

## **Social Capital, Collective Efficacy, & the Urban Underclass**

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- I. Urban Underclass Debate
- II. Social Capital Theory
- III. Collective Efficacy & Community Violence
- IV. Appropriation of Social Capital to Facilitate Crime

## Learning Objectives

1. Understand the importance of the urban underclass
2. Distinguish W.J. Wilson's thesis from Massey and Denton's thesis & note research results
3. Understand the integration of the urban underclass thesis & social disorganization
4. Understand social capital theory
5. Link social capital theory to collective efficacy
6. Know the broken windows thesis
7. Know results of empirical research on collective efficacy and broken windows
8. Understand how Patillo-McCoy and Venkatesh provide examples of appropriation of social capital to facilitate crime

## Urban Underclass (Wilson)

- War on Poverty in the 1960s
  - Moynihan report: race, poverty, crime, female-headed families (25%)
  - Culture of poverty
  - Liberals: worried about blaming the victim.
- WJ Wilson: Extreme disadvantage in inner cities
  - Female headed households
  - Poverty
  - Welfare
  - Violence & drugs

## **Causes of Urban Underclass (W.J. Wilson)**

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- Great migration of Southern blacks to northern industrial cities
- Shift from manufacturing to service economy (loss of secondary sector jobs)
- Historical legacy of racial discrimination
- Upwardly mobile middle-class blacks move to affluent suburbs (white neighborhoods): Role models exit

## **Residential Segregation (Massey)**

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- Extreme residential segregation contributes to concentrated disadvantage
- Overt racial discrimination
  - Audit studies (mortgage lending, real estate agents, rentals)
  - Racial preferences
  - Crime used as a code word for minority status
- Massey: Myth that middle class blacks moving to white neighborhoods

## Quillian's Empirical Research

- Must look at residential patterns over time
- Middle class blacks are moving to affluent neighborhoods
- But whites are moving out of these affluent neighborhoods to other white neighborhoods
- Result: Middle class blacks are in predominantly black neighborhoods
- Consequence: New impoverished neighborhoods left behind, increasingly black

## **Urban Underclass & Social Disorganization (Wilson and Sampson)**

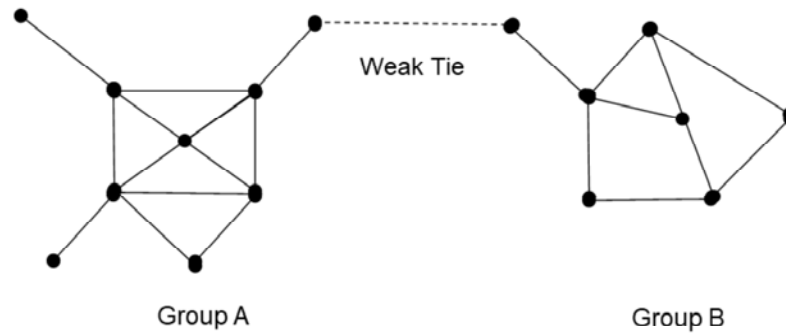
- Wilson's underclass thesis explains concentrated disadvantage in inner-cities
- Undermines local communities (social disorganization)
  - Residents are unable to achieve collective values
  - Weak families (family structure impedes supervision)
  - Indifference or tolerance of crime
- Result: High rates of crime and violence

## **Social Capital Theory**

- Begin with Utility Maximization Theory
  - Financial capital
  - Human capital
  - Social capital
- Social Capital:
  - Inheres in social structure (network ties)
    - Closure of social networks
    - Example: parents of other children
  - Facilitates certain social actions by actors

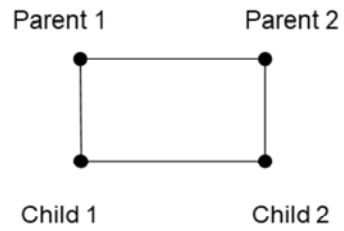


## Strength of Weak Ties

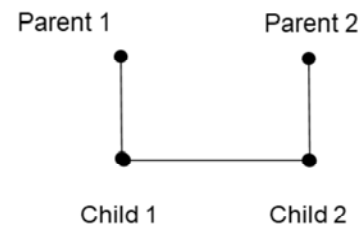


The weak tie allows different kinds of information (e.g., job openings) to pass between Group A and Group B

## Closure of Social Networks



Closed Network Structure



Open Network Structure

## **Social Capital: Types and Appropriation**

- Types of Social Capital
  - Obligations, expectations, trust
  - Information
  - Norms and effective sanctions
- Examples: getting a job & neighborhood control
- Social Organization can be Appropriated for other Purposes
  - South Korean study groups used by radical students to pass on revolutionary ideas
  - Friendship networks used to deal drugs

