation, for they are
able to incorporate variables into their model that represent
the breadth of local friendship networks, the rate of organiza-
tion participation, and the supervisory capacity of the neigh-
borhood. Therefore, their conclusion that socioeconomic com-
position has no direct effect on rates of personal and property
crime, thereby supporting the indirect hypothesis, are very per-
suasive. Yet recall that they do not incorporate indicators of
economic deprivation per se. In addition, the cross-sectional
nature of their study precludes an analysis of the effects of a
changing urban economy on the relevance of the social disor-
ganization model. As a result, while their findings are exciting,
they certainly cannot be considered conclusive.

Data and Measurement

Our examination of the viability of the direct and indirect
hypotheses within the context of contemporary urban econo-
mies is based on the rates of male referrals to the Cook County,
Illinois, juvenile court (computed per 1,000 male juveniles ages

10–17) for the years 1960 and 1980 in each of Chicago's offi-
cially recognized local community areas.[7] The years 1960 and
1980 were chosen because they seem to bracket nicely the de-
velopment of the economic processes discussed by Wilson
(1987:3–7) and a wide variety of consistently defined variables
were available for these periods.

Our measures of socioeconomic composition and depriva-
tion were selected to be as congruent with Wilson's argument
as possible. The indicators of general socioeconomic status
(SES) are identical to those that often have been used in past
research; the percentage of the population with professional/
managerial occupations, the median education level, and the
median family income. Three of the measures of severe eco-
nomic deprivation (DEP) are also straightforward: the percent-
age of families with incomes below the poverty level (for 1960
this is measured as the percentage with incomes below $3,000),
the unemployment rate, and the rate of public assistance allo-
cations per 100 residents.[8]

We have included one other indicator in our scale of eco-
nomic deprivation, although it does not represent financial
considerations per se: the percentage of the population that is
black. Wilson has argued that this minority population tends to
be concentrated in economically deprived neighborhoods, and
as will be seen in the subsequent analyses, a very large propor-
tion of its individual variation is shared in common with the
other economic indicators. Therefore, its separate incorpora-
tion into the model would have led to an intolerably high level
of multicollinearity and very unstable estimates of its effects.

Unfortunately, the selection of indicators to represent the
regulatory capacity (RC) element of the social disorganization
model was limited by the same paucity of data that other stud-
ies have confronted; information on the breadth and depth of
relational networks in all these neighborhoods during 1960
and 1980 is not available. Therefore, we have been forced to
rely on more indirect measures drawn from census data. Two
of these, the rates of owner occupancy and residential mobility,

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[7] Chicago had 76 community areas during 1960 and 77 during 1980. Since the
additional neighborhood for 1980 was created by splitting one of the original 76, we
reaggregated the data to make the two decades comparable. Of these 76 units of analy-
sis, two had very small juvenile populations (the Loop and O'Hare), thereby making
the estimated rates highly unreliable. They have been eliminated from the analysis,
resulting in our use of 74 consistently defined neighborhoods in the analysis.

[8] This indicator represents all financial allocations made through the the tax-sup-
ported programs of Aid to Dependent Children, Aid to the Blind, Disability Assistance,
and General Assistance. Since residents can qualify simultaneously under more than
one program, it is possible that the total number of allocations provided by these four
programs is greater than the number of residents (and this is the case in several neigh-
borhoods). Therefore it is more appropriate to consider it to represent a rate rather
than a percentage. All noncensus materials have been drawn from Kitagawa and
Taeuber (1963) and the Chicago Fact Book Consortium (1984).

have often appeared in other research within this tradition. However, the mobility indicator is somewhat problematic given the way the variable is defined by the Bureau of the Census (the percentage of residents who have not lived at the same address for five or more years). While this gives some sense of the rate of turnover, it is possible for very unstable communities to have scores nearing 0% on this item. Such a situation would occur when a large number of residents have left a neighborhood, essentially abandoning those who cannot (or will not) leave. If the remaining population has resided in the area for more than five years, the neighborhood will appear to be highly stable, even if a majority of the population has left the area. To compensate for this source of inferential complexity, we have also included community-specific measures of net migration, defined as the percentage change in population size during the preceding decade that cannot be accounted for by births or deaths, as an additional indicator of stability.[9] The final indicator of regulatory capacity is the percentage of children who live in husband-wife households, for Sampson (1987) has argued persuasively that this compositional element is intrinsically related to a neighborhood's ability to supervise the nature of the activities occurring within its borders.

