THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SOCIAL CONTROL IN URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS: A MULTILEVEL ANALYSIS OF VICTIMIZATION RISK*

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This study introduces public social control into multilevel victimization research by investigating its impact on household and personal victimization risk for residents across 60 urban neighborhoods. Public social control refers to the ability of neighborhoods to secure external resources necessary for the reduction of crime and victimization. I find that living in neighborhoods with high levels of public social control reduces an individual's likelihood of victimization, especially in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Given the important role that residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods can play in securing public social control, this contingent finding suggests that disadvantaged neighborhoods can be politically viable contexts.

Community policing and mobilization case studies emphasize that residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods can address problems of disorder and crime, fear of crime, and poor city services by securing ties to public officials and the police (Dawley, 1992; Henig, 1982; Kelling and Coles, 1996; Medoff and Sklar, 1994; Podolfskey and DuBow, 1981; Rabrenovic, 1996; Rooney, 1995; Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). Residents in a disadvantaged Chicago neighborhood (Englewood), for example, worked with local police and others to reduce robberies occurring around currency exchanges by placing an Automatic Transfer Machine inside the neighborhood police station (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997:183). Similarly, Dawley

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(1992) documented how a local organization secured funding from the City of Chicago and other sources to create recreational activities for youth in another crime-ridden Chicago community (Lawndale). These recreational services helped transform the neighborhood into a safer place for residents. Both accounts illustrate public social control—what Bursik and Grasmick (1993:17–18) conceptualized as the ability of neighborhoods to solicit and secure external resources by establishing ties to local governmental officials and the police department.

This study introduces public social control into multilevel victimization research by investigating its impact on household and personal victimization risk for residents across 60 neighborhoods in three metropolitan areas. Multilevel victimization models examine simultaneously the impact of contextual and individual-level factors on the likelihood of victimization risk (Kennedy and Forde, 1990; Miethe and McDowall, 1993; Miethe and Meier, 1994; Rountree et al., 1994; Sampson and Wooldredge, 1987; Smith and Jarjoura, 1989). Incorporating public social control into multilevel models of victimization provides a unique contribution because most studies conceptualize contextual factors only in terms of economic, demographic, and familial conditions. By assessing the impact of public social control, this study comments on the extent to which victimization is shaped, at least partially, by the broader political dynamics of a city. As such, this study is consistent with theoretical efforts that emphasize how political decision making by elites has influenced neighborhood dynamics, like public housing placement (Bursik, 1989; Logan and Molotch, 1987; McNulty and Holloway, 2000), social and physical disorder (Skogan, 1990), and residential race segregation (Massey and Denton, 1993).

In assessing the role of public social control, I pay particular attention to whether its benefits in reducing victimization risk are greater in disadvantaged neighborhoods than in neighborhoods with more affluence. One may anticipate such an outcome given differences in levels of public social control found in disadvantaged versus affluent neighborhoods. Disadvantaged neighborhoods typically have relatively low levels of public social control (Anderson, 1999; Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). Given these "floor" levels, any increase in neighborhood ties to public officials and external resources would represent a meaningful enrichment that, in turn, should translate into a significant reduction of victimization risk. Affluent neighborhoods, in contrast, already enjoy high or "ceiling" levels of public social control. Incremental improvements in public social control are unlikely to diminish an already low risk of victimization. If public social control does indeed offer an effective solution to criminal victimization in disadvantaged neighborhoods, it would suggest that neighborhoods that face the greatest structural barriers can be politically viable given the key role that residents play in securing public social control or in facilitating

community policing strategies (e.g., Goldstein, 1990; Henig, 1982; Piquero et al., 1998).

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY SOCIAL CONTROL IN THE VICTIMIZATION PROCESS

Community social control refers to the ability of a community to regulate itself by regulating the behavior of residents and visitors (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993). Social disorganization theory proposes that community social control mediates the effect of neighborhood disadvantage on crime (Bursik, 1988; Shaw and McKay, 1942). Empirically, this means that the effect of neighborhood conditions such as poverty on crime and victimization should disappear or substantially diminish when community social control is taken into account (Bellair, 1997, 2000; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson et al., 1997; Warner and Rountree, 1997).

In examining this hypothesis, researchers have focused primarily on local social ties—relationships *among* residents—as important sources of community social control. Specifically, studies have emphasized the respective impact of neighboring and informal social control on crime (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993). Neighboring refers to the extent of social interaction among neighbors such as chatting or getting together. Research demonstrates that higher levels of neighboring are associated with lower crime rates (Bellair, 1997, 2000; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Warner and Rountree, 1997). Informal social control refers to the ability of local neighborhoods to supervise the behavior of residents (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Hunter, 1985). Informal social control may take on a variety of forms, including neighbors watching out for each other and calling the police at the first sign of trouble (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Elliott et al., 1996; Greenberg et al., 1982; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson et al., 1997, 1999). Sampson et al. (1997), for instance, found that social cohesion accompanied by the willingness to intervene on behalf of the neighborhood's interest led to important reductions in crime and victimization in Chicago neighborhoods.

The focus on ties established among neighborhood residents, however, means that few social disorganization studies have investigated how ties to public officials and the police—another dimension of community social control—influence crime and victimization (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993). A notable exception is Bursik (1989), who examined whether the placement of new housing projects, a reflection of city-level decision making, was related to crime across Chicago neighborhoods. Bursik (1989:117) found that city officials placed new housing projects in residentially unstable neighborhoods, which were "presumably unable to organize and negotiate an effective defense against their construction." In turn, the

placement of housing projects in residentially unstable neighborhoods led to substantial increases in neighborhood delinquency rates through further increases in instability. Bursik's findings suggest that political decision making is consequential for neighborhood levels of crime and victimization. An important implication of his study is that residents must establish ties to city elites in order to influence political decisions that affect their neighborhoods, including their levels of crime.

Two bodies of literature note the importance of public social control. First, research on community policing documents how such programs allow the police to cultivate relationships with residents of mostly poor urban neighborhoods (Goldstein, 1990; Kelling and Coles, 1996; Piquero et al., 1998; Skogan, 1990; Skogan and Hartnett, 1997; Skolnick and Bayley, 1986). The success of police efforts at reducing crime, however, often hinges upon community involvement in the city-sponsored program. Kelling and Coles (1996), for instance, documented how the mayor and police chief of Baltimore set up a task force of city agencies and community associations to meet regularly with community residents in a disadvantaged neighborhood (Boyd Booth). With city support, residents in turn were able to board up abandoned buildings, remove neighborhood trash, and fence off walkways to impede drug-dealing efforts. These actions helped reduce violent crime by 56% in three years (Kelling and Coles, 1996). Building relationships with the police offers residents more than just reductions in crime. Skogan (1990), for example, found that community policing efforts in Newark led to residents' increased satisfaction with their neighborhoods and the police as well as a decrease in residents' fear of crime.

