Building Community Capacity for Violence Prevention

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The capacity of communities to prevent violence is examined from three perspectives: youth violence, child maltreatment, and intimate partner violence. The analysis suggests that community social control and collective efficacy are significant protective factors for all three types of violence, but these need to be further distinguished for their relationships to private, parochial, and state controls. It is argued that strong interpersonal ties are not the only contributor to collective efficacy and violence prevention. Weak ties, including those outside the community, and organizational ties are also seen as necessary. Violence prevention programs should be structured in ways that contribute to the communities' own capacity to prevent violence.

Keywords: *community; violence; prevention; child maltreatment; domestic violence*

This article addresses three questions related to the capacities of communities to prevent violence in the domains of youth violence, child maltreatment, and domestic violence. What does the research tell us about community capacity to prevent violence that exceeds the efforts of the individuals who live there? How can communities be made more protective? And how can changes in a community's capacity to prevent violence be measured?

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION CAPACITY?

The three domains of violence research considered herein—youth violence, child maltreatment, and domestic violence—rely on concepts of com-

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munity to describe and explain the causes of and opportunities for intervention to prevent violence. However, the role of community in preventing violence varies among the domains. The most fully developed theorizing about community violence prevention stems from the "social disorganization" and "social capital" literatures that address serious violence (i.e., homicide and robbery) and youth violence. Community capacity to prevent violence is conceptualized in terms of social interactions that lead to shared trust and a capacity for action, or what Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) have labeled "collective efficacy."

In the child maltreatment and domestic violence domains, ecological or community-based frameworks are used as organizing devices to describe the nested levels of interactions among individuals, families, and communities. It is in the nature of the interactions within and across ecological levels that child maltreatment and domestic violence arise. However, the processes by which families and individuals mediate community ecological effects are not well specified. Community capacity in each of the domains of violence is considered next.

Youth Violence

The ideas in this article about community capacity to prevent youth violence are drawn from the literature on the social ecology of crime and from recent work on social capital theory. Research has found that interpersonal violence is concentrated in certain neighborhoods, especially those characterized by poverty, racial segregation, and single-parent families. These persistent correlations provide structural measures of communities, but they do not explain the processes in communities that give rise to, or prevent, violence.

The early work of Shaw and McKay (1942) speculated that community characteristics led to community disorganization, or the inability of communities to maintain social control, thereby leading to high delinquency rates. In the 1970s and 1980s, the concept of social disorganization was defined explicitly as the lack of ability of a community structure to realize the common values of its residents and to maintain effective social controls, such as to prevent violence (Bursik, 1988; Kornhauser, 1978; Sampson & Groves, 1989). In this "systemic view," the local community is characterized by complex systems of friendship, kinship, and acquaintanceship networks and by social ties rooted in family life and ongoing socialization processes that give rise to social cohesion (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). This view suggests that networks of strong personal ties within com-

munities are primarily responsible for community capacity to prevent violence.

A related development in community-level research has been the concept of social capital, which is embodied in the social ties among persons and positions (Coleman, 1990). Social capital is built on mutual obligations, opportunities to exchange information, shared norms, and the ability to enforce standards and administer sanctions. Others define social capital as "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1993, p. 36). Both conceptualizations of social capital suggest that it stems not from the attributes of individuals but from the structure of social organization. Social disorganization and social capital concepts are closely connected. Although social disorganization theory is rooted in the norms arising from socialization and kinship networks, social capital theory relates to the connections between persons and positions within communities and the ability to share norms within communities. Neighborhoods deficient in social capital are less able to realize common values and maintain the informal social controls that foster safety (Bursik, 1999).

