

**NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL ECOLOGY AND INDIVIDUAL ATTRIBUTES:
INTEGRATING THE CONTEXTUAL AND INDIVIDUAL RISK FACTORS
IN REENTRY**

by
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
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ABSTRACT

As the United States enters a decarceration era, the factors predicting reentry success have received a rapidly growing body of research attention. The majority of extant studies to explain recidivism draw heavily from micro criminological theories to identify released prisoners' individual level risk factors such as family relationships, employment stability and subjective intention to desist. A relatively thinner line of research attention has been paid to the factors that go beyond individual attributes. Among a handful of studies that expand beyond individual-level attributes to assess the contextual effect of neighborhoods to which released prisoners return, they predominantly used neighborhood structural/economic characteristics as the proxies of neighborhood context, leaving the roles of community cohesion and disorder understudied in the context of reentry.

This dissertation contributes to the literature by first using an integrative theoretical framework to assess neighborhood social cohesion as well as released prisoners' individual level risk factors in the context of reentry with a sample of 549 serious adult offenders who were under parole supervision after their release from state prisons of Texas, Illinois and Ohio. In addition, it contributes by capturing another relevant dimension of neighborhood context of individual reentry—crime opportunities and guardianship. The respective effects of drug activities and parole practice on individuals' recidivism in a community are evaluated.

Multiple regression models are used to assess the disparity of neighborhood cohesion, parole practice and drug activities across different neighborhoods, and their

impact on individuals' reentry and reintegration. The findings provide a comprehensive assessment of the effects of community cohesion, disorder and individual risk factors on reentry outcomes. Findings reveal that although attenuated family bonds and financial difficulty are individual-level risk factors that undermine reentry, they represent only part of the story. When individual risk factors were controlled, neighborhood cohesion and disorder still exhibited significant influence on individuals' reentry outcomes over and beyond the individual level factors. In addition, parole practice, similar to policing, is not universal but contextual: Parole officers' support was weaker toward those who dwelled in disordered neighborhoods while stronger toward those who dwelled in cohesive neighborhoods. Lastly, there is an interplay of neighborhood context and parole practice in the reentry process. Parole officers' support demonstrated an amplified protective effect against recidivism for former prisoners who dwelled in well-ordered communities.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The U.S. “imprisonment binge”—a prolonged period of mass incarceration from the last two decades of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century—has led the U.S. to the top of the incarceration rankings compared with other industrialized and democratic nations ([Pratt, 2009](#)). While federal and state governments find themselves facing the heavy economic toll of housing large prison populations ([Gartner, Doob, & Zimring, 2011](#)), there is also an intimidating toll that mass incarceration takes on criminal justice involved individuals and their families. Past studies document various collateral damages of a criminal record, such as the blockage of access to education and housing grants (Bushway, 2004; Travis, 2002), the rejection from family members (Austin & Irwin, 2001; Covington & Bloom, 2007; Travis, Solomon & Waul, 2001) and the hardship to secure a job (Visher et al., 2004; Western, Kling & Weiman, 2001). Individuals re-entering society from prison face insurmountable hurdles to socially and financially survive (Western, 2018), and too often they are ensnared by the revolving door of prison and reincarcerated after reentry failure. According to the recidivism report by Bureau of Justice Statistics, about 30 percent of federal prisoners released to a term of community supervision returned to prison within 5 years, while nearly 60 percent of state prisoners conditionally released returned in 5 years (Markman, Durose, Rantala & Tiedt, 2016). If the recent reentry failure figures hold up, we can expect that nearly 360,000 out of the 600,000 former

prisoners that reenter society each year will be reincarcerated within five years. How to best integrate former prisoners back into society is one of the most pressing issues for researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

One of the main theoretical perspectives that has been used to examine desistance and recidivism is the developmental and life course criminology (Farrington, 2001; Laub, Nagin & Sampson, 1998; Maume, Ousey & Beaver, 2005; Sampson, Laub & Wimer, 2006; Cullen, 2011; Sampson & Laub, 1993), especially the age-graded theory of informal social control formulated by Laub and Sampson (1993). Emerging from the criminal careers debate of the 1980s and driven by Sampson and Laub's seminal re-analysis of the Glueck data, the age-graded theory of informal social control focuses on how life events explain the change and continuation of crime over a lifetime from a developmental perspective. Grounded in the intellectual roots of social control (Durkheim, 1897; Hirschi, 1969; Kornhauser, 1978; Reiss, 1951), this theory asserts that individuals whose bonds with society are either missing or weak are more likely to engage in deviant and criminal behaviors (Sampson & Laub, 1993; Laub & Sampson, 2003). For example, adult conventional social bonds with marriage and employment lead to a reduction of criminal behavior; those who enter marriage and employment during the transition from adolescence to adulthood veer away from crime (Laub & Sampson, 2003).

Well-received as it is, the age-graded theory of informal social control is not without its limitations in explaining desistance in a more contemporary era. First, the validity of a theory hinges on the social context; the applicability of the age-graded theory of informal social control to offenders' recidivism at the current time deserves a thorough assessment. Glueck's boys, mostly baby boomers, lived in a social context

during the 1950s and 1960s when living-wage industry-related jobs were readily available (Sampson & Laub, 1993). During the current deindustrialization era, the solid manufacturing jobs that were found to be associated with desistance for the Gluecks' sample are not generally part of the current economic landscape. In this era, higher education is more unaffordable to people suffering from structural disadvantages (Berman & Stivers, 2016), and the majority of the offenders find themselves trapped in financial hardship due to low levels of education and few technical skills (Bachman et al., 2016; Graffam, Shinkfield & Hardcastle, 2008; Henderson, 2001; O'Connell, 2003; Petersilia, 2005; Uggen, 2000; Watson et al., 2004; Wilson 1996).

Second, while the effects of marriage and employment have been treated as the main focus in the prior tests of the age-grade theory of informal social control (Farrington & West, 1995; Laub, Nagin & Sampson, 1998; Laub & Sampson, 2003; Sampson, Laub & Wimer, 2006), some other aspects of the theory have received limited research attention. For example, in their book *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives*, Sampson and Laub (2003) contend that it is the quality of a social bond that matters. However, only a handful of studies have examined this proposition and fathomed how the quality of one's family relationships or employment affects desistance (for an exception, see Laub, Nagin & Sampson, 1998; Paternoster et al., 2016).

Another important but understudied force in the desistance process is human agency. In their second book based on Gluck's study, Sampson and Laub presented an equivocal proposition on the role of people's agentic choice in the continuation of criminal careers (Laub & Sampson, 2003), but their subsequent empirical tests on

desistance focused on marriage and employment instead of human agency (Laub & Sampson, 2001; Sampson & Laub, 2003, 2005). In their recent elaboration of the age-graded theory of informal social control, they denied the role of human agency in the desistance process (Sampson & Laub, 2016). However, Over the past 20 years, criminologists have witnessed increased attention to the role of human agency in recidivism (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Maruna, 2001; Matsueda & Heimer, 1997; Paternoster, 2017; Paternoster, Bachman, Bushway, Kerrison, & O'Connell, 2015; Paternoster & Bushway, 2009), and leaving this effect untested is very likely to limit our understanding of the whole picture of desistance.

Finally, the third limitation of the age-graded theory of informal social control is that it misses the influence of neighborhood context to which former prisoners' return. In sociological and criminological studies, contextual effects are pivotal principles when researchers predict human behaviors (Hipp & Yates, 2009; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997; Shaw & McKay, 1942; Wilson, 2011, 2012). In the context of reentry, individual attributes—attitudes, job skills—only provide a partial story of reentry. To provide a complete and comprehensive picture of reentry success and failure, it is imperative to address the conditions of the communities to which released prisoners return (Currie, 1998; Gottfredson & Taylor, 1985; Kubrin & Stewart, 2006). A neighborhood ridden by drug dealing may elicit and reinforce the drug use of former prisoners (Gottfredson & Taylor, 1986). A community with strong local ties can exert informal sanctions against wayward behaviors of former prisoners and the social networks there may assist them to secure job and services (Warren, 1978). Compared to other residents, individuals returning home from prison are perhaps even more sensitive to the impacts of

neighborhood context. Therefore, the explanation of desistance should go beyond the individual level “hooks for change” and adopt an integrative perspective that takes into account both individual risk and neighborhood contextual effects. What’s more, due to the dynamics at the neighborhood level, it is plausible that an individual risk factor has divergent levels of effect on recidivism contingent on the community environment. For example, between two former prisoners who both have a modest level of determination to turn life around, the one who goes back to a neighborhood ridden with drug and violence may recidivate sooner or more often.