Second, research on neighborhood mobilization examines strategies that residents can use to establish ties to city officials and thus shape political decision making (Dawley, 1992; Henig, 1982; Medoff and Sklar, 1994; Rabrenovic, 1996; Rooney, 1995). Because residents from disadvantaged neighborhoods do not typically start off with strong ties to city governments and the police (Henig, 1982), these studies show that residents must first mobilize to gain the attention of city officials. The importance of communities being well organized suggests that local social ties (relationships among neighbors) play an important role in the formation of public social control. Once residents have garnered the city's attention, they often are able to secure city-allocated resources. For example, frustrated by the city's ineffective efforts to address crime in a disadvantaged neighborhood in Schenectady, New York (Hamilton Hill), a group of women formed Clean Sweep United to bring attention to neighborhood crime (Rabrenovic, 1996). Among other tactics, group members organized a lunch on the mayor's stoop to highlight the fact they could not do the same safely in their neighborhood. Such actions compelled the mayor and the

district attorney to abandon the use of plea bargaining and implement stricter sentencing for drug-related cases. Similarly, residents of a disadvantaged Boston community (Roxbury) pressured the city to remove abandoned cars that had long plagued their neighborhood. A local resident posed as a volunteer for the mayor's reelection campaign to obtain pro-mayor bumper stickers that were then later placed on the abandoned cars; an embarrassed city hall removed the cars the next day (Medoff and Sklar, 1994). Taken together, both the community policing and neighborhood mobilization literatures demonstrate that public social control can alter meaningfully the living conditions of disadvantaged neighborhoods.

THE CONTINGENT NATURE OF PUBLIC SOCIAL CONTROL

It is likely that the importance of establishing ties between neighborhood residents and local public officials is greatest in disadvantaged communities. Two related factors support this perspective. First, the infusion of outside resources such as increased police protection should lead to greater reductions in victimization in neighborhoods that lack the internal resources necessary to effectively regulate the behavior of residents and visitors. Unlike more privileged areas, disadvantaged neighborhoods often lack internal resources like informal social control given the magnitude of the structural problems they face (Anderson, 1990, 1999; Henig, 1982; Krivo and Peterson, 1996; Sampson et al., 1999; Wilson, 1987, 1996). For instance, residents from disadvantaged neighborhoods cannot address problems like abandoned and dilapidated buildings or widespread joblessness without the assistance and resources from city officials. Thus, when ties are established between neighborhoods and local government officials and the police, the resources that accompany this relationship should be most rewarding for reducing victimization in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Given the serious nature and number of problems facing disadvantaged neighborhoods, a second reason for expecting an enhanced effect of public social control lies in the amount of public social control found in disadvantaged versus affluent neighborhoods. As noted earlier, disadvantaged neighborhoods typically have low levels of public social control (Anderson, 1999; Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). Not only do many disadvantaged neighborhoods lack city-allocated resources (Massey and Denton, 1993), but many inner city residents of poor neighborhoods also feel alienated from the police and local judicial system (Anderson, 1999). Given such "floor" levels of public social control, it seems reasonable to expect that even a small increase in public social control would represent a significant improvement and likely lead to a significant reduction of victimization risk. In contrast, because more affluent neighborhoods already have high

or "ceiling" levels of public social control, it seems unlikely that incremental improvements would translate into large reductions to an already low risk of victimization.

The work by Skogan and Hartnett (1997) exemplifies this "enhanced effects" view of public social control in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The authors assessed the effectiveness of community policing in five Chicago neighborhoods. They found that Morgan Park, an affluent neighborhood with alliances to local political entities, reported the fewest program impacts. Skogan and Hartnett (1997) speculated that the lack of significant improvement from community policing initiatives was due to the fact that Morgan Park simply started off with fewer crime-related problems and already enjoyed a favorable relationship with local public officials. In contrast, community policing efforts had dramatic impacts in Englewood and Austin, two highly disadvantaged neighborhoods. Skogan and Hartnett (1997) concluded that the importance of community policing in these two neighborhoods was due to the fact that these communities began with more serious problems and weaker relationships to city agencies. These findings suggest that an enhanced effect of public social control is likely in disadvantaged neighborhoods because they have the most to gain from securing ties and resources from public officials and police.

INCORPORATING PUBLIC SOCIAL CONTROL INTO MUILTILEVEL VICTIMIZATION MODELS

I assess the impact of public social control along with local social ties within a multilevel victimization model. Multilevel victimization models draw on two theoretical perspectives. First, researchers use routine activities theory to explore the *microlevel* factors associated with an individual's probability of victimization. Routine activities theory highlights the role of situational factors and posits that an individual's probability of criminal victimization increases with the convergence of exposure to motivated offenders, target suitability, and the absence of capable guardians (Cohen and Cantor, 1980; Cohen et al., 1981; Miethe and Meier, 1994; Miethe et al., 1987). Individuals who leave their homes unoccupied, for example, report more household burglaries than do individuals who stay at home and essentially serve as guardians of their home (Cohen and Cantor, 1980).

Second, multilevel victimization studies use social disorganization theory to understand the impact of *neighborhood* conditions on victimization. Social disorganization models focus on how neighborhoods with high levels of poverty, residential mobility, racial/ethnic heterogeneity, and family disruption yield heightened levels of crime and victimization (Bursik, 1988; Shaw and McKay, 1942). Sampson and Groves (1989), for

example, found that neighborhoods with poor socioeconomic conditions had higher burglary victimization rates than did more affluent neighborhoods. Multilevel victimization studies also draw on recent reformulations of social disorganization theory that incorporate the view that many inner-city neighborhoods are socially isolated (Anderson, 1990, 1999; Skogan, 1990; Wilson, 1987, 1996). This perspective attributes the unusually high crime rates in extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods to acute levels of social isolation (Wacquant and Wilson, 1989; Wilson, 1987, 1996). Consistent with this view, Krivo and Peterson (1996) found that extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods in Columbus, Ohio, had violent crime rates 12 and 16 times greater than did neighborhoods with moderate and low levels of disadvantage, respectively.