Each set of variables was combined into the relevant scale through a principal components model (see Table 1). Two aspects of this table are particularly interesting. First, while the factor loadings all are relatively strong, the shared variations of the all-deprivation indicators are extraordinarily high; the communalities range from .88 to .96 for 1960 and from .75 to .94 for 1980. These findings confirm Wilson's argument concerning the pronounced concentration of these social characteristics within urban neighborhoods.

Second, the factor structures underlying these three dimensions during 1960 and 1980 are strikingly similar. Therefore, the generally invariant ecological structure described by Bursik (1984) for Chicago during 1960 and 1970 appears to also characterize the city during 1980. This finding calls for a slight modification of Wilson's (1987) argument, which implies that recent trends in urban economies have led to an increasing concentration of "the most disadvantaged segments of the urban black population" (p. 58). Rather, our findings suggest that the five indicators of economic deprivation we have used in our analysis generally have been concentrated in particular neighborhood settings since at least 1960.

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[9] Although it would be desirable to have such information on a race-specific basis, the material available to us suppressed the data if the population during the base year (i.e., 1950 for 1960 estimates, and 1970 for 1980 estimates) was less than 1,500. This especially was the case for the size of the black population in many of Chicago's neighborhoods during the 1950–60 period.

Table 1. Factor Structures of Socioeconomic Status, Economic Deprivation, and Social Disorganization, 1960–1980

Indicator	1960	1980
	Socioeconomic Status (SES)	
% professional	.897	.869
Median education	.773	.928
Median income	.844	.718
Eigenvalue	2.114	2.133
	Economic Deprivation (DEP)	
% below poverty	.971	.943
Unemployment rate	.981	.957
Rate of public aid	.981	.968
% black	.936	.865
Eigenvalue	3.742	3.491
	Regulatory Capacity (RC)	
% owner occupancy	.943	.942
Residential mobility	−.785	−.536
Net migration (%)	.608	.720
% children with parents	.888	.843
Eigenvalue	2.665	2.405

However, while the nature of concentration is similar for these two decades, the number of neighborhoods characterized by extreme economic deprivation has increased dramatically and in a fashion consistent with Wilson's discussion. Table 2 presents the univariate statistics for the variables that formed the basis of our three scales. A simple inspection of these distributions confirms Wilson's argument concerning recent urban dynamics. There appears to have been a bifurcated process of economic change during this 20-year period: while there was an increase in the percentage of residents employed in professional occupations, there also were significant increases in the poverty and unemployment rates, and a more than fivefold jump in the rate of public aid.

It is also interesting that the mean levels and variations of owner occupancy did not change significantly between 1960 and 1980 even though the levels of residential mobility significantly decreased. In addition, note that while the in- and out-migration flows tended to balance one another between 1950 and 1960, Chicago's neighborhoods on the average suffered a net loss of more than 13% in their residential populations between 1970 and 1980 due to migration. In fact, an inspection of the frequencies for the 1980 levels of this variable indicates that only 5 of the 74 neighborhoods were characterized by a positive level of inmigration (compared to 21 growing neighborhoods during 1960). When this trend is placed in the context of the noted patterns for owner occupancy and residential mobility, the findings suggest that Chicago's real estate market

Table 2. Chicago Neighborhood Characteristics, 1960–80

	1960		1980		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t[a]
Delinquency rate	15.57	12.12	56.83	36.93	11.55
% professional	8.67	5.12	18.05	10.20	10.40
Median education	10.39	1.59	11.02	1.14	3.71
Median income	$6,913	$1,595	$19,180	$6,136	$22.05
% below poverty	13.30	10.46	16.54	14.31	4.04
Unemployment rate	5.09	3.61	10.61	6.12	11.72
Rate of public aid	6.62	10.33	37.89	38.02	9.11
% black	20.06	33.76	39.69	42.86	5.36
% owner-occupancy	45.45	27.31	45.58	24.78	0.21
Residential mobility	50.46	10.73	38.42	11.25	8.34
Net migration (%)	0.34	52.11	−13.44	15.30	2.41
% children with parents	84.49	12.45	65.88	22.06	12.61

[a]$N=74$ for all variables. The t-test was computed on the basis of a paired comparison between years.

stagnated during this period and that the central city during 1980 was populated to a large degree by residents who had been "abandoned" in their neighborhoods.