To advance our understanding of both individual and contextual-level factors that affect recidivism, this study will incorporate concepts from two macro perspectives—social disorganization and routine activities theories. The majority of past studies on these theories have explored their respective criminogenic effects on neighborhood crime within aggregates (Cohen & Felson 1979; Cullen & Pratt, 2003; Felson, 1986; 1998; 2006; Parker & Cartmill, 1997; Sampson, 2012; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson et al., 1997; Weisburd, Groff & Yang, 2012). There has been little research that integrates social disorganization and routine activities theories—that is, examining social disorganization and criminal opportunity together (e.g., policing, drug activity and alcohol outlet density) in a place simultaneously. Despite this paucity in research, there is solid theoretical feasibility to integrate these two theories (Hipp et al., 2010).

Although the integration of individual level risk, community social disorganization, and crime opportunities (e.g., policing and drug activities) has not been established, a handful of studies have integrated the factors of community disorganization and individual risks in studying reentry. However, these studies

oftentimes only include a limited scope of individual level covariates (age, gender and race) when assessing community contextual effect (for an exception, see Tillyer & Vose, 2011). The widely found individual protective and risk factors of recidivism, such as family relationships, employment, and agentic efforts to desist are rarely controlled. This invites legitimate questioning to these tests because some significant contextual effects may be attributable to these important omitted individual level variables (Hauser, 1974).

Purpose of the Research

This dissertation addresses the aforementioned literature gaps by bridging the contextual and individual level risk factors of crime and formulating a macro-micro integrative model to explain released prisoners' recidivism. Specifically, the individual level factors to predict recidivism are selected based on the age-graded theory of informal social control (Sampson & Laub, 1993) and the community risk factors are selected based on the insights of two macro level theories—social disorganization theory (Bursik, 1988; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Sampson et al., 1997; Shaw & McKay, 1942) and routine activities theory (Cohen & Felson 1979; Felson, 1986; 1998; 2006). The interplay of the contextual and individual level risks in affecting recidivism will also be examined, as an individual trait may exhibit divergent influences on recidivism depending on the environment to which released prisoners return. I will test this integrative model using a sample of released individuals who went back to neighborhoods with diversified community contexts at the beginning of the 2000s. The integrative framework of examining former prisoners' reentry makes this analysis the first endeavor that parcels out the influences of contextual factors, individual attributes, and the interplay of these two forces in the context of reentry.

In this foray, I construct a framework of “people, places and things” in explaining risk factors for recidivism. The term “people” refers to criminal-justice involved individuals who are released from prison and embark on reentry and reintegration. “Place” is defined as the neighborhood context to which an individual returns after release. Lastly, “things” refer to crime opportunities in neighborhoods represented by drug activities and parole practice, which are likely to vary from one type of community to another. Figure 1 presents a model that is used to guide my research questions. There are three main components in the model: (1) “hooks for change”—individual’s protective factors against recidivism, (2) neighborhood social cohesion, and (3) neighborhood crime opportunities that are represented by illegal drug activities and parole supervision. The model sets the stage for examining the integration of ecological and individual risk factors that shape the success of individuals’ reentry.

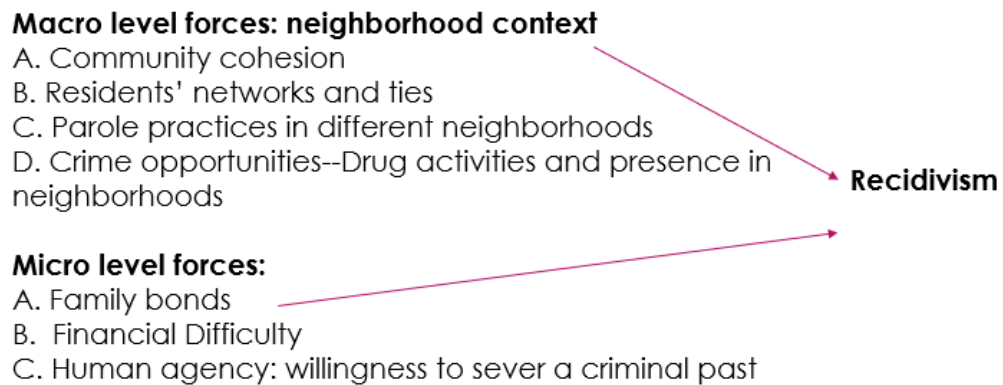


Figure 1 Integrative Model on Recidivism

Given that a legitimate concern on theoretical integration is the incorporation of variables from theories that do not share the same assumptions or intellectual roots, a section of the literature review will be dedicated to the discussion of the feasibility of integrating the aforementioned individual and neighborhood level predictors of desistance. In addition, a separate chapter is dedicated to introducing the extant analytical approaches that facilitate the integration of multiple levels (e.g., macro and micro) of predictors in explaining crime (Kubrin & Stewart, 2006; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Another legitimate concern is that the predictors from individual and macro level perspectives may be highly correlated. In the subsequent model building process, a model diagnosis will be conducted and issues of multicollinearity will be examined.

To complete this study, I use the data from Returning Home project, a multistate, longitudinal study designed to explore the process of prisoner reentry. The respondents in the study are former prisoners released from state prisons in Ohio, Illinois and Texas who returned to Cleveland, Chicago and Houston after imprisonment around the year of 2002. Experienced interviewers conducted up to three personal interviews prior and after their release, which included interviews with those who had been reincarcerated. Data about their reentry experiences were collected during these interviews, including respondents' determination to sever a criminal past, anti-social values, family relationships, and financial difficulty. Researchers also collected individuals' reincarceration and substance use records during reentry. Lastly, information about the neighborhood conditions they returned to (poor social cohesion, drug activities) was collected via interviews. Hence, the neighborhood measurements here are subjective measures—released prisoners'

perceptions of neighborhood cohesion and disorder. This methodological approach is quite different from that used in other social disorganization studies in which objective, aggregated measures of household income and employment rates are used to capture community context. Compared to these aggregate indicators, the subjective measures that will be used in the current research are more likely to represent the valid neighborhood context as they will represent true neighborhood locations, what some have recently termed “egohoods” (Hipp & Boessen, 2013). The reentry experiences of individuals should be understood based on their subjective cognition of social circumstances (Agnew, 1992; Merton, 1938). Perceived neighborhood conditions have proved to be relevant in understanding individual residents’ various aspects of wellbeing (Duncan, Duncan, & Strycker, 2002; Frye, 2007; Lenzi et al., 2012; Wickes, Hipp, Sargeant, & Homel, 2013). Given that our analysis focuses on individual respondents’ reentry outcomes, their perceived community context can legitimately shed light on how this contextual influence affects reentry outcomes.

The Blueprint of this Research

The remainder of this dissertation proceeds in the following fashion: Chapter 2 to chapter 4 provide a review of the theoretical frameworks that are used in this dissertation, including the age-graded theory of informal social control, social disorganization and routine activity theories, and their intellectual roots. I will also illustrate how researchers apply the key concepts of these theories in empirical studies and some validity issues of the theories that emerge from the tests. Beyond this, I illustrate in chapter 5 the legitimacy and feasibility of the theoretical integration of age-graded informal social control, routine activities, and social disorganization theories. I review the primary conditions of theoretical integration and discuss how my

integration meets these prerequisites and allows the three perspectives to shed complementary insights on each other in explaining recidivism. Chapter 6 is the methods chapter, which provides an in-depth description of the data collection and measurements used in this study. The latent variables used in this study are constructed in this chapter, and model diagnosis is conducted to identify ill-fitting issues (Agresti & Finlay, 2009; Menard, 2002). Lastly, at the end of this chapter, I introduce the analytical strategy to test my research hypotheses. Chapter 7 illustrates the process of my analysis using statistic models and presents the results. Chapter 8 summarizes these findings and provides a roadmap for future research to continue unpacking reentry under the integrative framework of individual risk and neighborhood contextual influences.

Chapter 2

DESISTING FROM CRIME: THE AGE-GRADE THEORY OF INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL

Continuity, Change, and Trajectory of Crime

Sampson and Laub's age-graded theory of informal social control is formulated to explain crime throughout the life course—from childhood, adolescence, to adulthood (Sampson & Laub, 1993). By integrating traditional criminological variables from social bonding theory (Hirschi, 1969) into a life course framework, Sampson and Laub underscore that the primary causes of crime are the same throughout the life course, namely, social bonds. However, the influence of these informal social bonds is age-graded; a social bond has varied significance on crime at different stages of life. For instance, in childhood and adolescence, bonds to family and school are the most salient factors to inhibit crime. However, as individuals age into young adulthood, bonds to higher education, labor force participation and marriage become more important.