Drawing from these micro level and neighborhood-level explanations of victimization risk and crime rates, researchers now view victimization risk as a result of both the social forces in an individual's neighborhood and an individual's routine activities (Kennedy and Forde, 1990; Miethe and McDowall, 1993; Miethe and Meier, 1994; Rountree et al., 1994; Sampson and Wooldredge, 1987; Smith and Jarjoura, 1989). Sampson and Wooldredge (1987), for example, found that residents who lived in communities with high levels of family disruption and who spent nights outside the home were more likely to experience predatory victimization. Similarly, Miethe and Meier (1994) found that individuals who resided in poor neighborhoods and who engaged in dangerous activities like going to bars at night faced heightened risks of violent and property victimization.

In sum, I extend previous multilevel victimization studies by integrating public social control into models of victimization risk. Specifically, I examine the impact of public social control on victimization risk while taking into account neighborhood disadvantage, local social ties, and an individual's routine activities. Because case studies about neighborhood mobilization and community policing indicate that public social control has brought about numerous neighborhood improvements in several disadvantaged neighborhoods, I also test whether the impact of public social control on victimization is enhanced by neighborhood disadvantage.

DATA AND METHODS

I use data from the Police Services Survey, conducted in 1977, to examine an individual's likelihood of criminal victimization.[1] This data set

1. Although the data used here are more than 20 years old, they nonetheless are applicable to the circumstances researchers find in today's neighborhoods. Our current understanding of disadvantaged neighborhoods largely comes from Wilson (1987, 1996), whose arguments about the concentration of disadvantage rely on the dramatic social and economic transformations that took shape during the 1970s. For example,

is well suited for understanding the role of public social control because it was part of a larger evaluation of police services provided to neighborhoods. The survey contains information from 12,015 households located in 60 residential neighborhoods across three Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs): Rochester, New York; Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida; and St. Louis, Missouri.[2] Because the survey was designed to evaluate police services to these households, police beats serve as the geographical marker for each neighborhood. The average population of the police beat is 9,500, and the average land area is about two square miles, making these beats reasonable approximations of neighborhoods (Bellair, 1997; Smith, 1982; Smith and Jarjoura, 1989). For each neighborhood, a random sample of household telephone numbers was obtained; the target was approximately 200 interviews per neighborhood. The completion rate varied slightly by neighborhood, but in all cases, it exceeded 80% (Smith, 1982:82). From each household sampled, one adult member was interviewed and acted as a spokesperson for the household. It is important to acknowledge that this sample is limited because it only includes information from three SMSAs. Because these areas were chosen to reflect the distribution of police departments from small- to medium-sized SMSAs in the United States, these data can be considered reasonably representative of similarly sized SMSAs (see Smith, 1982).[3]

In order to construct measures of neighborhood conditions and community social control, I aggregated responses to survey questions within each of the 60 neighborhoods by using the geographical identifier for each household. The within-area sample for the Police Services Study is very large; the average number of respondents in a given neighborhood is 202 (ranging from 106 to 259 respondents). Thus, theoretically relevant variables at the community level can be constructed reliably.

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the number of Chicago communities with concentrated poverty increased from 16 in 1970 to 26 in 1980; this includes an increase of eight new extremely poor neighborhoods during this 10-year period. Given that the 1970s were the site for much of these structural dislocations, it seems reasonable to expect that the processes uncovered by this 1977 survey can speak to, and are consistent with, the processes of today's neighborhoods.

2. In the Police Services Study, the SMSAs of Rochester, New York; Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida; and St. Louis, Missouri were selected based on cost constraints and logistic considerations from a larger sample of 34 large metropolitan areas (Smith, 1982). Based on the racial and economic composition of neighborhoods across these three SMSAs, 60 neighborhoods were chosen, corresponding closely to cluster sampling (Smith, 1982). Once the neighborhoods were selected, a random sample of households was chosen and surveyed.

3. Nonetheless, future research should examine public social control across a larger number of SMSAs that better represent SMSA sizes and geographic regions of the contemporary United States.

VARIABLES AND MEASURES

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Victimization. Respondents were asked if their homes had ever been burglarized and if someone in the household had been assaulted or mugged in the past 12 months. Using this information, I computed a dichotomous variable for *household victimization* by coding respondents whose home had been burglarized as 1, 0 otherwise. Similarly, I constructed a dichotomous measure of *personal victimization* by distinguishing respondents who reported an assault or mugging (1) from those who had not (0). Because this analysis is concerned with how neighborhood context affects the probability of victimization, I included only assaults and muggings that respondents reported to have taken place in their homes, on their blocks, or in their neighborhoods (see Miethe and McDowall, 1993; Miethe and Meier, 1994; Rountree et al., 1994; Smith, 1982).

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Community Social Control. Drawing on the work of Bursik and Grasmick (1993), I conceptualized *public social control* as community ties to the local government and the police, two institutions that control resources beneficial to neighborhood life. I measured public social control with respondents' answers to the following four questions: (1) "The local government is concerned about your neighborhood" (1 = strongly agree or agree; 0 = otherwise); (2) "A person can get satisfaction out of talking to the public officials in your community" (1 = strongly agree or agree; 0 = otherwise); (3) "Do you think that your police department tries to provide the kind of services that people in your neighborhood want?" (1 = yes; 0 = no); and (4) "How would you rate the overall quality of police services in your neighborhood?" (1 = outstanding, good or adequate; 0 = inadequate, poor or nonexistent). For each neighborhood, responses to each question were summed to create a percentage of residents satisfied with local governmental officials and the police; these percentages were standardized (converted to z-scores) and summed. Reliability analysis indicates that these four measures form a robust unidimensional construct (Cronbach's alpha = .94). High scores on this measure indicate that residents' perceived a favorable relationship with local public officials and the police. Although this measure is limited because it is based on perceptions about respondents' ties to local governmental officials, it seems reasonable to expect that this perception is based on first-hand experiences with how such political entities have responded to community issues in the past.[4]

4. An avenue for future research is to examine actual interactions between

I measured *local social ties* with an index based on the percentage of residents in each neighborhood who got together with their neighbors at least once a year (see Bellair, 1997) and the percentage of residents in each neighborhood who asked neighbors to watch their homes while they were away for a few days. These two measures were then standardized and summed (Cronbach's alpha = .84). High scores on the index of *local social ties* represent communities that have high levels of neighboring coupled with an abundance of neighbors watching out for each other.