## **Collective Efficacy (Sampson)**

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- Merge social disorganization with social capital theories
- Collective efficacy: capacity of a neighborhood to intervene when a problem arises
  - Based on working trust among residents
  - Shared expectations
  - Collective counterpart to Bandura's social efficacy (individual agency)

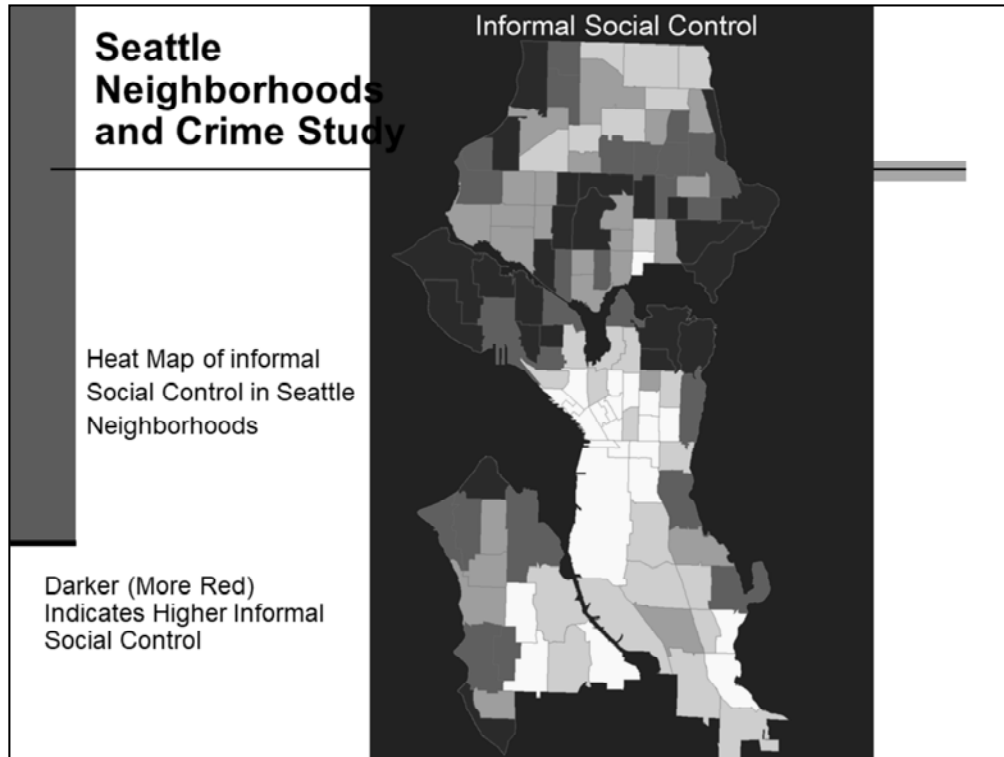
## **Social Capital & Collective Efficacy**