Three main propositions from Sampson and Laub's theory have exerted substantial influence in the area of life course criminology: continuity, change, and trajectories of crime. First, there is considerable continuity between adolescent delinquency and adult offending. This continuity is the product of both population heterogeneity and state dependence (Nagin & Paternoster, 1991; Sampson & Laub, 1997; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1994). Population heterogeneity attributes the continuity of crime to a person's propensity or proneness to commit a crime; this propensity is

proposed as a time-stable characteristic developed due to factors such as early-childhood socialization processes (Cleckley, 1976; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Nagin & Paternoster, 1991). For example, researchers with this standpoint may argue that due to socialization, personality, or biological/constitutional attributes, some people are more likely to be aggressive and violent early in life and at all subsequent points (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Moffit, 1993). On the other hand, state dependence stipulates that criminal behaviors have negative consequences which lead to further crime (Sampson & Laub, 1993). The mechanism of this causation lies in the negative effect of one's earlier delinquency on the odds to form adult social bonds later in life. For example, if a teenager is arrested due to smoking marijuana, this arrest may jeopardize his or her future chances of securing stable employment, which in turn may lead to a prolonged involvement in criminal behavior. Sampson and Laub coin the term "cumulative disadvantage" for this process (Sampson & Laub, 1997, p.30).

The second proposition from their age-graded theory (Sampson & Laub, 1993) is the change in crime patterns over life. There are several key terms in the anatomy of change in offending: turning points, transitions, and trajectories. Turning points refer to the life stages in which an influential event on crime occurs. A turning point can contain either an event or a process. An event can be dropping out of school, receiving a prison sentence, etc. A process can be detachment from school, which can take years to develop because the attenuation of the bond with school usually has an incremental nature. A turning point can also be multiple events that alter the offending pattern. For example, youth who experience family disruption may develop behavioral problems, which cause teachers to reject them in school. The rejections may result in the youth's school detachment and subsequent dropping out. This series of events, in turn, can

cause an uptick of delinquent behavior. Turning points can be either negative or positive events in life, the latter of which is usually pursued out of an individual's agentic work. For example, marriage and parenthood can be a turning point for adults who used to have an unstructured life and excessive delinquent peer involvement. Those who want to 'settle down' may willingly step into marriage and be committed to family and a prosocial life.

When an event or a process in life serves as a turning point for individuals in their crime involvement, they will have a transition process in which they may gradually decrease the frequency and intensity of delinquent behaviors. For example, after securing a job, people have less unstructured time to kill or idle around. Limited free time also cuts back the socialization with delinquent peers. This transition process is a desistance process. If individuals keep gradually withdrawing from partying, idling with peers, and other deviant acts, over time their lives will experience a trajectory away from a crime career to a conventional life. Therefore, trajectories are changes in the long-term behavioral patterns; a life event can be a turning point for an individual to incur a transition of deviant behavior, and the transition of behaviors can result in an alternation of life direction—a trajectory.

The third proposition from the age-graded theory is that structural factors exert constraints on the cultivation of social bonds, thus affecting desistance from crime and delinquency (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Sampson and Laub (1993, 2003) argue that structural factors such as family structure and social-economic status influence people's potential to build pro-social bonds. For example, children from a traditional two-parent household may receive relatively more parental nurturing, monitoring and discipline. Also, with higher SES, parents can afford to send their children to magnet

schools and equip themselves with more scientific and constructive parenting styles. Therefore, the family structure and social-economic status can influence the likelihood that children foster strong bonds with school and family.

The Social Control Mechanism

Sampson and Laub's theory rests on a social control mechanism that illustrates the role of pro-social bonds in desistance. Individuals who are weakly bonded to conventional social institutions are free to deviate from social norms. When people have weak attachments to pro-social others such as spouses, parents and other family members, these relationships hold little commitment to achieve main-stream educational and career success. Thus, they may withdraw from the conventional activities and internalize deviant values, and become weakly bonded with the society (Hirschi, 1969; Frazier, 1976). In other words, society has limited ability to successfully regulate the behavior of these individuals. Then what causes crime? When social bonds are too weak to restrain people from deviating, humans, as inherently selfish and unrestrained (Hobbes, 1651) and naturally capable of committing a crime, will engage in unregulated behavior and focus on satisfying personal interests. In short, deviance results (Durkheim, 1951).

From the social control prism, the variation of offending over the life course is due to the variation of social bonds individuals have over the life span. When individuals have a family, a job, and are motivated to be support kids to finish school, they are at less risk of offending. On the contrary, with little involvement in conventional activities or social institutions, people are unlikely to accept social norms and thus more likely to break the law. Sampson and Laub, tracking Glueck's men across large segments of the lifespan, found substantial changes in offending in the

lives of these respondents. They found marriage and employment, two primary conventional social institutions, primarily explain the variation of offending among Glueck's men (Sampson & Laub, 1993).

In their theory, Sampson and Laub also address the incremental process of building social bonds. The emergence of the bonds to marriage and employment can be likened to an investment process in that the bonds do not arise intact and full-grown but develop over time like a pension plan funded by regular installments. As the investment in social bonds grows, the incentive for avoiding crime increases because more is at stake. For example, a person accumulates networks and social capital and is benefited from promotion as he or she sticks to a job. These achievements and benefits are incompatible with an offender's lifestyle as crime makes one forfeits all of them (Laub et al., 1998).

It should be noted that because Sampson and Laub's theory derives from the social control perspective, their theory is not compatible with the propositions from theories falling out of this perspective. For example, from a self-control perspective, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) maintain that "employment does not explain, or help to explain, the reduction in crime with age" (p. 139). From this perspective, the association between work and crime is spurious due to a common cause, such as impulsiveness or opportunity. Laub and Sampson do not agree with this argument. They emphasize that turning points such as marriage and employment are exogenous, triggering events that cannot be explained by one's attribute such as impulsiveness (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Just like people cannot fully control what chance or opportunity they will have when putting their resumes on the job market, the effect of employment cannot be reduced to a motivation to seek a position. In Sampson and

Laub's own words, "If these events were entirely the result of conscious calculations or enduring patterns of behavior, we could not argue for the independent role of social bonds in shaping behavior" (Laub et al., 1998, p.225). In a nutshell, people's entry into a conventional social institution is due to the structural force independent of their attributes such as high self-control or conscious calculations: "Many men made a commitment to go straight without even realizing it. Before they knew it, they had invested so much time in a marriage or a job that they did not want to risk losing their investment" (Laub & Sampson, 2003, p.278).

However, this is not to say that other theories do not predict a negative association between a social institution and crime. While Sampson and Laub contend marriage discourages offending by increasing the potential costs of crime (e.g., damaging a valued relationship) or by encouraging offenders to consider the potential disapproval of their partners (Laub & Sampson, 2003; Sampson & Laub, 1993), self-control theorists argue marriage fosters desistance by promoting improvements in self-control (Forrest & Hay, 2011). Social learning theorists claim that marriage reduces the exposure to deviant friends and increases the exposure to conventional others (Warr, 1998, p.192/196).

From Downplaying to Denying the Effect of Human Agency in Recidivism

As mentioned above, Sampson and Laub formulated their theory in two sequential books about their Glueck's men study, *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points through Life*, and *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives*. In their first book, they molded their theory as structural and there was no mention of human agency in their discussion (Farrall & Bowling, 1999; Giordano, 2017; Sampson & Laub, 1990). In their second book *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives*, they pointed

out that “The Glueck men are seen to be active players in their destiny, especially when their actions project a new sense of a redeemed self” (Laub & Sampson, 2003, p. 55).

However, their later works reflected their denial of the force of human agency in the desistance process. In numerous empirical tests of their theory, they did not include any variable representing respondents’ subjective intention toward reoffending. In their latest discussion on their theory that is published in 2016, they maintained that the desistance process “did not involve purposeful identity change” (Sampson & Laub, 2016, p.328), and that desistance took place by default (Sampson & Laub, 2016, p.328).

Their stance of human agency is at odds with a vast body of findings on desistance using offender samples at the current era (Giordano et al., 2002; Matsueda & Heimer 1997; Paternoster, 2017; Paternoster & Bushway, 2009; Paternoster et al., 2015; Silver & Ulmer, 2012). For example, Paternoster and Bushway’s (2009) found that the perceived sense of “feared self” associated with future failures provided the initial motivation to break from past delinquent lifestyles. Desistance from crime came about when individuals came to the decision that the costs of continued delinquent lifestyles were more than they were willing to bear (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009). Giordano and her colleagues discovered that the cognitive and emotional transformation was an integral element of desistance and concluded that internality was a driving force of change in crime engagement (Giordano et al., 2002).