Neighborhood Conditions. I examined three neighborhood conditions prominent in social disorganization studies. I constructed an index of neighborhood *disadvantage* that standardized and summed the percentage of households with incomes below $5,000 per year (the lowest income category available to respondents); the percentage of residents without a bachelor's degree; and the percentage of households that comprise single parents with children under the age of 18 (Cronbach's alpha = .74). To capture a neighborhood's level of racial/ethnic *heterogeneity*, I subtracted from one the sum of the squared proportion of residents in each of the following racial or ethnic groups: whites, African Americans, and other minorities (see Bellair, 1997; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Warner and Pierce, 1993; Warner and Rountree, 1997). High scores on this measure indicate neighborhoods that are racially and ethnically heterogeneous, and low scores indicate neighborhoods that are more racially and ethnically homogeneous.[5] A neighborhood's level of *residential stability* is the mean number of years that respondents have resided in their neighborhoods (see Bellair, 1997).

Routine Activities. I measured an individual's routine activities in three ways. To capture a respondent's *exposure to offenders*, I controlled for respondents' perceptions about the level of crime in their neighborhood. Specifically, I distinguished between residents who reported an increase in neighborhood crime within the past year (1) from respondents who reported that neighborhood crime had stayed the same or decreased (0). Target attractiveness is indicated by respondents' yearly *family income*, a seven-category variable that ranges from an income below $5,000 (1) to an income that is more than $30,000 (7) (see Kennedy and Forde, 1990; Miethe and McDowall, 1993; Miethe and Meier, 1990; Rountree et al., 1994). I measured capable guardianship by distinguishing between respondents who *live alone* (1) from those who live with other adults (0)

residents and the local government and police as well as the distribution of resources across neighborhoods.

5. The formula for calculating racial/ethnic heterogeneity is $1-\Sigma p_i^2$, where p_i is the proportion of the total population of the police beat in a given racial/ethnic group.

(see Miethe and McDowall, 1993; Miethe and Meier, 1994; Rountree et al., 1994).

Controls. I controlled for three respondent attributes that are associated with criminal victimization: race/ethnicity, sex, and age. I constructed two dummy variables for race/ethnicity: *African-American* and *other minority*.[6] White respondents comprised the reference category. *Female* respondents were coded as 1, and males as 0. *Age* was measured in years. To account for any differences across the three SMSAs, I included two dummy variables for the SMSAs of *Rochester* and *St. Louis*. Following Bellair (1997), these cities are compared with the Tampa-St. Petersburg SMSA, the reference category. The Appendix presents the bivariate correlations.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

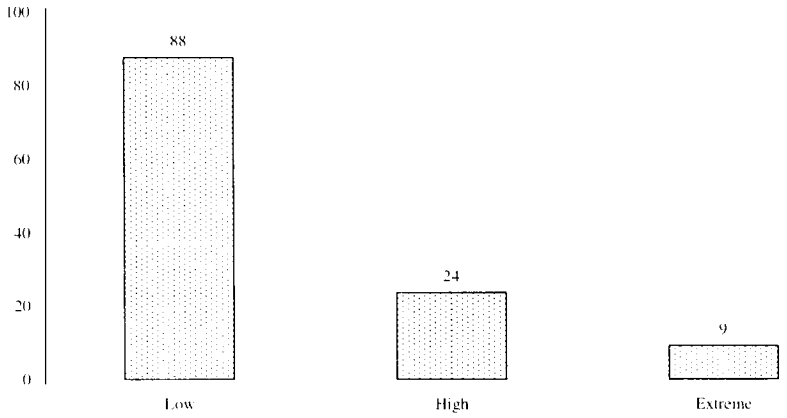
A typical concern with multilevel data is the correlation of cases within each neighborhood leading to biased standard errors. To account for the clustering of cases within each unit, I estimated random-effects logistic regression models. This procedure ensures that the coefficients and standard errors are unbiased, making reliable hypothesis testing possible. For each regression equation, I report metric and semi-standardized coefficients. The semi-standardized coefficient (SS^{*}) indicates the amount of change in the log odds of the likelihood of victimization associated with a one-standard-deviation change in the independent variable (Kaufman, 1996).[7] I explored the potential for multicollinearity by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores, condition indices, and variance decomposition proportions (Belsley et al., 1980). In all models, the VIF scores were lower than 5 and the condition indices were lower than 20, indicating that multicollinearity does not adversely affect the parameter estimates in the analysis.

Given that I am particularly interested in the role of public social control in highly and extremely disadvantaged communities, it is important to consider how many such neighborhoods actually enjoy high levels of public social control. Figure 1 separates neighborhoods into low, high, or extreme levels of disadvantage and shows the percentage of neighborhoods within each category that has high levels of public social control. (High levels of public social control refer to neighborhoods that scored

6. Respondents that identified themselves as Latino (N = 92), Native American (*N* = 47), or other (*N* = 42) were collapsed into one category because their numbers were too small for reliable analysis of the independent groups.

7. The semi-standardized coefficient is computed as $SS_j^{*} = b_j * S_i$, where S_i is the standard deviation of X_j.

Figure 1 Percentage of Neighborhoods with High Levels of Public Social Control



above the mean on the public social control index.) As one would expect, neighborhoods with low levels of disadvantage are most likely to have high levels of public social control. Of the 32 neighborhoods with low disadvantage, 28 have high levels of public social control (88%). Although high levels of public social control tend to be concentrated in areas with affluence, nonetheless 4 of the 17 highly disadvantaged neighborhoods also report high levels of public social control (24%). As Figure 1 indicates, extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods are the least likely to enjoy the benefits of high public social control in that only 1 of 11 neighborhoods enjoys high levels of public social control. Yet that 9% of extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods have high levels of public social control suggests that ties to local public officials and the police *can* be established even in places that are faced with the greatest structural disadvantage. The presence of high levels of public social control in disadvantaged neighborhoods indicates that there is sufficient variation across these contexts to make the testing of the interaction between public social control and neighborhood disadvantage substantively meaningful.

I present four equations for each dependent variable. Model 1 (a and b) examines the effects of neighborhood conditions on household or personal victimization, net of an individual's routine activities and controls. Model 2 (a and b) introduces local social ties into the equations. Model 3 (a and b) adds public social control, and Model 4 (a and b) tests for an interaction between public social control and neighborhood disadvantage.[8] To create

8. I also tested for an interaction between neighborhood disadvantage and local social ties, but it was not significant (results not shown).