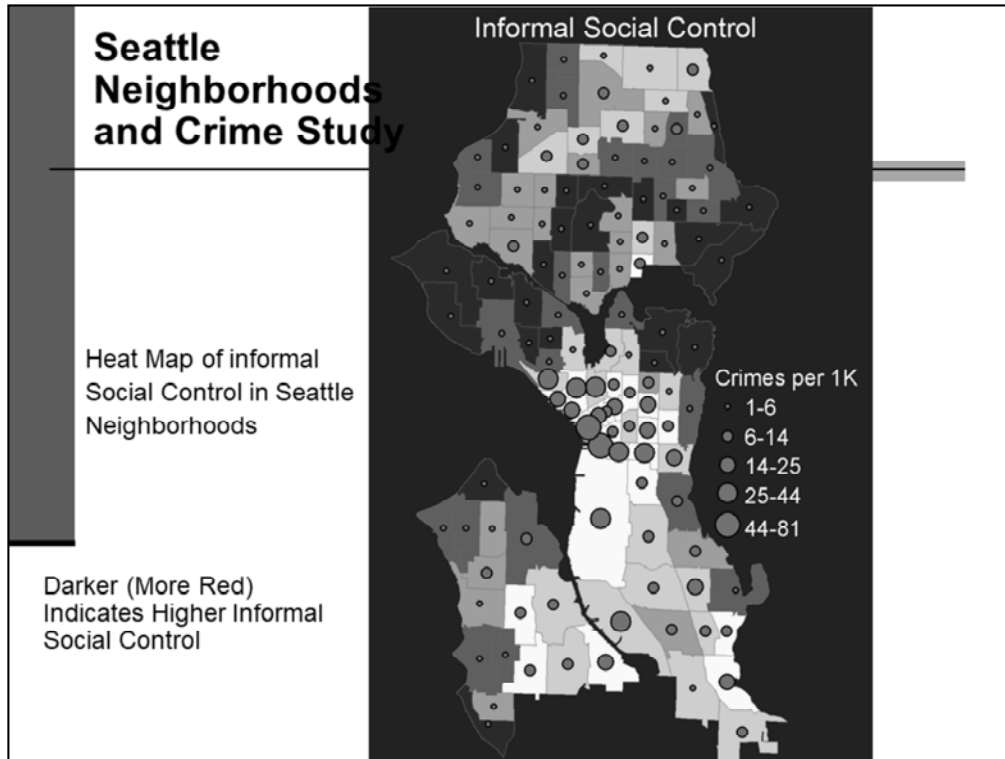
- Neighborhood social capital (collective efficacy):
  - Intergenerational closure
  - Reciprocated exchange
  - Child-centered social control
  - Also: Trust among neighbors, kinship/friendship ties, voluntary associations, neighborhood activism
- Results: (see diagrams)
  - Social ties affect violence through child-centered social control.
  - Broken windows hypothesis

## Neighborhood Organization, Collective Efficacy, and Crime Rates



- Social Network ties in the Neighborhood
  - Formal ties to the neighborhood
  - Informal social ties
- Collective efficacy
  - Neighborhood ties represent structural resources for social capital
  - Affect crime rates through collective efficacy
  - Chicago and Seattle







## Broken Windows (Wilson and Kelling)

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- Minor forms of physical and social disorder (incivilities) correlate with more serious crime
  - Graffiti, broken windows, dilapidated buildings, panhandlers, homeless
  - Broken windows signals to criminals indifference to crime
  - Low probability of being seen, reported, arrested
- Disorder also undermines community controls
  - In a few years or months, stable neighborhoods of families who care about their homes, children, and safety, may become an inhospitable & frightening jungle.
  - Mechanisms: changed behavior of residents; residential mobility
- Policy: Zero tolerance policing

## Disorder, Collective Efficacy, and Crime



- Broken windows hypothesis: Direct effect of disorder on crime
- Collective efficacy (social capital) hypothesis
  - Association between disorder and crime is spurious
  - Collective efficacy reduces disorder **and** crime in the neighborhood
  - Some support by Sampson and Raudenbush (1999)

### **Field Experiments (Keizer et al. 2008 *Science*)**

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- Begin with broken windows hypothesis
- Mechanism: norm violation weakens goal to act appropriately
- Descriptive norm violation (graffiti) inhibits injunctive norms (theft, littering)
- Conduct six experiments to examine cross-norm effects
- Note: examining norm violations NOT serious crime

## Graffiti (Fireworks) and Littering



### Anti-Litter Violations (alley)

Control: 33% (25 of 77)  
Graffiti: 69% (53 of 77)  
Total: 51% (78 of 154)

$$\chi^2 (1,154) = 20.4, p < .001$$



### Anti-Litter Violations (bike shed)

Control: 52% (26 of 50)  
Fireworks: 80% (37 of 46)  
Total: 66% (63 of 96)

$$\chi^2 (1,96) = 8.59, p < .005$$

### Graffiti on (Litter around) Mailbox Theft of Envelope with 5 Euro Note



Steal Letter: Litter

Control: 13% (9 of 71)

Litter: 25% (18 of 72)

Total: 19% (27 of 143)

$\chi^2 (1,143) = 3.55, p < .05$

Steal Letter: Graffiti

Control: 13% (9 of 71)

Graffiti: 27% (16 of 60)

Total: 19% (25 of 131)

$\chi^2 (1,93) = 27.8, p < .001$

Note: Mailing the envelope and doing nothing  
are both counted as non-theft.



### Mail Box Experiment: Protocol

- Dependent Variable:
  - Walk by 2,509
  - Steal Envelope 47
  - Mail Envelope 230
- Treatment 2,786
  - Graffiti
  - Trash
  - Graffiti + Trash
- Context: Neighborhood  
Collective Efficacy



**International District**

## Preliminary Results: Mailbox Experiment

- Much lower theft rate in Seattle vs. Groninigen
  - Despite property crime rate being slightly higher in Seattle
  - Many more people walk by and do nothing
- Disorder does not reduce theft
- Disorder reduces mailing
- Theft is lower in high collective efficacy neighborhoods.

