

Contextual influences on adolescent risk behavior: Community

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Key conclusions regarding influence

- Community/neighborhood characteristics matter
 - ✧ Little known about specificity of relations
- Both structure and social processes are important
 - ✧ Social processes may have an important protective effect
- Direct effects, but particularly in regard to individual risk and protection, important to consider interaction with other developmental systems
 - ✧ Example of families – differences in family functioning and parenting
 - ✧ Differences in how parenting behaviors may relate to outcomes in different contexts

Key conclusions regarding intervention

- Manage the context
 - ⌘ Work with individuals or families to help cope with or manage the ecological context
- Community coalitions and partnerships
 - ⌘ Focused on key social problems
 - ⌘ Impact structure and social organization
- Community/Economic Development
 - ⌘ Target changes in the structural characteristics without dramatically altering the residential population of the community

What is meant by neighborhood effects?

(what is the outcome of interest?)

- Much of neighborhood research is based in sociological theory regarding risk for crime occurring within neighborhood
- Versus interest in how neighborhood context relates to individual risk and development

What is a 'neighborhood'?

- .. "urban village" notion

- ⌘ spatially bounded, internally homogeneous, not socially proximal to or dependent on spatially adjacent places

or...

- .. "egocentric local environment" notion

- ⌘ each individual inhabits a local environment defined by the spatially and socially proximal context

- .. in either case, census tracts are at best a rough proxy for "neighborhood"