The full extent of Chicago's economic transformation can be provided by examining the changes in the neighborhood levels of economic deprivation during this 20-year period. Unfortunately, this relatively simple analytic question is trickier than it appears. Since a factor score reflects the weighted sum of the Z scores for each of the indicators reflected in that factor, a community's score for a particular decade reflects only its relative standardized position within the overall distribution of scores for that year. Because of the significant differences in the means of the deprivation variables in 1960 and 1980, a straightforward comparison of the DEP scores for these years is inappropriate because the raw scores have been standardized on the basis of inconsistent distributional characteristics. For example, if all the neighborhoods declined to the same degree between 1960 and 1980, the relative ordering of neighborhoods still would be identical for both decades, resulting in a rank correlation of 1 despite the growing level of deprivation.

Our goal was to transform both sets of variables on the basis of a consistent and comparable metric. Therefore, we "quasi-standardized" the 1980 data on the basis of the raw 1960 distributions by subtracting the 1960 mean from each 1980 observation and then dividing by the 1960 standard deviation. The five transformed variables were then combined by using the factor score coefficients that were used to create the DEP scale for 1960. This transformation enabled us to examine the level of economic deprivation of each neighborhood

Table 3. Changes in Neighborhood Economic Deprivation, 1960–1980

			1960				
			Low Deprivation 1	2	3	High Deprivation 4	Row %
1980	Low Deprivation	1	21.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4
		2	31.6	11.8	0.0	0.0	10.8
		3	26.3	29.4	11.1	0.0	16.2
	High Deprivation	4	21.1	58.8	88.9	100.0	67.6
	Total		100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Column %		25.7	23.0	24.3	27.0	$N=74$

in 1980 relative to what it was in 1960, not just to other neighborhoods during 1980.[10]

Table 3 provides two very clear indications of the general economic decline of Chicago's neighborhoods. First, note from the marginal distributions that nearly 70% of the areas had the same level of economic deprivation during 1980 as the lowest 25% of the 1960 neighborhoods. In fact, over one-fifth of the least deprived 1960 neighborhoods were in the most deprived category by 1980. Second, economic decline during this period was a unidirectional process; none of the neighborhoods could be classified as moving from a more deprived to a less deprived status during this period.

In sum, Chicago is a city that clearly has undergone the economic transformations Wilson discussed. This is an important difference from the image of Chicago envisioned by Shaw and McKay and by Park and Burgess, in which the functional role of the neighborhood in the ecological system was assumed to be in a general state of equilibrium. The central question facing contemporary social disorganization research, therefore, is the degree to which these changes may have affected the viability of the basic hypothesis that economic deprivation has a primarily indirect, rather than direct, effect on the crime rate.

[10] Based on the means and standard deviations presented in Table 2, this transformation is:

Transformed 1980 DEP = .26207*[(1980 unemployment − 5.092)/3.606] +
.25954*[(1980 poverty − 13.303)/10.455)] +
.26206*[(1980 public aid − 6.616)/10.330)]+
.24997*[(1980 black composition − 20.065)/33.757)].

The cutting points for the categorized distribution were chosen so that the 1960 DEP values were roughly divided into quartiles. The same intervals were then used to categorize the transformed 1980 DEP values. This transformation was only utilized to facilitate the 1960–80 comparisons. The 1980 DEP values incorporated into the regression models presented in Table 4 represent the original factor scores based on the analysis shown in Table 1.

Table 4. Regression Models for Chicago's Neighborhoods, 1960 and 1980

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables		
	Delinquency	Regulatory Capacity	Delinquency
	1960		
Constant	15.568	0.000	15.568
DEP	8.623	−.789	4.059
	(7.867)	(−9.187)	(2.789)
	.711	−.789	.335
SES	−1.817	.070	−1.411
	(−1.658)	(0.817)	(−1.428)
	−.150	.070	−.116
RC	—	—	−5.782
			(−4.254)
			−.477
Adjusted R^2	.659	.692	.725
	1980		
Constant	56.830	0.000	56.830
DEP	26.845	−.775	11.844
	(7.316)	(−7.998)	(2.704)
	.727	−.775	.321
SES	−0.310	.051	−1.292
	(−0.084)	(−0.524)	(−0.406)
	−.008	−.05170	−.035
RC	—	—	−19.349
			(−4.975)
			−.524
Adjusted R^2	.522	. 546	.642

NOTE: For each effect, the first entry is the unstandardized beta coefficient, followed by the t-value (in parentheses) and the standardized coefficient.