Given this vast body of findings underscoring the force of human agency in the desistance process, it seems a variable representing people’s subjective intention to sever a criminal past should not be excluded in a model that predicts recidivism. In

addition, granted that family bonds and employment stability are catalysts to desistance as Sampson and Laub posited, to obtain robust results, these variables' effects should be assessed with the effect of human agency controlled in a model.

The Strength of Age-graded Theory of Informal Social Control in Contemporary U.S.

The validity of a theory hinges on the social context (Shaw & McKay, 1942; Wilson, 2010); thus, the effects of marriage and employment as Sampson and Laub touted should be understood within the social context of the Glueck's sample. Glueck's data were collected in the 1950s and 1960s, an era that is distinct from the current time. At that time, not marrying oneself out was deviant and untenable, and cohabitation was not as acceptable, either (McAdam, 1992; Wilhelm, 1998). Thus, having a spouse and children was used as a dominant standard for people to live conventional lives during the 1950s (Trost, 2010; Wilhelm, 1998). It is not surprising that Sampson and Laub found marriage a test stone to discern Glueck's boys' readiness to get life straight as prodigal sons.

However, in the past 30 years, the structure of adult family relationships in the United States has changed dramatically. Marriage rates have declined steadily (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Bumpass & Sweet, 1989; Smock, 2000) and there was a "divorce revolution" in the 1970s (Peterson, 1996; Weitzman, 1985). What's more, similar to the connotation of a single mother family that shifts with time, so does the social connotation of marriage. Researchers find marriage has experienced growing uncertainties and more and more people express it has become obsolete (Pew, 2010; [Span](#), 2018; Wilhelm, 1998). In 1960, two-thirds (68%) of all people in their twenties were married. In 2008, just 26% were (Pew, 2010). In 2010, nearly four-in-ten survey

respondents (39%) said that marriage was obsolete (Pew, 2010). Given the drastic change in people's understanding of marriage since the 1960s, having a spouse and children may no longer be the turning point as it was in the 1950s.

Second, the landscape of the labor market has changed dramatically since the 1960s. The Glueck's boys came of age in an era of American industrialization, in which well-paying industrial jobs were readily available (Bachman et al., 2016). However, unlike the respondents from the Glueck's data, former prisoners in the contemporary era face an uphill battle to survive financially against the backdrop of deindustrialization (O'Connell, 2003; Petersilia, 2005; Uggen, 2000; Watson et al., 2004). With long prison sentences, prisoners often lose their opportunity to gain work experience, and connections to potential employers or job networks are severed (Graffam, Shinkfield & Hardcastle, 2008; Henderson, 2001).

Will this change in the landscape of labor market, as a primary aspect of social context, affect the applicability of Laub and Sampson's statement that desistance was not necessarily a conscious or deliberate process (Sampson & Laub, 2003, p. 278–9)? It might be that due to the high availability of manufacturing jobs in the industrialization era, Sampson and Laub observed Glueck's men entered the conventional social institutions with little intention or purpose. As they admitted, the little role of human agency in desistance “best fits the desistance process found in our data” (Laub & Sampson, 2003, p. 278). They addressed the exogenous nature of employment and contended entering the workforce was not the result of one's conscious calculation or enduring patterns of behavior (Laub et al., 1998, p.225). Unfortunately, we are no longer in an era where individuals can secure a job without stretching too much effort; low skill and manufacturing jobs are in relatively short

demand. Former prisoners in the contemporary era, with limited education and work experience due to their troubled past, face a narrow scope of opportunities to find jobs that enable them to survive financially.

When the supply of jobs is relatively small given the number of people who are out there to secure the positions, a strong will and consistent effort to get life straight should have a role in explaining the odds of employment and desistance of former prisoners. Lots of offenders, due to the disadvantaged social context of their upbringing, get used to a life selling drugs, robbing drug dealers, and having a spontaneous rather than well-planned way of life. To navigate everyday life, people tend to do what other people in the same environment do. An offender mentality and lifestyle are all former prisoners have accustomed to. To say farewell to this identity, mentality and lifestyle, they need a powerful will; what's more, to put themselves in a job that needs continued commitment to the fixed work hours and mundane work needs an even stronger force of human agency. Without a strong intention to sever the criminal past, former prisoners may find themselves not ready for joining the workforce or parenting kids, or even they enter these conventional social institutions, they withdraw fairly quickly. That is probably why researchers observe a pattern: Former prisoners usually work just a small fraction of the time in their first few months after release, and the majority of them cannot hang in the job (Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009).

However, to recognize the role of human agency does suggest that structural forces (e.g., the availability of jobs or ideal marriage partners) is in the rear-view mirror. As the classic sociological theories enlighten (e.g., Bourdieu, 1987; Coleman 1990), human agency and external structure force are like flesh and bones, they not

only coexist but also are inseparable from each other. Purposive acts of individuals are constrained by extant social structures (Weber 1978). That is why in the examination of desistance in the current time, we need to emphasize the decreasing job opportunities for released offenders, the stigmatization of a criminal record, the advanced system of crime screening used by employers that were not used during the time of Glueck's men, and put equivalent emphasis on a strong will to sever the criminal past.

The distinctiveness of the contemporary social context regarding the labor market and people's understanding of marriage calls for a re-evaluation the crime-inhibitory effect of marriage and employment as well as a re-examination of the presumed minimal role of human agency. This stretch of research can help elaborate the age-graded theory of informal social control by incorporating the aspect of the era-dependent effect of the "hooks for change."

The Empirical Findings about the Family Bonds and Employment

Why empirical tests on the age-grade theory of informal social control mainly focus on the effects of family bonds and employment? In their 1993 book, *Crime in the Making*, Sampson and Laub were clear that quitting crime was due to participation in conventional social institutions, the most salient two of which were family and employment.

...changes that strengthen social bonds to society in adulthood will lead to less crime and deviance. Conversely, changes in adulthood that weaken social bonds will lead to more crime and deviance. This premise allows us to explain desistance from crime as well as late onset...our theoretical model rests on social ties to jobs and

family as the key inhibitors to adult crime and deviance. (Sampson & Laub, 1993, p21).

From their account, participation (or a loss of participation) in these two conventional social roles can turn previous offenders into non-offenders (desistance) and explain how previous non-offenders become offenders (adult onset).

Being aware of the change in the social context since the birth of the age-graded theory of informal social control, and the all-male, all-white characteristic of Clueck's sample, researchers have used more contemporary data to test the proposed effect of marriage and employment. However, extant research is equivocal. Next, I will illustrate the empirical status of family bonds and employment, respectively. The empirical test results reviewed here are the longitudinal studies on desistance, especially the tests on the age-graded theory of informal social control.

There are mixed results on the role of family bonds on desistance. A vast body of empirical tests illustrated the protective role of family in the reentry process (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Bersani & Doherty, 2013; Boman & Mowen, 2017; Canter, 1982; Sampson & Laub, 1990, 1993; Savolainen, 2009; Wright, Cullen, & Miller, 2001). Anywhere from 40% to 80% of newly released offenders relied on their families immediately after release (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Nelson, Deess, & Allen, 1999; Visher et al., 2004). Eighty-four percent of the former prisoners in Visher, Yahner, and LaVigne's (2010) study were living with family seven months out of prison, and 92% of them received cash assistance from their families. In a qualitative study of individuals returning in the Boston area, Western (2015) found that individuals who achieved a successful reintegration expressed that their families helped them to hold

onto conventional values, discourage from absconding from parole, and help them cultivate a stable daily routine after release.

However, there are also studies illustrating that many individuals face severe difficulty in reestablishing family ties during reentry, and that the frustration over attenuated family relationships becomes a source of strain and trigger for drinking and substance use (e.g., Lin & Visser, 2019; Travis, 2005). By using qualitative interviews, Breese and colleagues (2000) found that some respondents were treated like the “black sheep” of the family (p. 14) when they came home. For other respondents, their families had moved away from the area during their incarceration. After their reincarceration, they placed considerable blame on the lack of familial support for their post-release failure (Breese, Ra'el, & Grant, 2000).

The takeaway message from the empirical tests is that we should not reduce the cause of desistance to a simple label of “married” status and use a static identity such as “married” and “having children” to represent the force of family bonds, it is the quality of family bonds that matters. In one marriage, a husband may say “piss off” to the missus in response to entreaties to stay at home rather than going out with mates. In another marriage, a wife receives “yes dear” as a reply from her husband. In a marriage, a spouse may spend little time and energy supervising, monitoring, and correcting the partner’s wayward behavior and, even if he or she does do, the partner has few reasons to abandon behaviors that might compromise a relationship for which he or she has little regard (Grasmick & Bursik, 1990; Laub & Sampson, 2003). In another marriage, a spouse has a high and stable level of commitment, sexual fidelity, and constructive interactions with the partner.