Recently, the view that community capacity to prevent violence is achieved primarily through the social relations embodied in dense networks of "strong" ties within geographically bounded spaces known as neighborhoods or communities has been challenged on two grounds (Bellair, 1997; Morenoff, Sampson, & Raudenbush, 2001). First, it is argued that in many poor neighborhoods, residents are tightly interconnected through personal networks of family and kin, but these network ties do not produce the collective resources that result in the control of disorderly behavior and violence. Wilson's (1996) research suggests that in disadvantaged neighborhoods, there are strong networks of personal ties but that these networks may impede social organization because of their high degree of social isolation from other communities and social institutions. Sullivan (1996) argued that although the social networks in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods may not be as dense as Wilson suggests, they are isolated from other communities and social resources. Pattillo-McCoy (1999) identified close and stable network ties that nevertheless had negative repercussions for the neighborhood in terms of drug dealing and violence, as drug dealers were central participants in the networks.

A second reason for challenging the assumption that there is a direct connection between low violence and a dense web of strong ties within communities is that in many urban communities, shared expectations for social control are maintained in the absence of thick ties among neighbors (Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999). Strong ties may no longer be the norm in many

urban communities because friendship and social support networks are decreasingly organized in a local and parochial manner (Fischer, 1982; Wellman, 1979). Rather, weak ties, as theorized by Granovetter (1973), may be critical for establishing social resources, such as job referrals, because they integrate the community by bringing together otherwise disconnected groups.

Thus, strong social ties alone within communities may not be sufficient to produce the capacity to prevent violence. Neighborhoods with strong ties and dense networks of primary ties may not be able to maintain informal social controls and safety if these neighborhoods are isolated from contacts with the broader society. This may be particularly so in hypersegregated and disadvantaged neighborhoods (Massey & Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1987, 1996). Alternatively, dense networks of primary ties may not be required for communities to achieve low rates of violence. Sampson et al. (1999) argued that shared expectations for social control can be maintained in the absence of strong ties among neighbors.

Sampson et al. (1997, 1999) proposed the concept of collective efficacy as a mechanism to facilitate social control that does not necessarily require strong ties or associations. Collective efficacy reflects a combination of a working trust and shared willingness of residents to engage in social control; it exists relative to specific tasks such as maintaining public order or preventing violence. The concept of collective efficacy moves from a focus on private ties to an emphasis on shared beliefs in the capacity of a community to achieve an intended effect. Thus, although the personal ties that characterize primary networks may provide a resource potential, collective efficacy—or the shared expectations among neighbors for engagement in social control—reflects the capacity of a community to exercise control.

Finally, Bursik and Grasmick (1993) identified three levels of social control that help to explain violence—private, parochial, and state controls. In stable communities with high levels of private and parochial controls, state controls work to support the collective efficacy of the community residents. Lynch and Sabol (2001), for example, showed that aggressive police arrest practices enhanced collective efficacy in Baltimore neighborhoods that had high levels of voluntary association and neighboring (private and parochial controls).

In sum, the social disorganization and social capital literatures explicitly identify mechanisms that reflect a community's capacity to prevent violence. The concept of collective efficacy and the capacity of a community to engage state controls help to explain the levels of violence across communities.

Child Maltreatment

Child maltreatment encompasses a range of behaviors that include both violent and nonviolent acts; its study is therefore not reducible to the study of violence. At the same time, the incidence of child maltreatment is correlated with many of the same factors that correlate with the incidence of violence. Child maltreatment is highly correlated with poverty (Garbarino & Sherman, 1980) and is concentrated among certain groups within poverty populations, such as single parents or young caregivers (Gelles, 1992), and child abusing families are socially isolated from formal and informal support systems (Belsky, 1993; Cox, 1997, 1998; Finkelhor, 1995). These concepts are related to ecological theories of child maltreatment that view child maltreatment as explained through a nested set of systems at the individual, family, community, and sociocultural levels (Belsky, 1993; Garbarino, 1977). Cicchetti and Lynch (1993) extended the ecological approach by proposing a transactional model of risk and protective factors. Children's developing capacities have an impact on the relationships that affect child maltreatment in the capacity of children to protect themselves and in their exposure to both potential abusers and protective caregivers (Finkelhor, 1995). Although social ties, social networks, and social isolation are important in ecological models of child maltreatment, some abusive or neglectful families may be embedded in closely knit but maladaptive networks (Korbin, 1998; Thompson, 1995).