Findings

One of the most important findings that can be derived from our regression analyses (Table 4) is the absolute necessity of differentiating between economic deprivation and more general measures of socioeconomic composition that are not nearly as sensitive to variation in the low end of the economic distribution. In both 1960 and 1980, SES has a nonsignificant effect on both the delinquency rate and regulatory capacity that characterize Chicago's neighborhoods. The level of economic deprivation, on the other hand, plays a major role in shaping these two aspects of the local community even after the effects of the other variables in the model are controlled for. This pattern may explain the contradictory conclusions of Sampson and Groves (who found no direct effects of economic factors on crime on the basis of variables similar to SES) and Curry and Spergel and Taylor and Covington (who document such effects using variables similar to DEP).

Nearly as important a finding is that despite the dramatic

changes in the distribution of economic deprivation that occurred between the beginning and end of this 20-year period, the patterns of relationships for 1960 and 1980 are strikingly similar, including the magnitudes of the significant standardized coefficients. The only departure from this similarity is that the models explained somewhat less of the variation in regulatory capacity and delinquency rates in 1980 than in 1960. Nevertheless, the model is fairly powerful during both periods and in general can be considered to be robust.

Most important, the predictions of the traditional social disorganization model receive strong but mixed support during both periods. As expected, economic deprivation is strongly associated with the regulatory capacity of an area, which in turn has the strongest direct effect on delinquency during both periods. In addition, the indirect effects of economic deprivation on delinquency during 1960 (.376) and 1980 (.406) are greater than the direct effects in the full models (.335 and .321, respectively).[11] Therefore, our findings indicate that economic factors affect delinquency, at least primarily, in a manner consistent with the traditional Shaw and McKay framework.

Nevertheless, economic deprivation has a significant direct effect on delinquency during both periods. It certainly is possible that this effect would have been further attenuated if we had incorporated additional indicators of the internal regulatory capacity of these neighborhoods into the model. Yet, on the basis of these findings, we must consider the possibility that there are additional neighborhood dynamics relevant to delinquency that are not reflected in the traditional theoretical specification of social disorganization. In the final section of this article, we discuss such an extension of the social disorganization framework that may account for these findings in a manner which is logically consistent with the underlying theoretical assumptions of the model.

Discussion

The findings represented in Table 4 certainly do not represent the only time empirical patterns have departed from those predicted by the traditional social disorganization model. In fact, the viability of the framework as a whole was prematurely dismissed by many criminologists because of its notorious inability to account for the presence of stable, working-class communities that nonetheless were characterized by relatively high rates of crime and delinquency. Likewise, the existence of a direct effect of economic deprivation on delinquency is inconsis-

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[11] The indirect effects are computed by multiplying the direct effect of DEP on RC by the direct effect of RC on the delinquency rate.

tent with the core assumptions of the model. In addition, many observers have criticized its general failure to consider the political and economic contexts of the larger urban systems in which local neighborhoods are embedded.

Recently, however, there have been several attempts to reformulate the social disorganization framework in terms of a broader systemic approach that emphasizes the breadth and depth of institutional and personal relational networks within a community and the capacities of such networks as sources of social control (see Sampson & Groves 1989; Bursik & Grasmick 1993). These capacities have been most fully addressed by Hunter (1985), who identifies three dimensions of neighborhood social order. The *private* level is grounded in the intimate, informal primary groups in a community, and control is exerted primarily through the allocation or threatened withdrawal of sentiment, social support, and mutual esteem (Hunter 1985:233). The second, *parochial* level of control reflects the nonintimate relationships among neighbors who do not have a deep sentimental attachment and the interlocking of local institutions such as schools, churches, and voluntary organizations (ibid.). At this level, the regulatory capacity of an area reflects the ability of residents to supervise activities within the community and the degree to which local institutions are integrated into the fabric of everyday community life.

While the concepts of private and parochial control formalize several of the key dynamics of the social disorganization model that were left implicit by Shaw and McKay, we do not feel that they totally can account for our observed direct effect of economic deprivation on delinquency. Likewise, they are totally unable to account for the existence of stable, high-delinquency areas. In our opinion, this is due to the primary emphasis of these two levels of control on the internal dynamics of the community. Spergel and Korbelik (1979:109) have shown that there are externally determined contingencies that mediate the ability of local networks and institutions to control the threat of crime. In fact, some local associations initially arise due to the intervention of external organizations who may seek legitimacy for projects they are considering in a particular community (Taub et al. 1977). Therefore, it is also necessary to consider the *public* level of social control (Hunter 1985:233), which focuses on a community's ability to secure the public goods and services allocated by agencies located outside the neighborhood that are necessary for the development of an effective regulatory capacity.