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Independent and Dependent Variables

	Whole Sample (N = 60)		Low Disadvantage (N = 32)		High Disadvantage (N = 17)		Extreme Disadvantage (N = 11)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Panel A: Neighborhood-Level Data								
Neighborhood Conditions								
Disadvantage	.00	2.45	−1.91	1.16	1.22	.80	3.68	1.03
Poverty (%)	18.06	12.63	8.53	4.77	23.91	6.68	36.77	8.10
Family Disruption (%)	5.46	3.01	4.06	1.88	5.75	3.26	9.07	2.14
College Educated (%)	35.81	17.07	47.55	12.96	24.64	10.45	18.88	7.41
Heterogeneity	.20	.18	.13	.14	.27	.20	.31	.17
Residential Stability	12.28	3.73	11.22	3.03	13.37	4.49	13.72	3.41
Local Social Ties								
Local Social Ties	.00	1.85	1.21	1.27	−1.12	1.47	−1.81	1.14
Neighboring (%)	59.56	8.78	64.21	7.06	54.37	8.34	54.19	6.46
Neighbors Watch Out (%)	72.59	8.48	78.42	5.12	68.16	6.00	62.50	5.55
Public Social Control								
Public Social Control	.00	3.68	2.41	2.58	−2.08	2.52	−3.78	2.72
Satisfied Talking with Public Officials (%)	49.30	10.30	56.04	8.52	43.53	6.10	38.60	3.64
Satisfied with Police Services (%)	62.76	11.70	69.14	10.46	58.05	6.33	51.46	9.81
Confidence in Local Government (%)	68.90	10.56	74.64	8.26	63.79	8.63	61.65	10.02
Police Responsive to Community (%)	83.21	8.06	88.56	3.71	78.83	6.47	74.41	7.99

	Whole Sample (N = 9829)		Low Disadvantage (N = 5299)		High Disadvantage (N = 2603)		Extreme Disadvantage (N = 1927)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Panel B: Individual-Level Data								
Victimization								
Household	.07	.26	.05	.23	.07	.26	.12	.32
Personal	.03	.16	.01	.12	.03	.18	.06	.23
Assault	.02	.13	.01	.10	.02	.14	.03	.18
Robbed	.01	.11	.00	.05	.01	.13	.03	.16
Routine Activities								
Exposure to Offenders (=1)	.22	.41	.18	.39	.27	.44	.24	.43
Family Income	3.03	1.67	3.65	1.69	2.53	1.38	1.99	1.18
Live Alone (=1)	.22	.41	.16	.37	.27	.44	.31	.46
Controls								
African American (=1)	.27	.45	.09	.29	.32	.46	.72	.45
Other Minority (=1)	.02	.12	.01	.11	.02	.13	.02	.13
White (=1)	.71	.45	.90	.30	.67	.47	.26	.44
Female (=1)	.58	.49	.56	.50	.58	.49	.63	.48
Age (years)	47.67	17.87	46.89	16.98	47.63	18.71	49.86	18.90
Rochester, NY	.18	.38	.16	.37	.23	.42	.15	.35
St. Louis, MO	.43	.50	.39	.49	.45	.50	.52	.50
Tampa-St. Petersburg, FL	.39	.49	.44	.50	.32	.47	.33	.47

NOTE: Low disadvantaged neighborhoods are below the mean on the index of disadvantage. High disadvantaged neighborhoods are between the mean and one standard deviation above the mean on the index of disadvantage. Extreme disadvantaged neighborhoods are one standard deviation above the mean on the index of disadvantage.

this interaction term, I first mean-centered the component variables and then created a product term (Aiken and West, 1991). In all four models, public social control and neighborhood disadvantage are mean-centered.

FINDINGS

Table 1 provides the means and standard deviations for the dependent and independent variables. The first and second columns present descriptive statistics pertaining to all neighborhoods (Panel A) and all individuals in the sample (Panel B). To show how key measures vary across neighborhoods with divergent levels of disadvantage, I split the sample according to whether respondents lived in neighborhoods with low, high, or extreme disadvantage. Following Krivo and Peterson (1996), neighborhoods that scored below the mean on the index of disadvantage were considered to have low disadvantage; neighborhoods that scored between the mean and one standard deviation above the mean on the index of disadvantage were considered to have high disadvantage; and neighborhoods that scored one standard deviation or more above the mean on the index of disadvantage were considered to have extreme disadvantage.

As revealed earlier in Figure 1, Panel A of Table 1 details important disparities in public social control across the 60 neighborhoods. For example, 56% of residents in communities with low levels of disadvantage are satisfied talking with public officials, but only 44% and 39% of residents in highly or extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods, respectively, are satisfied with public officials. Similarly, almost 70% of residents from neighborhoods with low levels of disadvantage report satisfaction with police services, whereas police satisfaction is reported by only 58% and 51% of residents in highly disadvantaged and extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods, respectively. In addition, Table 1 shows that highly and extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods embody a variety of characteristics conducive to victimization risk. Compared with low levels of neighborhood disadvantage, for instance, disadvantaged neighborhoods have higher levels of heterogeneity (Panel A) and people living alone (Panel B) as well as lower levels of local social ties (Panel B). Given the prevalence of these and other factors, it is not surprising that Panel B shows that individuals living in neighborhoods with low levels of disadvantage report anywhere from about one and one-half to six times fewer household and personal victimizations than do residents from highly or extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods.[9]

9. With *residential stability* as the exception, all means for noncontrol variables in neighborhoods with low levels of disadvantage are statistically different from means in highly or extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods ($p < .05$, two-tailed).

Table 2 presents the results of logistic equations predicting an individual's likelihood of household or personal victimization. Although not central to this study, I first turn to the role of routine activities in an individual's risk of victimization. Model 1a shows a heightened risk of household victimization for individuals who have exposure to offenders, high family incomes, and who live alone. The pattern is largely similar for personal victimization, given that Model 1b demonstrates that exposure to offenders and family income are important predictors of personal victimization. Noteworthy, the effects of these routine activities on both household and personal victimization persist as local social ties and public social control are entered into the models. That an individual's routine activities play an important role in victimization risk, net of neighborhood conditions and community social control, lends support to the view purported by multilevel victimization studies that victimization risk is a byproduct of both the social forces in individuals' neighborhoods and their routine activities.