Neighborhood is also an important component of ecological models. The relationship of neighborhood structure and process to child maltreatment has been documented by studies showing variation among neighborhoods in reported rates of child maltreatment related to measures of economic disadvantage and residential mobility and to the social processes and demographic shifts that accompany concentrations of poverty (Coulton, Korbin, Su, & Chow, 1995; Drake & Pandey, 1996; Garbarino & Crouter, 1978; Garbarino & Kostelny, 1992; Garbarino & Sherman, 1980; Hay & Jones, 1994; Vinson, Baldry, & Hargreaves, 1996).

Although ecological models are theoretically complex and promising, they have rarely been tested empirically. In a multilevel model assessing individual factors, neighborhood structural characteristics, and neighborhood social processes, neighborhoods varied on rates of officially reported child maltreatment but not on a measure of child abuse potential. This could imply either that neighborhoods factors can prevent actual child maltreatment in populations that are similarly disposed or that neighborhood factors can affect the processes by which child maltreatment is reported and substantiated. In addition, this multilevel model pointed to the complexity of factors

considered across ecological levels, for example, with neighborhood conditions weakening the effects of a childhood history of abuse (Coulton, Korbin, & Su, 1999). Empirical examinations of the ecological models of maltreatment can help to identify the role of communities in preventing maltreatment, and this can help in developing strategies to strengthen the protective capacities of communities. For example, it is important to understand how communities define child maltreatment and understand its etiology (Korbin, Coulton, Lindstrom-Ufuti, & Spilsbury, 2000).

Ecological approaches to maltreatment share several similarities with the social ecology of violent crime. In both domains, the incidence of events is concentrated in areas of high poverty; maltreatment families and communities with high levels of youth violence are socially isolated entities; and the incidence of maltreatment and violence is associated with social ties. In addition, in both domains "routine activities" that bring motivated offenders into contact with potential victims play an important role (Smith, Frazee, & Davison, 2000). In considering child maltreatment, changes in the environment can increase either the number of motivated offenders or capable guardians of children.

There are important differences between the domains of child maltreatment and youth violence. One key difference is the private versus public location of the incidents. Maltreatment that occurs within families occurs in private places that are not easily or readily detected or amenable to intervention by community institutions. Conversely, the majority of youth violence occurs in public spaces; these can be policed without intrusion into private spheres such as family settings. Second, the role of the community differs between the two domains. In youth violence, a community's willingness to engage in protective behaviors—its collective efficacy—can reduce violence. In maltreatment, the community's willingness to prevent maltreatment is mediated by the family. Third, in the ecological model of maltreatment, community violence is a causal variable in that it affects the likelihood of maltreatment and the development of maltreated children.

Domestic Violence

Like child maltreatment, domestic violence occurs between intimates and in places that customarily provide safety from violence (e.g., the home). Although theories of domestic violence emphasize intrafamilial factors (Gelles, 1999; Merrill, Hervig, & Milner, 1996; Murphy & O'Farrell, 1997), there also have been attempts to link the intrafamilial sources of violence to the community social organization. Gelles (1999) pointed out that domestic violence research has been dominated by psychopathology models and pro-

posed an ecological framework that considers the characteristics of the child, parent, family, social situation, and community.

Ecological approaches to domestic violence maintain that tension arises from poor relationships within the family and that these conditions are aggravated by the absence of support from the community (Belsky, 1993; Garbarino, 1977). Family dynamics also are nested within a culture that condones violence. Dobash and Dobash (1997) viewed domestic violence as stemming from a larger social patriarchy that subordinates women and in which violence is but a subset of that subordination.

Unlike the concentrations of child maltreatment and youth violence observed in poor neighborhoods, data on the incidence of domestic violence do not reveal a consistent pattern with structural characteristics of neighborhoods. However, when intimate partner violence is restricted to official police reports (rather than self-report data) on aggravated and sexual assaults (approximately 25% of all intimate partner violence), the distribution of aggravated and sexual assaults are correlated with concentrations of poverty. Concentrated poverty tracts in Duval County (Jacksonville, Florida) had median rates of intimate partner violence that were 9 times those of other tracts (Miles-Doan & Kelly, 1997).