The empirical test results are inconclusive as to whether employment is a hook to desistance (Graffam, Shinkfield & Hardcastle, 2008; Tripodi, Kim & Bender, 2010; Turner & Petersilia, 1996). Some tests found a crime-inhibitory effect of employment. For example, Tripodi and his colleagues used both the odds of new incarceration and the time before new incarceration as outcome variables, and found that although employment was not associated with the likelihood of reincarceration, it was associated with an increase in survival time till new incarceration. However, Shinkfield and Graffam's study complicated the picture of employment and recidivism. In their study on a group of Norwegian offenders, they observed that former prisoners usually worked just a small fraction of the time in their first few months after release, and that the majority of them lost their jobs thereafter (Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009).

Introducing Neighborhood Context in the Framework of Age-Graded Theory

Moving on from individual level factors to the macro-level factors of recidivism, I identify an inadequacy in Sampson and Laub's (1993) age-graded theory of informal social control. Their theory fails to take into consideration the meso-environment's (e.g., neighborhood) effect on the availability of positive turning points for individuals that are predicted to foster desistance from crime. It is also imperative to investigate the interplay of individual and neighborhood level factors in affecting one's change or continuity in crime. In this section, I will illustrate the ways neighborhood conditions can influence individuals' behavior in general and delinquency in particular.

To start off, the availability of a positive turning point that can sever a delinquent life path hinges on not only an individual's SES, but also his or her

neighborhood environment. A youth who resides in a neighborhood ridden with crime, violence and residential mobility may have difficulty developing strong engagement in school. This is because schools in this kind of neighborhood may have a bully, violence and insecurity issues. If going to school becomes the synonym of victimization and fear, one has less odds to build up strong engagement in school.

Second, some turning points may be available for some social groups but not others due to the places in which people reside. A criminal justice involved individual, with no savings or family support, who lives in a state without halfway homes for released offenders would become homeless after release; he has little opportunity to build up networks and bonds with pro-social neighbors because he does not even have a home or a neighborhood. In contrast, when released prisoners go back to neighborhoods conducive to desistance, they may have a more concrete probability of successful reentry. For another example, a neighborhood with adequate social services and institutions for teenage mothers may provide a teenage mother with a boost in life if she can utilize the networks to find daycare services which free her from all-day baby care thus providing time for her to advance education. However, for a place with no such social services and networks, a teenage mother will face a higher risk of financial insecurity, joblessness and delinquency because in order to take care of the baby by herself, she has to truncate her education and career plans (Elder, 1998; Sampson & Laub, 1997).

Third, not only salient macro protective factors against crime such as neighborhood networks and collective efficacy vary across neighborhoods, but also risk factors for crime. Certain features of a neighborhood can amplify the effect of an individual's risk factor for offending. For example, in a neighborhood ridden with

drug activities and liquor stores, criminal justice involved individuals who struggle with addiction can easily fall victim to the immediate environment compared to those who have addiction issues but reside in a neighborhood with little drug or alcohol issue.

One may argue that the neighborhood effects on one's crime should be reduced to the effects of one's individual level factors. Only by having a high SES can a family afford to live in a neighborhood with ample social service resources; people's earlier impulsive choices impact the later constraints that they encounter down the road of life. It is plausible to say that people who are impulsive commit crime early in life, and this results in their joblessness and dwelling in disorganized neighborhoods in adulthood. Because they frequently encounter neighbors' incivilities in these types of living environments, their impulsivity is easily triggered, and they are rearrested during an outbreak of their impulsivity.

However, this reductionist argument, though apparently plausible, is fatally flawed. The opportunities and constraints people encounter later in life cannot be attributed totally to their earlier choices. The family and neighborhood contexts are not totally determined by people's free will; they are shaped by multiple elements such as the economic structure of a place and a period, the expansion patterns of the city they live in, etc. (Bursik & Webb, 1982; Patillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 1997). For example, in a young city such as a college town or military-base town, neighborhoods are built after the fair housing laws. There are no old neighborhoods with poor-conditioned houses or serious resident racial segregation like the neighborhoods in old cities such as Chicago. In this young city, there may be less racial profiling in police patrol, as the neighborhoods in this kind of city are relatively racially integrated. Compared to a

black youth living in a low-income neighborhood in Chicago, another black youth living in a low-income neighborhood in this young city would be less likely to experience unjustified police stopping and frisking and police brutality and thus less likely to be irritated by and aggressive toward police.

Therefore, both macro-level forces and micro-level individual traits cast distinct constraints and hurdles on criminal-justice involved people regarding reentering the society. The macro-level factors include a city's industry structure, development history (Pfohl, 1985; Snodgrass, 1976), and criminal justice practice especially the disparity in policing across communities (Greene, 1999; Klinger, Rosenfeld, Isom & Deckard, 2016; Rosenfeld, Fornango & Rengifo, 2007). The micro-level factors include one's bonds with conventional social institutions (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Moffitt, 1993; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Smith & Thornberry, 1995). For released prisoners, a social group that face insurmountable hurdles when struggling to secure an entrance to the society and with little affordability to move out when their community is degraded, they are more vulnerable to the influence of community disadvantages. In the following section, I will provide the development and the core propositions of a prominent macro perspective in criminology—social disorganization.

Chapter 3

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT: COMMUNITY DISORGANIZATION AND CRIME

Earlier Developments of Social Disorganization Theory

Social disorganization theory posits that neighborhood structural processes, such as residential instability, racial heterogeneity, and economic disadvantage, influence neighborhood crime rates. Social disorganization theory's origin lies in Durkheim's concept that crime is normal when there is a breakdown of social controls; this breakdown of social controls is associated with rapid social change (Durkheim, 1893). During a rapid social change, there is attenuated effectiveness of rules and norms governing social behavior (Durkheim, 1893). In urban areas, due to racial and ethnic heterogeneity and population mobility, there are transitory relationships among residents (Shaw & McKay, 1942). A neighborhood with weak relationships and diversified values does not have adequate development of shared norms; it suffers from ineffective informal regulations of people's behaviors. The results are social disorganization and high crime rates (Shaw & McKay, 1942; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1920; Wirth, 1938).

Shaw and McKay's classic study on juvenile delinquency in urban areas in Chicago is recognized as the earliest theorization of social disorganization perspective to explain crime by neighborhood context. During the 1940s, Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (1942) found that rates of delinquency in Chicago varied across community contexts. They found that communities featured by poverty, racial/ethnic

heterogeneity and residential mobility experienced higher rates of crime and delinquency. Drawing on the Chicago School of Sociology, they sought to explain the epidemiology of delinquency by the characteristics of the social world in which individuals interacted and were socialized.

Their research was conducted against the backdrop of industrialization, migration and city growth during the first half of 20th century. Shaw and McKay relied on Ernest Burgess' (1925) concentric zone framework to capture the social factors from different communities and examined their effects on crime. According to Burgess (1925), the city consists of five different types of zones, arranged in concentric circles progressively farther away from the business center. Zone one is the central business center, where the main buildings, museums, and stores are located. This area serves as the center of the city's economic, cultural, and social life. According to the concentric zone theory, the rest of the city develops around this city center. Zone two, the zone in transition, surrounds the central business district and is characterized by being constantly invaded by the ever-growing industries and business, which results in a chaotic makeup where deteriorated residential units coexist with light manufacturing and business. Zone three is located beyond the zone in transition. This zone contains most of the industrial workers who are expelled by the expansion of zone one into zone two, and who are well off enough to move out of zone two—the zone in transition—but who need to remain close enough to the factories where they work. Zone four, which encircled zone three, is a residential area composed of high-class residential buildings and single-dwelling units. Farthest out, zone five comprises of the suburban areas and satellite cities where commuters live.

Because of the ongoing industrialization and city growth in Chicago during the first half of 20th century, these zones were constantly expanding and invading the next one, in a process of extension and succession (Burgess, 1925). Particularly, the expansion of the business district displaced residents into zone two, characterized by deteriorated housing and poor living conditions (Burgess, 1925; Snodgrass, 1976). This zone gained the name ‘zone in transition’ because inexpensive housing and closeness to factories attracted new waves of impoverished immigrant groups. The more recent immigrants displaced older immigrant groups that had achieved a more advantageous social and economic position and had moved out to better settlements in zones farther away from the business center. Thus, zone two remained inhabited by the most recent immigrants, usually unskilled workers with very limited resources and community ties. Dwellers in this zone were eager to move out to another zone as soon as they could afford to live in a better neighborhood. As a result, this zone was characterized by high transiency and density as well as ethnic heterogeneity and low socioeconomic status of its dwellers, many of whom lived in poverty. According to Burgess, because of these characteristics of zone two, this zone was reigned by social disorganization (Burgess, 1925).