The potential importance of the public dimension of neighborhood crime control is highlighted by the resource mobilization research which shows consistently that a social movement is more likely to be successful if it is able to develop linkages

among representatives of the movement and other groups in the environment (see McCarthy & Zald 1987; Bursik & Grasmick 1993:156–57). For example, Mayer (1983:155–56) has argued that ties to established community organizations in other neighborhoods that share an interest in crime control can be crucial to the success of a locally based crime control program, for these groups may already have established relationships with local politicians and business leaders who may be able to provide the resources necessary to an association's success.

Such resources are not necessarily monetary or even tangible. Molotch (1976; see also Logan & Molotch 1987) characterizes cities as a system of competing neighborhood-based land interests that are capable of strategic coalition and action vis-à-vis other neighborhoods in that system. Therefore, the development of broad-based networks of association can also increase the capacity of local communities to influence the processes of urban political decisionmaking so that the outcomes foster their regulatory capacities. For example, Bursik (1989) has presented evidence suggesting that political decisions about the location of the public housing constructed in Chicago between 1970 and 1980 were not made on the basis of market considerations relating to the costs of acquiring the necessary tracts of land. Rather, the projects were most likely to be located in neighborhoods that already were unstable and presumably unable to organize and negotiate an effective defense against their construction. It is important to note that the construction that resulted from these externally generated decisions tended to increase the existing rate of residential turnover and, in turn, delinquency.

We feel that the greatest shortcoming of the traditional social disorganization model has been the failure to consider the relational networks that pertain to this public sphere of control, for as many urban analysts have noted (see, e.g., Lewis & Salem 1986), it is very difficult to significantly affect the nature of neighborhood life solely through indigenous neighborhood processes. Therefore, a central assumption underlying the systemic reformulation of social disorganization is that crime is more likely in areas in which the networks of public control cannot effectively provide services to the neighborhood.

Therefore, we would argue that the effect of economic deprivation on crime and delinquency is, in fact, an indirect one, mediated by the capacity of a neighborhood to solicit human and economic resources from external institutional actors. Such an assumption is supported by the work of Moore (1978:21-26), who notes the general absence of political "brokers" who can intercede between underclass Chicago communities with relatively high rates of gang behavior and major institutional agencies, such as those connected with health and

welfare, education, migration, and most importantly, criminal justice. Thus, she concludes that residents of such neighborhoods are poorly equipped to deal with such institutions. As a result, the potential ability of an economically marginal neighborhood to exercise effective public control is very limited.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to collect the requisite data concerning the relational networks implicit to the public-level control of crime on a large scale basis (i.e., for every neighborhood in a large urban system). However, there is at least anecdotal evidence to illustrate the powerful potential for these trans-neighborhood networks to foster a community's capacity for the control of crime. For example, Dawley's (1992) excellent history of the Conservative Vice Lords (one of Chicago's supergangs) describes a period during 1968 and 1969 when the Lords were able to solicit funds successfully from outside of their community (most notably from the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations) to develop a series of neighborhood-based community improvement programs. Although the central area of their territory generally was considered to be one of the most dangerous in Chicago, Dawley (1992) has argued that important changes in neighborhood life occurred during this period, including a significant decline in gang activity and a reduction in the fear of crime.[12] Similar patterns have been noted by Erlanger (1979) in Los Angeles during a period in which many gang members became involved in a local political movement.

In sum, we do not feel that the findings pertaining to economic deprivation presented here and in other related research necessarily contradict the assumptions of a systemic model of social disorganization. Rather, we believe that a simultaneous consideration of all three levels of control—the private, the parochial, and the public—can account for these patterns in a logically consistent manner. Unfortunately, the validity of these conclusions must await the collection and analysis of very sophisticated network-based data. If such data do, in fact, become more widely available, we believe that social disorganization research will enter a new, exciting, and theoretically provocative era.

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[12] Unfortunately, the Lords became involved in a series of intense clashes with City Hall and encountered problems with their tax-exempt status as an organization. As a result, the funding disappeared, and 10 years later most of the gang were either reinvolved in serious crime or dead, and the neighborhood regained its former status as an "urban cemetery" (Dawley 1992:190).

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