On the other hand, self-report victimization data (National Criminal Victimization Survey) show a different pattern of concentration when the measure of intimate partner violence includes all domestic violence crimes, including the misdemeanor assault cases that comprise the bulk of intimate partner violence. The rate of intimate partner violence in central cities (9.5/1,000) is only slightly higher than the rate (approximately 8/1,000) in suburban and rural areas (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). Using central city urban areas as a proxy for high poverty areas has its problems, but concentrated poverty areas are located primarily in urban areas, and poverty rates in central cities exceed those for suburban areas by a factor of 3 to 1. Therefore, one would expect to see a higher concentration of domestic violence incidents in central cities. Nevertheless, urban/suburban differences in domestic violence are small in comparison to the differences in homicides and aggravated assaults. The difference between the concentration of types of violence—such as homicide and aggravated and sexual assault on one hand and misdemeanor domestic violence on the other hand—raises questions about whether these forms of violence arise from the same processes and about the role of community organization in preventing domestic violence.

Theories of violence in general locate violence in the social disorganization of communities. Theories of domestic violence locate violence in the family or intimate partner unit. In these theories, cultural and social institutions that support domestic violence influence the family unit, and the com-

munities that fail to come its aid in crisis influence it. Using segment-level data from the National Criminal Victimization Survey data, Lynch and Weirsema (2001) supported the contention that domestic violence arises from factors that are distinct from other forms of violence and that family dynamics, rather than social context, have the greatest effects on the risk of domestic violence. Specifically, they found that changes in marital status had among the largest effects on the risk of domestic violence.

The Lynch and Weirsema (2001) analysis suggests that domestic violence policies may have to differ from violence policies in general. If the source of domestic violence lies in the inability of families to resolve disputes without violence, then family interventions may be required to prevent domestic violence. The absence of large effects of community social structure and organization suggest that domestic violence, at least among persons who are or were married, may not be as highly concentrated in high poverty neighborhoods as other forms of violence and child maltreatment. In addition, domestic violence generally occurs in homes and other private places, but interventions into homes and family life are controversial.

HOW DO WE BUILD MORE PROTECTIVE COMMUNITIES?

The social disorganization perspective provides a way to think about the spheres of social control that would need to be involved in developing coordinated community responses to violence. In Bursik and Grasmick's (1993) framework, the private sphere of social control refers to that obtained from interactions with primary group members, such as families. Parochial controls arise from social interactions in voluntary associations or groups (e.g., church groups, PTAs, bowling leagues). These can lead to social control directly (such as a neighborhood group providing summer jobs for youth, thereby increasing the capacity of a community to supervise youth) or indirectly (such as involvement in voluntary associations that lead to willingness to engage in collective efficacy). State controls involve government-sponsored agencies (such as schools, health clinics, and criminal justice agencies). The involvement of state controls can be punitive (such as pro-arrest policies in domestic violence), or they can provide resources (such as mental health services).

These spheres of social control suggest that neighborhoods can be strengthened by increasing the resources available to them or by increasing the connectedness within and between neighborhoods. Several things are important for building community capacity for violence prevention. First, it

is important to think of the capacity in terms of social interactions rather than in terms of cumulating assets per se. Building bonds or "bridges" to organizations for the purposes of obtaining or sharing resources not only meets needs, but it also serves to connect a community into a broader social fabric (Putnam, 1993).

Second, it is important to think about how social interactions at the private and parochial levels enhance or build collective efficacy. Despite the impressive array of empirical evidence for the role of collective efficacy in preventing violence (e.g., Morenoff et al., 2001; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1994; Sampson et al., 1997, 1999), more needs to be learned about how strong social ties (the primary ties among kin and friends) can foster trust and social control that can lead to collective efficacy. It is possible that social control can be developed without first building dense networks among residents but by emphasizing privacy and denying strangers access to the community and its resources.