Based on the concentric zone framework, Shaw and McKay undertook the task of mapping Chicago’s delinquency. They used official data on delinquency—arrests and probations—of the different periods between the beginning of 1900 and the 1930s. Their map revealed that delinquency was consistently concentrated in zone two—the zone in transition. Besides the characteristics of high mobility, heterogeneity, and poverty observed in neighborhoods located in this zone, other social ills—infant mortality, tuberculosis, mental disorder and truancy—were also concentrated there.

This finding held regardless of the type of delinquency measure that was used and was applicable to all of the time periods they analyzed.

Therefore, in Shaw and McKay's social disorganization theory, they attribute the variation of delinquency rates to the degree of community organization (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Delinquency occurs at higher rates in communities that are social-disorganized, whereas in organized communities, delinquency is less frequently observed. Two mechanisms are formulated in which the structural condition of poverty, high mobility and racial heterogeneity result in high crime rates: the breakdown of control and the transmission of criminal values (Shaw & McKay, 1942).

First, the structural conditions in the zone in transition make it difficult for the residents to properly socialize and control their children. In the case of neighborhood crimes in Chicago during the industrialization, new waves of European migrants faced significant challenges when fostering social control. They brought with them from their home countries the approaches and values to socialize and control their children that were situated in agrarian life. Their values and approaches oftentimes proved to be ineffective in solving the new challenges they faced arising in their lives embedded in industrialization (Shaw & McKay, 1942). The heterogeneity of cultural backgrounds that characterizes the communities in zone two also fractures social opinion and makes it harder for community members to achieve consensus or uniformity in terms of defining and finding solutions to common problems. Due to residential instability, the formal and informal rules within the community cannot be maintained over time. Because residents plan to move out to better areas shortly after they have secured a job and stable income, they have less incentive to focus on solving their current community problems and strengthen their ties with the community.

In their theory, Shaw and Mckay (1942) also contend that the structural characters of transitional zone facilitate the transmission of deviance culture and moral cynicism. Crowded homes in poor areas result in more time children spend outside as well as less supervision of children. This increases the deviant associations of individuals within that community (Stark, 1987). Youth are thus able to learn criminal traditions and obtain status by engaging in delinquent activities.

Kornhauser's Reformulation of Social Disorganization

Social disorganization theory, originally conceding both the roles deviant culture learning and the insufficient informal social controls that exist in a disorganized neighborhood, has experienced a significant reformulation by Kornhauser (1978) and Bursik (1988). Without access to survey data, Shaw and McKay inferred the existence, components, and consequences of disorganization from observed relationships between community structural characteristics and official records of delinquency. Their theory was criticized as tautological: the construct of social disorganization was confounded with the outcome it intended to explain (Bursik, 1988; Lander, 1954; Pfohl, 1985). How do we know a community lacks organization? Because it is disorganized.

Inevitably, Shaw and Mckay's (1942) theory experienced a significant revision. Kornhauser and Bursik addressed its issues regarding ontological assumptions and elaborated on the mechanisms that accounted for neighborhood crime rates (Bursik, 1988; Kornhauser, 1978). It is this revision that turned the theory into a pure control model and laid foundations of all the later control-tradition-based elaborations of social disorganization (e.g, Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997). In the book *Challenging Criminological Theory: The Legacy of Ruth Rosner*

Kornhauser, Cullen, Wilcox, Sampson and Dooley (2015) illustrated Kornhauser's theoretical contribution in resolving the issues from which Shaw and McKay's social disorganization model suffered.

First, Kornhauser (1978) argues that people in nature are not blank slates, and thus, the origins of the motivations to break the law need not to be explained. Humans, according to Kornhauser and other control theorists, have a particular kind of nature: They seek immediate gratification in the most expedient ways possible (Kornhauser, 1978). At times, the most expedient means of securing easy and immediate gratification are committing a crime—such as by using force or fraud to secure what one wants. By nature, humans have enough incentive and motivation to commit criminal acts. Therefore, crime motivation being ubiquitous, it follows that this factor does not differentiate between who is and is not a criminal. The invariant motivation cannot explain variation in criminal conduct. Arguing crime resulted from learning deviant values that generate criminal motivation is fatally flawed due to their erroneous view of human nature. Techniques, rationalizations and excuses for offending can be learned, but motivation and cravings cannot be learned.

Second, the key element that stops people from acting on their desires for easy, immediate gratification lies in socialization. Through socialization, individuals learn how to regulate their innate needs and wants, and thus to restrain themselves from committing a crime. It is the normative and moral regulation of society that socializes individuals to conform to conventional means and to satisfy and restrain their desires in accepted ways. People need to avoid the Hobbesian problem of order “all against all” (Parsons, 1937). When stable values are fostered to avoid the Hobbesian problem and these common norms exist on a large scale, they translate into regulations, laws

and morality (Parsons, 1937). People's egoistic goals and actions will be shaped by these stable values and norms, and to some extent obeying the law is for the society's sake as well as for individuals' sake (Camic, 1989). For example, people have the nature of following certain moral codes as well as punishing those who violate such codes. These codes likely include (1) not killing or physically harming innocent people; (2) not taking the property of innocent people by force or theft; and (3) treating others in an equitable manner (e.g. not cheating or engaging in deceptive practices in exchange relationships, not free-riding off the contributions of others, distributing earned resources on the basis of inputs, and giving needed resources to those dependent on you) (Agnew, 2013, p.6). People are inclined to conform to social norms even at some cost to their individual interests (Agnew, 2011). These natural justice codes are the foundations of a society that protect its people from clashing into the Hobbesian problem.

Third, though the cultivation of law-obeying behaviors lies in socialization, socialization is not always perfect, and that is what leads to crime. When individuals are not well socialized, fail to internalize or develop the capacity to follow the social norms via life processes such as parenting and education, they escape from social controls and follow their innate drives. Deviation and crime occur. In a nutshell, even though conventional social norms are widespread in society, not every individual internalizes the norms and controls at the same level or with the same strength. It is the attenuation of social norms rather than learning a deviant culture that explains crime. Needs and wants are diverse and not always culturally induced. Wanting more is part of human nature; people always experience stress due to something that they cannot have, even those who are rich. As a result, culture is not the cause of crime. Even gang

activities are not due to deviant culture but social norm attenuation—the gang members do not internalize the social norms to a sufficient level thus not abiding by social norms.

In the context of neighborhood crime, when institutions such as family and community counsel in a place are ineffective to socialize individuals into conventional norms, individuals are incapable of learning or promoting conventional social norms in this community (Kornhauser, 1978). The results are rule-breaking and lawless. This norm attenuation argument has received sizable empirical support in criminological studies (Bartusch, 1998; Erez, 1984; Ewick & Silbey, 1998; Warner, 2003). For example, Carr, Napolitano and Keating (2007) conducted a qualitative study to directly compare the validity of norm attenuation versus the subcultural-learning approach. They found that youth in high crime neighborhoods did not hold complete opposition to the legal system and values. Most of them saw a crucial role for police and law enforcement in controlling crime. Although young people who had experienced procedural injustices, such as being stopped and harassed for no reason, had a certain level of negative view toward police, these young people actually opted for increased formal social control to inhibit crime as a logical response to crime. The researchers concluded that neighborhood disorganization was due to attenuated faith in law and rules, not learning pro-crime values (Carr et al., 2007).

The Systemic Model of Social Disorganization

Assuming attenuated social control as the cause of crime, Kornhauser (1978) and Bursik (1988) formulated a theory to explain the effect of social disorganization and neighborhood crime—the systemic model. According to this model, values are transmitted through and embodied in various institutions including the church, school,

family and other community organizations (Kornhauser, 1978). A fragile, badly divided community with residential turnover cannot evoke shame in a person who conducts deviant behaviors. The community ceases to be an agency of social control. In other words, certain features of a community affect its ability to socialize residents with society's common values and to exert informal social control (Bursik, 1988). If a community has high percentages of short-term tenants as residents, there is less likelihood for residents to form friendship networks and become involved in community organizations, which weakens the influences of institutions such as community council, school, church, etc.

From the systemic model, community organization is conceptualized “as a complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal associational ties rooted in family life and ongoing socialization processes” (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974, p. 329). The systemic model rests on the expectation of an indirect relationship between social ties and crime that operates through informal control (Figure 2).