Turning to the role of neighborhood conditions, Model 1 (a and b) shows that neighborhood disadvantage enhances an individual's likelihood of household and personal victimization. This finding is consistent with multilevel victimization research that has found that individuals residing in disadvantaged neighborhoods have higher risks of victimization than do individuals living in less disadvantaged neighborhoods (Kennedy and Forde, 1990; Miethe and McDowall, 1993; Miethe and Meier, 1994; Rountree et al., 1994; Sampson and Wooldredge, 1987; Smith and Jarjoura, 1989). As we would expect, this effect of neighborhood disadvantage is mediated by local social ties for household victimization (Model 2a) and by public social control for personal victimization (Model 3b). Results also indicate that heterogenous neighborhoods are contexts that increase individuals' likelihood of household victimization, even after adjusting for local social ties and public social control.

Individuals living in neighborhoods with high levels of local social ties are less likely to report household or personal victimization (Model 2 [a and b]). Consistent with social disorganization research, these findings indicate that an effective strategy to reduce victimization is to foster the social interaction of residents so that they watch out for each other (e.g., Sampson et al., 1997; Warner and Rountree, 1997). Note, however, that the effect of local social ties is much stronger for personal than for household victimization. In fact, the semi-standardized coefficient for personal victimization is almost two times larger than is the semi-standardized coefficient for household victimization. A likely explanation for this disparity is that personal but not household crimes typically occur in visible public spaces. As such, personal crimes may be more subject than household

Table 2. Random-Effects Logistic Regression of Household or Personal Victimization on Neighborhood Conditions, Community Social Control, Routine Activities, and Controls (N = 9,829)

	Household Victimization Models				Personal Victimization Models			
	1a	2a	3a	4a	1b	2b	3b	4b
	b SS	b SS	b SS	b SS	b SS	b SS	b SS	b SS
Neighborhood Conditions								
Disadvantage	.092**	.050	.014	−.013	.184***	.108*	.027	−.016
	.224	.120	.035	−.032	.447	.263	.065	−.039
	(.032)	(.041)	(.047)	(.046)	(.044)	(.053)	(.052)	(.057)
Heterogeneity	1.108**	.887*	1.096**	1.424	.079	−.378	.246	.439
	.197	.160	.195	.253	.014	−.067	.044	.078
	(.374)	(.388)	(.408)	(.414)	(.490)	(.497)	(.463)	(.476)
Residential Stability	.003	.004	.005	.004	−.003	−.005	.013	.012
	.011	.010	.018	.016	−.012	−.019	.050	.045
	(.017)	(.017)	(.017)	(.017)	(.023)	(.022)	(.019)	(.020)
Community Social Control								
Local Social Ties	. . .	−.103+	−.066	−.072	. . .	−.190**	−.081	−.114+
		−.190	−.122	−.134		−.352	−.150	−.211
		(.063)	(.067)	(.065)		(.083)	(.073)	(.075)
Public Social Control	. . .	. . .	−.039+	−.039+	. . .	. . .	−.106***	−.098**
			−.143	−.142			−.389	−.360
			(.027)	(.026)			(.033)	(.033)

Table 2. Continued

	Household Victimization Models				Personal Victimization Models			
	1a	2a	3a	4a	1b	2b	3b	4b
	b SS$_{\mathfrak{L}}$	b SS$_{\mathfrak{L}}$	b SS$_{\mathfrak{L}}$	b SS$_{\mathfrak{L}}$	b SS$_{\mathfrak{L}}$	b SS$_{\mathfrak{L}}$	b SS$_{\mathfrak{L}}$	b SS$_{\mathfrak{L}}$
Public Social Control*								
Disadvantage	. . .	. . .	. . .	−.017** −.163 (.007)	. . .	. . .	. . .	−.017* −.154 (.009)
Routine Activities								
Exposure to Offenders (=1)	.950*** .389 (.084)	.946*** .390 (.084)	.939*** .385 (.084)	.946*** .388 (.084)	.793*** .325 (.131)	.785*** .322 (.131)	.762*** .312 (.130)	.772*** .316 (.131)
Family Income	.077** .128 (.030)	.079** .130 (.030)	.082** .137 (.030)	.077** .129 (.030)	−.205*** −.343 (.054)	−.198*** −.331 (.054)	−.185*** −.308 (.054)	.193*** .323 (.054)
Live Alone (=1)	.251* .104 (.103)	.250** .010 (.103)	.257** .106 (.103)	.255** .105 (.103)	−.312 −.129 (.169)	−.312 −.129 (.168)	−.290 .120 (.168)	−.289 −.120 (.168)
Controls								
African American (=1)	.037 .017 (.114)	.033 .010 (.114)	.016 .007 (.114)	−.024 −.010 (.114)	−.108 −.048 (.172)	−.104 −.046 (.169)	−.186 −.084 (.163)	−.239 −.107 (.166)
Other Minority (=1)	−.814+ −.100 (.467)	−.823* −.100 (.467)	−.820* −.101 (.467)	−.844 −.104 (.467)	−.176 −.022 (.530)	−.190 −.023 (.530)	−.205 −.025 (.526)	−.223 −.027 (.528)
Female (=1)	.112+ .055 (.085)	.114+ .060 (.085)	.117+ .058 (.085)	.113 .056 (.084)	−.120 −.059 (.132)	−.116 −.057 (.132)	−.105 −.052 (.130)	−.110 −.055 (.130)

Table 2. Continued

	Household Victimization Models				Personal Victimization Models			
	1a	2a	3a	4a	1b	2b	3b	4b
	b SS	b SS	b SS	b SS	b SS	b SS	b SS	b SS
Age (years)	−.023***	−.023***	−.023***	−.023	−.032***	−.032***	−.032***	−.032***
	.409	−.410	−.410	−.416	−.572	−.573	−.567	−.576
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.004)	(.004)	(.004)	(.004)
Rochester, NY	−.058	−.170	−.173	−.298	.456*	.214	.228	.092
	−.022	−.070	−.066	−.114	.166	.082	.088	.035
	(.174)	(.184)	(.181)	(.182)	(.243)	(.247)	(.211)	(.227)
St. Louis, MO	.161	.049	.013	−.180	.473	.036	.157	−.050
	.080	.020	.006	−.089	.219	.018	.078	−.025
	(.135)	(.184)	(.187)	(.195)	(.197)	(.252)	(.224)	(.251)
Constant	−2.534	−2.373	−2.553	−2.584	−2.090	−1.791	−.262	−2.174
X^2	277.69***	282.90***	286.66***	298.04***	169.43***	186.94***	224.75***	234.28***
Log Likelihood	−2344.81	−2343.54	−2342.53	−2339.71	−1096.83	−1124.83	−1121.08	−1119.41
df	12	13	14	15	12	13	14	15

NOTE: Standard error in parentheses. $^{\cdot}$ $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (one-tailed).

crimes to the guardianship provided by neighbors (Miethe and McDowall, 1993; Miethe et al., 1987; Rountree et al., 1994).