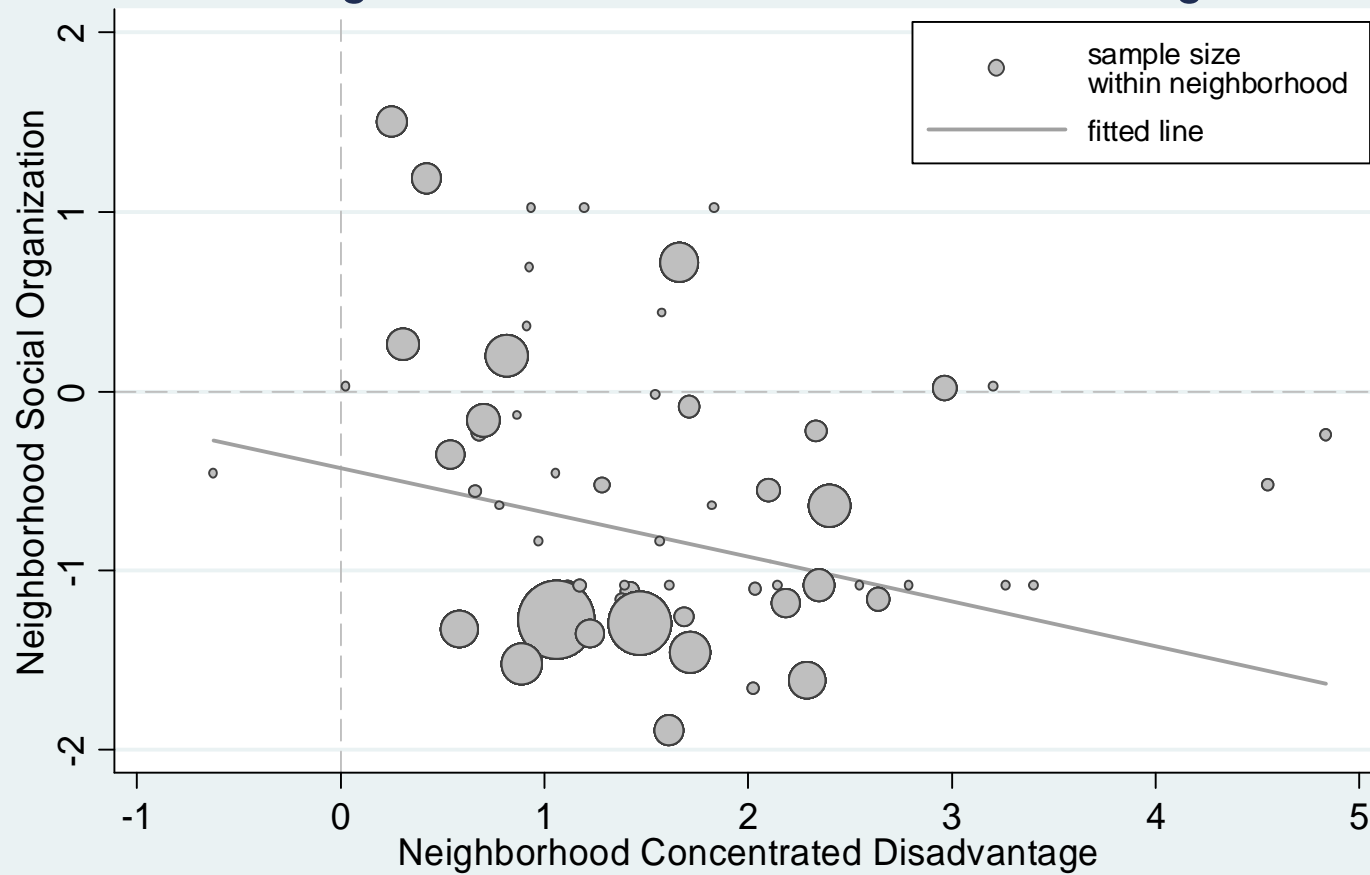
Community and Neighborhood

- Community Structural Characteristics: characteristics that largely reflect the economic conditions of the community (e.g., percent poverty, business investment, mobility, heterogeneity, *crime)
- Neighborhood Social Organization: social processes or organization within the neighborhood (e.g., felt social support and cohesion among neighbors, sense of belonging, informal social control, participation in formal and voluntary organizations)

Relation of community structure and neighborhood social processes

- neighborhoods considered smaller geographical and social units nested within communities.
- Community as a larger geographical unit, includes resource availability.

SAFE Neighborhood Social Organization vs. Neighborhood Concentrated Disadvantage,



What do we know about the relation of community characteristics and adolescent problem behavior?

- Disadvantaged neighborhoods (characterized by concentrated poverty, residential instability, high rates of crime) are related to a host of poor outcomes for youth (e.g., delinquency, violence, substance use, academic achievement, social competence, depression)

Other aspects of neighborhood conditions

- Exposure to community violence
- Housing quality
- Crowding/noise
- Built environment

Neighborhood Social Processes

- Social connection and support
- Social norms
- Informal social control
- Routine activities

How do we think about neighborhoods? (particularly when talking about individual child/adolescent development)

- Independent effects of different aspects of neighborhood (mediated relationships)
- Combination of structural and social characteristics
- In interaction with other important developmental systems (i.e., family)

Neighborhood Clusters

- Inner-city without functioning social processes: high crime rates, high concentrations of poverty, low business investment, high concerns about safety and low neighborhood social organization (22%)
- Inner-city with functioning social processes: high crime rates, high concentrations of poverty, low business investment, but low concerns about safety and high neighborhood social organization (39%)
- Other urban poor: lower crime rates, lower concentrations of poverty, higher business investment, low concerns about safety and low neighborhood social organization (38%)

Gorman-Smith, Tolan & Henry, 2000

Family Types Across Neighborhoods

<u>Family Type</u>	<u>Other Urban</u>	<u>Inner-city with</u>	<u>Inner-city w/o</u>
Exceptional	31%	35%	34%
Task-oriented	33%	29%	38%
Moderate	38%	29%	33%
Struggling	45%	27%	28%



Intervention

- Considering context, but not changing context
 - ⌘ Social interventions with individuals and families to manage living within context
- Changing community context
 - ⌘ Social interventions with individuals and families (e.g., Communities that Care, CeaseFire)
- Economic Redevelopment
 - ⌘ Business improvement districts

Communities that Care

- Prevention system that works to mobilize and empower coalitions of diverse community stakeholders
- Use the CTC youth survey to assess levels of empirically identified risk and protective factors in the community
- Use the CTC prevention strategies guide to choose and implement tested preventive interventions to address risk factors that are high

Where to go?

- What are the essential aspects of communities in understanding their impact on families and youth development?
- What is the process through which neighborhoods relate?
- What is the relation of community and individual physiology and behavior?
- What is the nature of the transaction between individual and communities over time?
- Are the same factors that are related to academic success, employment and emotional health related to developmental, behavioral or mental health problems such as delinquency or depression?
- What are the differences in impact across development?
- Are there differences in impact by gender or ethnicity?

The End