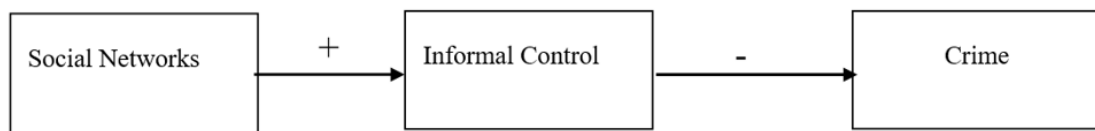


Figure 2 Casual Structure of the Systemic Model of Neighborhood Crime

There are three levels of social institutions that foster close social ties and resultant informal social control for a community. Private control could be parents' supervision on their children in the family. Parochial control could be supervision that

happens naturally within communities as people interact in normal day-to-day routines. Public control could be the networks developed between a neighborhood and outside agencies including those operated by the criminal justice and other governmental systems (Kornhauser, 1978; Bursik, 1988).

Therefore, social control is embedded in social networks. Structural characteristics such as poverty, population heterogeneity and instability positively contribute to social disorganization—weak networks and informal social control in private, parochial and public levels in a community (Bursik, 1999). By associating neighborhood organization with the strength and density of social ties, the systemic model differentiates between factors affecting neighborhood organization (structural conditions) from neighborhood organization itself (density of ties). Additionally, it is able to differentiate neighborhood disorganization—understood as the incapacity of neighborhood self-regulation—from its outcome—crime rates (Bursik, 1988; Bursik & Grasmick, 1993).

However, despite making important contributions to the social disorganization literature, problems with the systemic model soon became apparent. Some empirical studies revealed an intricate relationship between ties and social control (Bellair, 1997; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Pattillo, 1998; Sampson, 2002, 2012; Venkatesh, 1997; Warner & Rountree, 1997). For example, researchers found contradicting functions of organized gangs within communities (Pattillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 1997). At the parochial level, gangs had an important regulating role in communities and were embedded in the communal social life. Gangs became informal social control agents themselves and helped communities to fight disorder and provided resources to residents to strengthen local institutions (Pattillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 1997). On the

private level, gangs were tied to the community by kinship and friendship, undertaking the roles of siblings, cousins, and friends of the community members. If community bonds and networks inhibited crime as control tradition posits, the crime from this kind of neighborhood could not be explained by the systemic model.

Recognizing inconsistency in the findings on social ties and crime, some researchers posited that social ties and networks should not be conceptually equalized with informal social control (i.e., see Bellair 2000; Morenoff, Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997). Along this line of reasoning, Sampson and his colleagues introduced collective efficacy theory (Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997), one of the most popular social disorganization theories in contemporary time.

The Collective Efficacy Model of Social Disorganization

Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) formulated collective efficacy theory based on the tenet that neighbors may know and trust in each other and have close ties, but if no one is willing to question strangers or break up groups of juveniles hanging out on street corners, the neighborhood may still have high levels of crime. In their theory, social cohesion and close ties, hypothesized as the inhibitors of crime by the systemic model, should be conceptualized as a condition for collective efficacy (hereafter CE), defined as the neighbors' willingness to collectively promote community goals and intervene when discovering crime and incivilities. The concept of CE not only describes the social cohesion among neighbors but also their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good (Sampson, 2012). It is CE that explains the variation of crime across different neighborhoods; neighborhood structural

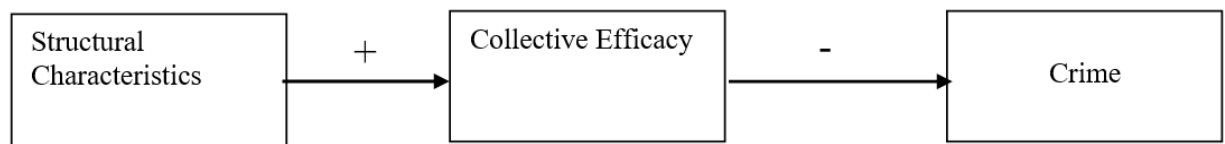
disadvantage undermines neighborhood safety by decreasing residents' collective efficacy (Morenoff, Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001) (Figure 5).

The concept of CE was discovered with fortuity. In a study inspired by social disorganization theory and using the PHDCN Community Survey Data, a data set specially designed to capture community organization features, Sampson and his colleagues examined community organizational features and crime rates. They operationalized two different constructs: informal social control and social cohesion. Informal social control was measured using five items asking for the likelihood of their neighbors' intervening in different scenarios: (1) children were skipping school, (2) children were graffiti-painting a local building, (3) children were disrespecting an adult, (4) a fight broke in front of their houses, and (5) a budget cut was threatening the closest fire station. A five-point Likert scale ranging from "very unlikely" to "very likely" was used to rate responses. Social cohesion was also measured using five items, which all used a five-point Likert scale to rate respondents' agreement with the following statements: (1) "people around here are willing to help their neighbors," (2) "This is a close-knit neighborhood," (3) "People in this neighborhood can be trusted," (4) "People in this neighborhood generally don't get along with each other," and (5) "People in this neighborhood do not share the same values." The last two items were reverse coded (Sampson et al., 1997, p.920).

In their study, these items were used to create social cohesion and informal social control values for each respondent. Neighborhood level measures of social cohesion and informal social control were constructed by taking the respective means of the two variables among respondents in the same community. Notably, these two constructs were originally intended to capture two distinct neighborhood properties

and thus were thought to be conceptually distinct. However, when the data were analyzed, Sampson and his colleagues found that the measures of informal social control and social cohesion were highly correlated at the neighborhood level, with a correlation coefficient above .80. Unquestionably, these two variables could not be included simultaneously in a model due to a multicollinearity issue. Accordingly, Sampson and his colleagues invented and coined the term “collective efficacy”, which was used in their model to represent both the informal social control and social cohesion (Sampson et al., 1997, p.920). Of course, Sampson and his colleagues did not perceive collective efficacy as a serendipitous finding or an ad hoc response to what the data showed; they contended that “Because we also expected that the wiliness to intervene on behalf of the neighborhood would be enhanced under conditions of mutual trust and cohesion, we combined the two scales into a summary measure labeled collective efficacy” (Sampson et al., 1997, p.920).

Figure 3 Causal Structure of the Collective Efficacy Model of Neighborhood Crime



Despite empirical support, CE has also received some criticism. One criticism points out that the relationships between structural factors such as poverty and CE are not yet conclusive. Is CE a mechanism that mediates the effect of neighborhood structural disadvantages on crime, or is it just an indicator of neighborhood structural disadvantage? If it is the former, it should be independent of the structural conditions

of a neighborhood. However, many studies have shown that collective efficacy is dependent on structural conditions. In Wickes's study, residents in wealthy neighborhoods had nothing collective in the way they solved neighborhood problems—they just made a phone call to the local council, whereas neighborhoods facing limited recourse and various problems became a locale breeding collective efficacy (Wickes, 2007).

Another criticism underscores the inclusive universal applicability of CE across different social contexts. Studies applying CE to neighborhood and crime in some Latin American countries (e.g., Brazil) failed to find empirical support for the proposed mechanism of CE (Villarreal & Silva, 2006). Researchers in these studies either found CE had no effect on crime or a positive effect on crime (Cerdá et al., 2012; Cerda & Morenoff, 2013). Obviously, there are heterogeneous results of CE across different countries and social contexts.

The Empirical Status of the Three Main Social Disorganization Models

Under the social disorganization framework, three theories—structural disadvantage, systemic model (Bursik, 1988; Kornhauser, 1978) and collective efficacy theory (Sampson et al., 1997)—have emerged and each of them has turned into an independent subfield in criminology. Generally, each of the theories has received a sizable number of empirical tests.

Empirical tests on neighborhood structural factors and crime have generally supported Shaw and McKay's model; structural factors such as poverty and population mobility have been found to be positively associated with neighborhood crime rates (Guest, Cover, Matsueda & Kubrin, 2006; Kubrin & Hipp, 2014; Kubrin, Squires, Graves & Ousey, 2011; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Sampson, 2012). In a meta-analysis

on social disorganization theory, Pratt and Cullen (2005) found that residential mobility, racial heterogeneity, and unsupervised local peer groups were consistent indicators of neighborhood crime across empirical studies, and that the mean effect sizes of the latter three were quite substantial (above 0.20). Furthermore, from this meta-analysis, two variables, the percent nonwhite and percent black, scored high on both strength and stability as neighborhood structural indicators of crime rates (Pratt & Cullen, 2005).

The empirical test results of the systemic model are mixed. The network measurements that have been found to exhibit proposed crime inhibitory effects are the size of local family and friendship networks (Kapis1976, 1978; Sampson & Groves 1989), organizational participation (Simcha-Faganand & Schwartz, 1986; Taylor, Gottfredson & Brower1984), and frequency of interaction among neighbors (Bellair, 1997). The majority of the empirical tests have focused on the role of dense ties in a community and the occurrence of crime. Several studies have found a direct inhibitory effect of social ties on neighborhood crime (e.g., Cullen & Pratt, 2003; Sampson & Groves, 1989). For example, Sampson and Groves (1989, p.779) found that neighborhoods with more “social ties” and greater “participation in organizations” experienced less crime. Bellair (1997, p.681) illustrated that neighborhoods with more “social interaction” (i.e., visiting with one’s neighbors) had lower levels of disorder. Warner and Rountree (1997) revealed an association between greater levels of neighboring activities and lower assault rates.