The effect of local social ties on victimization is altered when public social control is included into the equations (Models 3 and 4 [a and b]). As Model 3a shows, the effect of local social ties is mediated completely by public social control for household victimization. The pattern is somewhat different for personal victimization. In Model 3b, the effect of local social ties disappears with the introduction of public social control but regains marginal significance when the interaction of public social control and neighborhood disadvantage is included in Model 4b. That public social control largely mediates the effect of local social ties lends support to the idea that establishing ties to public officials and the police is most likely in neighborhoods where residents already have established social connections with each other.

Central to this study, Model 3 (a and b) shows that public social control plays an important role in diminishing victimization risk. This finding suggests that neighborhoods with strong ties to public officials and the police are able to secure city resources that effectively diminish victimization risk. This view is consistent with Bursik and Grasmick's (1993:38) argument that a key way to affect the "nature of neighborhood life" is for neighborhoods to negotiate with local governmental officials and the police. More generally, the importance of public social control demonstrates that an individual's probability of victimization risk is shaped to a great extent by the broader political dynamics of the city. But as was the case for local social ties, the effect of public social control is much stronger for personal than for household victimization. For example, the semi-standardized coefficient for personal victimization is more than two times larger than its counterpart for household victimization. Given that personal crimes occur typically in public spaces, they seem more vulnerable than do household crimes to the actions of residents and public agents of social control.

Model 4 (a and b) further explicates the nature of the effect of public social control on victimization risk by including the interaction between public social control and neighborhood disadvantage. For both household and personal victimization, public social control yields greater benefits for the reduction of victimization as neighborhood disadvantage increases.[10]

10. Given that public social control and neighborhood disadvantage overlap to such an extent ($r = -.77$), it is important to explore whether the significant interaction between public social control and neighborhood disadvantage is simply due to a nonlinear effect of public social control on victimization risk. I tested for this nonlinearity by constructing a squared term for public social control; creating a product term between public social control-squared and neighborhood disadvantage; and including these terms in the regression models one at a time as well as with the base terms of

Figures 2 and 3 provide a visual depiction of this interaction. The lines marked by squares represent the predicted effect of public social control on household (Figure 2) and personal (Figure 3) victimization in neighborhoods with extreme disadvantage, holding all other variables constant at their means. The lines marked by triangles show this same relationship for neighborhoods with high disadvantage. Both lines depict strong negative slopes, which means that increases in public social control are associated with large reductions in victimization risk for residents of highly and extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods. In neighborhoods with low levels of disadvantage, the lines marked by diamonds in Figures 2 and 3 show that increases in public social control are less effective in reducing household and personal victimization (below their already low levels).[11]

This enhanced effect of public social control indicates that public social control is particularly important in disadvantaged neighborhoods—places where it is needed most. This suggests that a key component of neighborhood "success" hinges on the ability of residents to work with more powerful outside institutions that are equipped to allocate much needed resources to disadvantaged neighborhoods. This observation is consistent with numerous case studies that have highlighted the importance of public social control for disadvantaged neighborhoods in Chicago as well as in cities like Baltimore, Newark, and Boston (Dawley, 1992; Kelling and Coles, 1996; Medoff and Sklar, 1994; Podolefsky and DuBow, 1981; Skogan, 1990; Skogan and Hartnett, 1997).

CONCLUSION

Recent multilevel victimization studies have demonstrated that disadvantaged neighborhood conditions increase dramatically an individual's probability of victimization (Kennedy and Forde, 1990; Miethe and McDowall, 1993; Miethe and Meier, 1994; Rountree et al., 1994; Sampson and Wooldredge, 1987; Smith and Jarjoura, 1989). Community policing

public social control and neighborhood disadvantage. Neither the public social control squared-term nor the product term between public social control-squared and neighborhood disadvantage was significant, providing no evidence for a curvilinear relationship.

11. Statistical tests of the public social control slopes for extreme and high levels of neighborhood disadvantage indicate that the effects are significantly different from zero ($b = -.06$, $t = 2.18$ and $b = -.08$, $t = -2.57$ for household victimization; $b = -.12$, $t = -4.33$ and $b = -.14$, $t = -4.46$ for personal victimization). By contrast, the line marked by diamonds in Figure 2 shows that public social control has a slight negative effect on household victimization in neighborhoods with low levels of disadvantage, but it is not statistically different from zero ($b = -.02$, $t = -.67$). The line marked by diamonds in Figure 3 depicts a negative (although weaker) effect on personal victimization in neighborhoods with low levels of disadvantage; it is statistically different from zero ($b = -.08$, $t = -2.83$).

Figure 2 The Effect of Public Social Control on Household Victimization

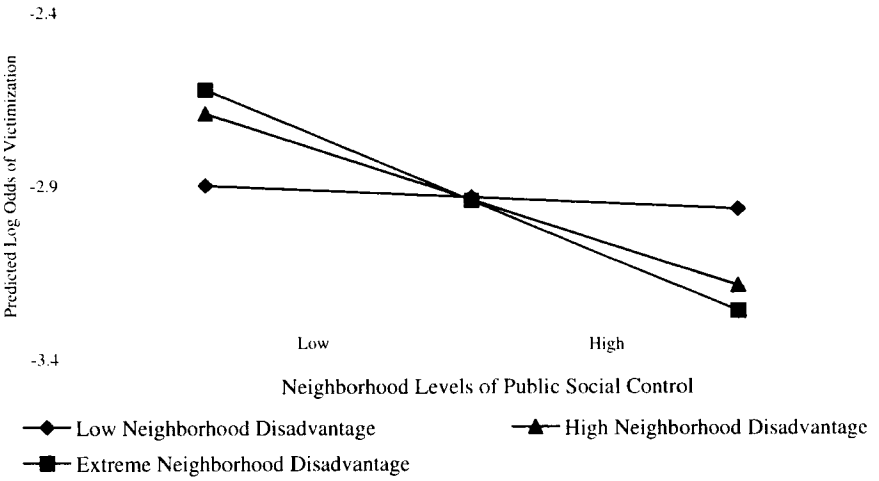
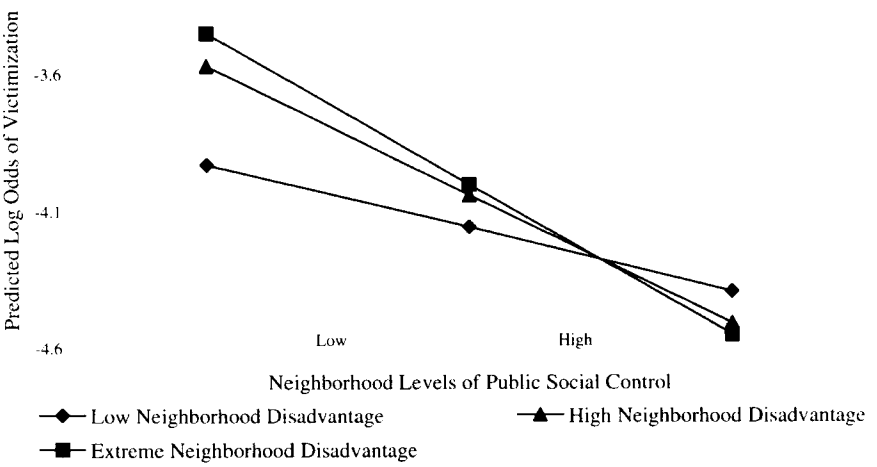