Alternatively, community justice models provide opportunities for citizens, victims, and community groups to have an explicit decision-making role in the sanctioning of young offenders. These models also provide an opportunity for the community to be actively engaged in the implementation of sanctions by working with offenders through probation officers. These models are predicated on primary ties and informal networks of social control, in which community residents take an active role in the sanctioning of offenders. Community justice models emphasize reparation and offender accountability (Bazemore, 1997) and various aspects of shaming, including integrative shaming (Braithwaite, 1999). These approaches build social control through primary ties in collaboration with formal sanctioning institutions.

Third, this framework also provides a way to think about the role of state controls, especially criminal justice institutions. The correct balance between private, parochial, and state controls needs to be maintained. Too much or too little involvement of state controls can potentially weaken private or parochial controls. Lynch and Sabol (2001) showed, for example, that aggressive arrest practices by the police supported and enhanced collective efficacy in Baltimore neighborhoods that were undergoing social change. Alternatively, massive incarceration of offenders residing in these neighborhoods enhanced collective efficacy directly, but it also reduced the involvement of residents in voluntary associations, thereby indirectly diminishing collective efficacy. In subsequent analysis, Lynch and Sabol suggested that high rates of incarceration were associated with high rates of fear of crime by residents. Fear, in turn, was found to decrease community solidarity that was otherwise positively related to collective efficacy.

Analogously, a recent reevaluation of the data from the Spouse Assault Replication Program (SARP), in which perpetrators of domestic violence were randomly assigned to arrest and nonarrest interventions, show that although arrests were associated with decreases in domestic violence, effects of arrest varied widely between men who were employed and those who were unemployed and that the majority of suspects discontinued their aggressive behaviors even without an arrest (Maxwell, Garner, & Fagan, 2001). In addition, the finding that married men were less likely to commit domestic violence after an arrest than were unmarried men suggests that although breakdowns in social control can occur for socially integrated (employed and married) men, their desistance from additional domestic violence can also be understood in terms of their "stake in conformity" (Gelles, 1999; Sherman, 1992) or the effects of parochial controls.

The degree of involvement of state institutions in community violence prevention efforts is perhaps most important in child maltreatment and domestic violence. The state's relationship to the citizenry is most sensitive in the family setting. Governments in the United States do not intervene in family life absent an indicated reason to intervene (Sherman, 1998). This pattern of involvement creates a distinct ecology of prevention that treats families in different places very differently. The realm of possible family-based violence prevention programs is defined by the ecological context in which the programs might be delivered and by the authority of the government to intervene in family life associated with each of these contexts. In short, for family-based violence interventions, it is important to consider the specific ecological context when considering the level of state control.

Limitations in Building Protective Communities: Hypersegregation and Labor Market Isolation

Concerns about the levels of social control, their interrelationships, and their specific ecological contexts aside, the very high concentrations of serious violence—youth violence and homicide, child maltreatment, and aggravated and sexual assaults against intimate partners—in areas of concentrated poverty lead to other important, perhaps fundamental, considerations in thinking about making communities more protective. First, the causes of inner-city crime reflect macro forces that are not amenable to control by local communities. Hypersegregation—which socially and geographically isolates predominantly poor communities in American cities (Massey & Denton, 1993)—for example, is not the result of voluntary decisions on the part of residents, but it is the result of policies that created massive public housing projects in low-income areas, systematic racial practices in housing,

redlining by banks, and other practices (Wilson, 1987). Federal policies such as urban renewal and public housing may have done more to isolate inner-city residents and cause crime than to cure it (Sampson & Lauritsen, 1994). Economic restructuring and spatial mismatch between residence and location of jobs compounds employment problems for inner-city residents. Efforts to build more protective communities should address the major risk factors of hypersegregation and labor market isolation.