Treatment reduces prob of mailing, no effect on stealing, increases no action.

- If we remove no action and run a logistic regression, treatment appears to increase thefts because of this.

As expected, men more likely to steal.

Unsure of non-white effect, probably due to tract effects.

People in groups much less likely to act, possibly due to distraction. Noteworthy that people in groups are counted individually rather than as a mass, so a group of 5 missing the letter is big.

CE impacts stealing and no action

Busier areas have lower action counts; bystander effect or distraction (cognitive overload)



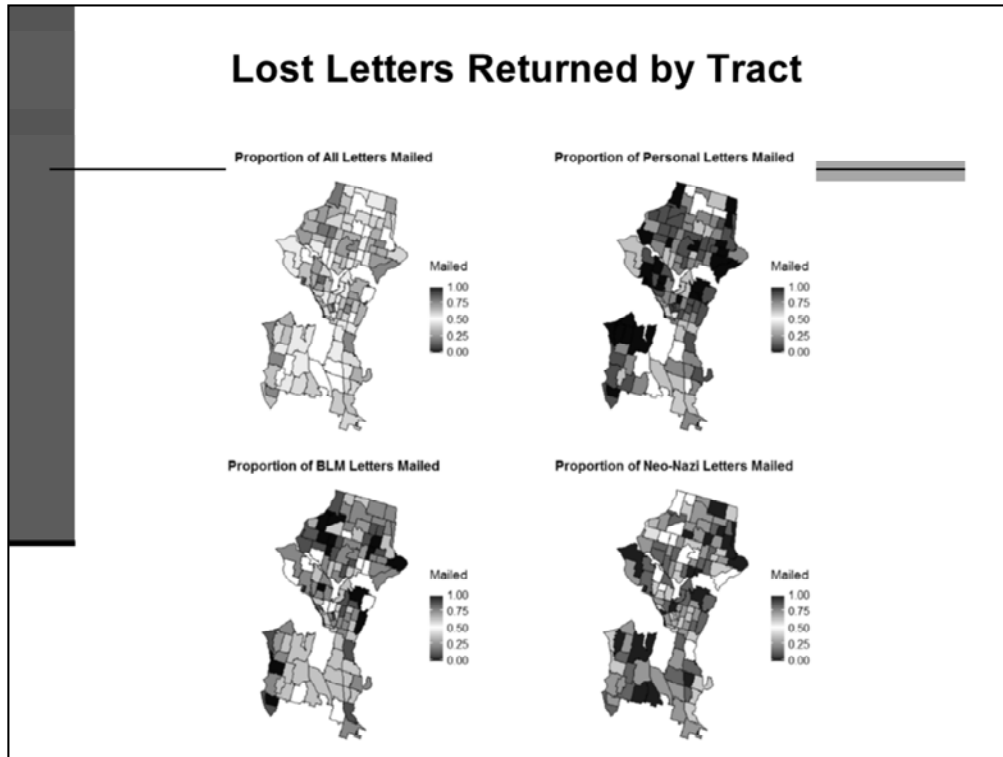
## Lost Letter Experiment

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graph LR; A[Pro-Social Behavior] -.-> B[Collective Efficacy]
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- More recent behavioral measure of collective efficacy
- Replication of Milgram et al. (1965)
- Sampson (2012): 3,303 letters dropped across 343 Chicago neighborhood clusters
- Seattle Letter Drop
  - 24 letters in each of 122 census tracts
  - Total of 2,928 letters dropped

## Lost Letter Experiment

	<u>Return %</u>	<u>Corr(CE)</u>
■ Milgram et al. (1965)		
■ Medical Research Associates:	70%	--
■ Friends of the Communist Party:	70%	--
■ Friends of the Nazi Party:	25%	
■ Sampson (2012)	%	.41
■ Seattle Letter Drop		
■ Charles F. Landers	79%	.35
■ Friends of Black Lives Matter	71%	.32
■ American Neo-Nazi Party	24%	.03



## Conclusions about Broken Windows

- There may be a small effect of neighborhood disorder on crime
- Collective efficacy plays a important role in cleaning up disorder
- Probably does not justify zero tolerance policing as panacea
- Unanticipated negative consequences
  - Police dislike focus on minor incivilities
  - Potential for racial profiling
  - Undermines citizen-police relations
- Building collective efficacy may be more efficient

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