Figure 3 The Effect of Public Social Control on Personal Victimization



and mobilization case studies suggest that a way to counteract this heightened level of victimization is through public social control (Dawley, 1992; Henig, 1982; Kelling and Coles, 1996; Medoff and Sklar, 1994; Podolfskey and DuBow, 1981; Rabrenovic, 1996; Rooney, 1995; Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). Public social control refers to the ability of neighborhoods to solicit and secure external resources by establishing ties between neighborhoods and local governmental officials and police departments (Bursik, 1989; Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Hunter, 1985). In turn, the resources that accompany these ties should bring about reductions in crime and victimization. Using a multilevel model, this study assessed the impact of public social control on household and personal victimization risk for residents across 60 neighborhoods in three SMSAs. Net of a variety of neighborhood and individual-level characteristics, I find that public social control reduces household and personal victimization risk. In fact, public social control yields greater benefits in neighborhoods with prevalent structural disadvantage than in neighborhoods with more affluence. This enhanced effect suggests that the establishment of neighborhood ties to local public officials results in the infusion of resources, such as increased educational services for youth, needed to counteract the heightened levels of victimization found in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Not only does this finding point to public social control as an avenue for community betterment, it also has implications for our understanding of the political viability of disadvantaged neighborhoods. In contrast to the view that residents from high poverty areas are necessarily alienated from political institutions and have apathetic attitudes toward the political process, the enhanced effect of public social control suggests that disadvantaged neighborhoods can be politically viable contexts (see Berry et al., 1991). This observation is supported most clearly by the important role that residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods play in establishing public social control. The literature on neighborhood mobilization stresses the influence that residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods can bring to bear on local politicians when they are organized and use pressure tactics (Dawley, 1992; Henig, 1982; Medoff and Sklar, 1994; Rabrenovic, 1996; Rooney, 1995). Such actions, in turn, often have compelled authorities to allocate resources to disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Similarly, although the literature on community policing shows that police departments may initiate ties to residents, such work also emphasizes the crucial role that residents play in making community policing programs successful (Kelling and Coles, 1996; Podolfskey and DuBow, 1981; Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). Indeed, a major goal of community policing is to foster neighborhood self-help and community mechanisms of informal social control that set in motion the process for neighborhoods to take ownership of their communities (Goldstein, 1990; Skogan, 1998).

Thus, even if residents do not initiate public social control, its *potency* appears anchored with the unified actions of residents in disadvantaged neighborhoods. As such, my findings suggest an "empowered" view of residents living in disadvantaged neighborhoods given their ability to take active roles in curtailing levels of victimization and crime.

Our understanding of public social control would be furthered by investigating the conditions under which ties are secured and resources are allocated. For example, future research should explore how such neighborhood characteristics as racial/ethnic composition and levels of political mobilization affect the likelihood that residents acquire public social control. For instance, Skogan and Hartnett (1997) found that community policing efforts in a predominantly African-American neighborhood were more successful than in a Latino neighborhood. This suggests that predominantly Latino neighborhoods face unique structural and cultural constraints that make difficult the fostering of ties with the police. Uncovering the mechanisms that lead to public social control is important given its implication for our understanding of the conditions under which disadvantaged neighborhoods can be politically viable contexts. How public social control is secured is important given that it effectively buffers residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods from much of the structural forces that lead to their heightened levels of victimization risk.

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Appendix. Bivariate Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Household Victimization	1.00															
2. Personal Victimization	.07*	1.00														
3. Disadvantage	.08*	.09*	1.00													
4. Heterogeneity	.09*	.05*	.50*	1.00												
5. Residential Stability	.00	.03*	.30*	.01	1.00											
6. Public Social Control	−.08*	−.11*	−.77*	−.29*	−.06*	1.00										
7. Local Social Ties	−.10*	−.10*	−.70*	−.56*	−.30*	.58*	1.00									
8. Exposure to Offenders	.13*	.08*	.07*	.05*	.04*	−.10*	−.10*	1.00								
9. Family Income	.01	−.05*	−.48*	−.21*	−.16*	.39*	.32*	.00	1.00							
10. Live Alone	.01	−.01	.18*	.09*	.04*	−.12*	−.13*	−.01	−.33*	1.00						
11. African American	.07*	.07*	.56*	.44*	.10*	−.48*	−.52*	.00	−.23*	.05*	1.00					
12. Other Minority	−.02*	−.00	.03*	.05*	.01	−.01	.00	−.01	−.01	−.02*	−.08*	1.00				
13. Female	.01	−.01	.05*	.01	.02*	−.04*	.01	.04*	−.19*	.15*	.03*	−.01	1.00			
14. Age	−.10*	−.08*	.06*	−.04*	.14*	−.02*	−.03*	.03*	−.32*	.22*	−.10*	−.03*	.05*	1.00		
15. Rochester, NY	−.01	.01	−.03*	−.09*	.22*	−.04*	.04*	.10*	−.04*	.01	−.11*	.03*	.03*	−.01	1.00	
16. St. Louis, MO	.04*	.04*	.09*	.22*	.15*	.02*	−.53*	.02*	−.01	.01	.24*	−.06*	−.09*	−.03*	−.41*	1.00

NOTE: * $p < .05$ (two-tailed).