Addressing these problems requires "vertical" versus "horizontal" strategies of community violence prevention (Hope, 1995). Horizontal strategies focus on life within the community and place responsibility on residents to solve their own problems. Vertical solutions focus on the linkages between community life and decisions made at higher levels of power outside of the community; these can include business location decisions, mortgage lending (e.g., redlining or "flipping" loans), and law enforcement strategies. There are potentially promising strategies to address these concerns (Bushway & Reuter, 1998). Empowerment zones typically provide tax incentives for businesses to locate in economically depressed areas. They are of particular interest for violence prevention because new jobs present more opportunities for legitimate work and attachments to mainstream social institutions; the economic activity from new businesses can lead to increased social interactions among residents and strengthen social institutions. Similarly, Job Corps and school-to-work transition programs are supposed to increase the chances that at-risk youth will have successes in the labor market.

Structuring Prevention Efforts in Ways That Contribute to Building Community Capacity

The discussion in this article has thus far focused on the roles of community and neighborhoods in causing and preventing violence. It has been argued that strengthening the social organization of communities and improving their access to resources will increase their capacity to prevent violence and will, in the long run, lead them to become safer places. In the short run, however, communities also may benefit from violence prevention programs. Several themes emerge from the previous discussion about how violence prevention programs should be structured to contribute to broader community-building efforts.

First, programs should act as "institutions of social integration" or provide mechanisms and opportunities for the people they serve to develop connections and linkages with mainstream social institutions. For example, there are many school-based programs that aim to prevent youth involvement in all types of crime (Gottfredson, 1998), but they rarely use the school as institu-

tions of social integration for the community. One exception is the Child Development Program (CDP), which combines classroom management with family-based strategies that develop parents' connections with schools as mainstream institutions of social integration (Brattistich, Schaps, Watson, & Solomon, 1996).

Second, violence prevention programs should operate in ways that strengthen community ties and resources. The capacities of neighborhoods to solve their problems of violence lie only partially within their boundaries. Strengthening ties within communities can contribute to the bonding and density of primary networks of social interaction. Strengthening ties with individuals and institutions outside of the community can contribute to the development of the "weak ties" that are associated with access to resources. Programs that are designed to reduce the social isolation of maltreatment families for example, can contribute to community capacity for violence prevention if the home visitation provides linkages to and among other institutions inside and outside the community (Blau & Long, 1999; Harrington & Dubowitz, 1999).

Third, programs should consider ways to establish appropriate levels of connections with the three spheres of social control—the private, parochial, and state controls identified previously. The manner in which interactions among the spheres are structured depends on many complex factors that lie within a community. For example, in poor, minority communities with a long history of poor relationships with the police, ties to state controls will need to be developed in different ways from those that could be developed in other communities.

Comprehensive service delivery programs could contribute to community-building efforts that engage all three levels of social control. Blau and Long (1999) talk about the possibility that families may require long-term and ongoing therapeutic assistance to remain violence free. This would require a set of interventions that meet specific needs at specific times in the family's experience. A possible important community-building component of the ongoing therapeutic intervention is the creation of social and personal support services.

The "coordinated community response initiatives" (CCRI) in domestic violence also provide an example of an intervention that aims to develop connections among three spheres of social control. The CCRIs involve core service providers from law enforcement, the courts, victim advocates groups, and medical services to provide better and comprehensive services to victims of domestic violence. The inclusion of these other agencies leads to the primary prevention efforts of CCRI initiatives.

HOW DO WE MEASURE CHANGES IN COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO PREVENT VIOLENCE?

Many violence prevention programs in each of the three domains are implemented in communities, but the existence of programs in the community does not necessarily reflect the capacity of a community to prevent violence. Rather, it more likely signals the opposite, that the community capacity to prevent violence is weak or nonexistent, hence the need for the programs. This article has argued that even though violence prevention programs in the domains of youth violence, child maltreatment, and domestic violence rarely have an explicit goal of building community capacity to prevent violence, the programs can nevertheless be part of a community-building effort. Whether they achieve this goal is related to the extent to which the programs (a) facilitate social interactions that provide resources to distressed areas (e.g., establish weak ties or bridging social capital), (b) use state controls to provide the correct balance based on a community's need, and (c) produce enduring patterns of interactions that contribute to the mutual trust and capacity for collective action by the community.

These factors point to the need to develop ways of measuring the sources and dimensions of community violence prevention capacity. Community capacity consists of the social capital and formal and informal organizations that can be drawn on to reduce violence (Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, & Vidal, 2001). Community capacity is both a latent and active phenomenon; the stores of resources must lead to action in order to prevent violence. The measurement of community capacity to prevent violence is typically static, but the concept is inherently dynamic. Thus, we currently know more about the structures and processes that are correlated with levels of violence than how community actions prevent violence. However, what we really want to measure in community violence prevention is whether the community acts effectively and what social structures and processes enable that effective action.

The concept of collective efficacy captures, to some degree, the conversion of resources into action. As measured by Sampson et al. (1997), collective efficacy combines residents' perceptions of their communities' social cohesion with their tendency to intervene or act to achieve community aims. These reflect social structures and processes that are illustrative of parochial controls. An additional aspect of community capacity for violence prevention that has not yet received much attention in terms of measurement is the linkage between communities. These connections provide access to resources that are often based on weak ties, rather than the strong ties characteristic of closer relations within communities. Such ties may be particularly important in communities with limited internal resources or those that have

been isolated due to economic or racial segregation. Finally, organizational capacity needs to be measured as well. Communities may exhibit strong private ties and shared expectations for social control but still lack the institutional resources to achieve social control (Hunter, 1985).

There are several considerations involved in measuring these sources and dimensions of community capacity to prevent violence. One issue is how to define community or neighborhood boundaries. Traditionally, the social ecology of crime considered neighborhoods as independent social entities. However, it may be that modern neighborhoods are less distinctly defined and there may be spatial dynamics involved. For example, improvements in capacity in one neighborhood may spill over into a nearby neighborhood. Another issue is that measuring community capacity for violence prevention may differ for each specific domain of violence. For example, in child maltreatment, the presence of parenting role models and social and institutional support may reflect the process by which community capacity prevents violence. In domestic violence, awareness of community and state support for victims may result in a woman calling the police or taking steps to leave an abusive relationship. In short, the measure of community violence prevention capacity not only involves capturing the sources and dimensions, but it also involves relating these to specific ecological contexts within the three domains.

The complexity of neighborhood and community influences on violence can best be understood through multidisciplinary, multimethod approaches. Any approach alone has both strengths and weaknesses. For example, aggregate statistical measures of neighborhood conditions have contributed to understanding the relationship between poverty and related structural conditions and negative outcomes for children (e.g., Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, & Sealand, 1993; Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994). These analyses, in which neighborhood is usually represented by census tracts because of data availability, are powerful in their large sample size and generalizable findings. However, statistical analyses at the level of the census tract cannot elaborate the processes involved as neighborhood residents negotiate their living circumstances.

Qualitative or ethnographic descriptions of neighborhoods' conditions and outcomes, on the other hand, provide in-depth, contextual portraits of the realities of daily life but are limited to a relatively small number of individuals within circumscribed locations (e.g., Anderson, 2000; Jarrett, 1994; Stack, 1974). Only occasionally have these approaches been combined in the same research project, for example, in neighborhood studies of child maltreatment (e.g., Garbarino & Crouter, 1978; Garbarino & Sherman, 1980; Korbin & Coulton, 1997) or juvenile delinquency (e.g., Maccoby, Johnson,

& Church, 1958). In these studies, different approaches are used to inform one another, capitalizing on the strengths of each approach and attempting to compensate for its weaknesses. In addition to multiple approaches, multiple perspectives need to be incorporated in understanding community capacity to prevent violence. Views of parents and children of the same neighborhood may differ, for example, and increased attention has been directed to the perspectives of youth on community programs designed to serve them (e.g., Eccles & Appleton, 2002). Such approaches to research are promising for uncovering the structures and processes that contribute to community capacity for violence prevention.

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