However, some studies add nuance to the systemic model—extensive friendship and ties in a community may actually undermine its crime control capacity (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Pattillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 1997). For example, qualitative

studies have found that social ties inhibited the informal intervention on delinquency when gang organizations had close ties with the local residents (Pattillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 1997). At the parochial level, gangs helped a community to fight disorders and provide residents with resources; at the private level, gangs were tied to the community by kinship and friendship, undertaking the roles of siblings, cousins and friends of the community members (Pattillo, 1998). In this type of community, the dense web of ties worked as protection for organized illegal activities (Pattillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 1997).

Collective efficacy theory has also received substantial empirical tests, which have reflected mixed results. Generally, in cross-sectional tests, CE was widely found to be negatively associated with crime at aggregates, especially violent crime (McDonald, 2004; Moreoff et al., 2001; Sampson et al., 1997; Sampson & Wikstrom, 2007; Wikstrom & Treiber, 2009). For example, using PHDCN data, researchers conducted several cross-sectional studies in which they discovered support for CE's effect on homicide (e.g., Moreoff et al., 2001; Sampson et al., 1997). However, longitudinal studies found a somewhat different picture (Cerdá et al., 2012; Kondo, Andreyeva, South, MacDonald & Branas, 2018; Steenbeek & Hipp, 2016). For example, using the Netherlands data, Steenbeek and Hipp (2016) found disorder in a neighborhood caused an increase in CE subsequently, and caused residential mobility because relatively affluent neighbors, upon experiencing disorder in their community, chose to move out. Their moving out increased residential mobility, which brought disorder to a new high level. Using data from Columbia, Cerdá, Moreoff and their colleagues revealed that collective efficacy was not only positively associated with the

poverty level but also positively associated with neighbors' perceived violence in their community.

Empirical Tests Integrating Neighborhood Context and Individual Risks of Recidivism

Despite many empirical tests that have applied social disorganization variables to levels of crime within aggregates, limited research attention has been paid to assess their effects under the frame of bridging neighborhood contextual and individual risk factors to examine reentry outcomes generally, or desistance from crime specifically. In fact, there have been only a handful of tests on neighborhood characteristics and former prisoners' recidivism, and all of them used structural context (e.g., poverty, income) as indicators.

Generally, the results are decidedly inconclusive. Some studies found significant effects of neighborhood level characteristics on individual recidivism (Hipp et al., 2010; Kubrin & Stewart, 2006) while others illustrated a null effect (Huebner, Varano, & Bynum, 2007; Oberwittler, 2004; Wehrman, 2010; Tillyer & Vose, 2014). For example, Hipp and his colleagues found that concentrated disadvantage increased individuals' risk of recidivism. Further, the characteristics of surrounding neighborhoods also appeared to influence the likelihood that one slipped back to a criminal path: Residential stability in surrounding neighborhoods reduced recidivism risk, while concentrated disadvantage increased it (Hipp et al., 2010). In contrast, other studies reveal that concentrated disadvantage exhibited a null effect on recidivism (Tillyer & Vose, 2014; Wehrman, 2010), so did residential mobility (Grunwald, Lockwood, Harris & Mennis, 2010; Tillyer & Vose, 2014) and racial segregation (Mears, Wang, Hay & Bales, 2008). Even more confusing, some studies captured a

crime-inhibitory effect of neighborhood disadvantage. For example, Mears and her colleagues found that neighborhood resource deprivation was negatively related to drug reconviction and had a null effect on property reconviction (Mears et al., 2008).

From a closer examination of the empirical tests that reported divergent effects of neighborhood characters on recidivism, several trends emerge. First, compared to metropolitan research settings such as Chicago (Morenoff, Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001) and California (Hipp et al., 2010), the proposed positive effect of neighborhood structural disadvantage on recidivism is less likely to be found in suburban or rural settings (Huebner, Varano & Bynum, 2007; Wang, Hay, Todak & Bales, 2014; Wehrman, 2010). For example, in a research site in a Midwest state, researchers found neighborhood structural disadvantage had no impact on individual former prisoners' recidivism (Huebner, Varano & Bynum, 2007).

In addition, the neighborhood contextual effect is contingent on the type of crime as the outcome (Grunwald et al., 2010). For example, Grunwald and her colleagues (2010) reported that concentrated disadvantage and social capital influenced drug offense recidivism, but not general offense (including violent and property offenses).

Finally, when more individual factors are controlled in the model, neighborhood contextual effects are less likely to surface. For example, Wang and her colleagues tested how neighborhood context affect recidivism when individuals' demographic factors, prior record, post-release parole supervision and delinquent behavior scale were controlled. They found that all the neighborhood factors—racial heterogeneity, residential mobility and resource supply—had no influence on individual recidivism. The authors also tested whether neighborhood factors interacted

with individual level factors; the majority of the interaction terms were not significant. Tillyer and Vose (2011) examined reoffenses of a group of former prisoners in Iowa. They controlled for respondents' demographic variables and LSI-R score, a recidivism risk score constructed based on one's criminal history, education, employment, finances, family and marital relationships, living accommodations, leisure and recreation activities, criminal and non-criminal companions, alcohol and drug problems, emotional and personal issues, and attitudes and orientations related to crime (Andrews & Bonta, 1995). Tillyer and Vose reported that, with the effects of these individual level variables adjusted, none of the neighborhood factors exhibited significant influence on respondents' recidivism (Tillyer & Vose, 2011).

Nonetheless, these studies demonstrated the potential of integrating neighborhood context and individual risks to explain recidivism (Hipp, Petersilia & Turner, 2010; Kubrin & Stewart, 2006). It is a pity that all of the past studies used neighborhood structural context (e.g., poverty and unemployment) to represent the neighborhood environment in examining individual recidivism. This stretch, derived from the early model of social disorganization perspective during the 1940s (Shaw & McKay, 1942), is at odds with the recent elaborations of social disorganization perspectives that underscore the roles of social cohesion, networks (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993) and collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997) in explaining crime. Another shortcoming of these integrative studies lies in their limitation to provide policy implications. Even some studies demonstrated that one would have low odds of recidivism if went back to a wealth-concentrated neighborhood, it is impossible for policymakers to formulate a policy that increases the wealth of all community members before releasing an individual back home.

In the frame of bridging neighborhood contextual and individual risk factors to examine reentry, the criminological community is still left in the dark about whether non-structural characteristics—community social cohesion, a core concept from the systemic and collective efficacy perspectives, are applicable in the context of individual reentry. This study attempts to illuminate the effects of neighborhood cohesion and crime opportunities on released prisoners' recidivism.

Chapter 4

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT: CRIME OPPORTUNITIES IN ROUTINE ACTIVITIES THEORY

The Main Propositions of Routine Activities Theory

Unlike social disorganization model (Shaw & McKay, 1942) in which particular social structures of a neighborhood (poverty, racial/ethnic heterogeneity, and residential instability) lead to a lack of social control and higher levels of crime, the routine activities perspective focuses on the opportunities of crime in a place (Cohen & Felson 1979; Felson 2002). Routine activities theory (Cohen & Felson 1979) is often used to understand how characteristics of place and situations shape the variation of crime opportunity as well as the occurrence of crime.

Routine activities theory seeks to explain the crime rates across different places by three factors: targets, offenders and guardians. In brief, crime occurs when there are an ideal target, a motivated offender and the absence of guardians. In other words, the co-occurrence of attractive targets and a lack of capable guardians create crime opportunities for motivated offenders. This prism can be used to examine the ‘hotspot’ places of crime in the city. The street belongs to everyone, hence is supervised by no one, except for an occasional policeman who does not know who belongs there anyway (Felson, 1987, p. 917). When a street experiences a large volume of transient pedestrians who do not know each other, the crowdedness makes people less able to guard their belongings. Additionally, the unfamiliarity among people coming and going decreases the probability that someone will be willing to keep an eye on other

people's belongings. Places like this have a high risk of crime. If a place, besides crowdedness and unfamiliarity among pedestrians, also has unstaffed police officers, unsupervised youth, and pedestrians who carry cash, this place will experience crime concentration (Cohen & Felson 1979; Felson 2002). For example, a street may experience a higher rate of robbery if there is attenuated police patrol and an open-door drug market in which transactions are done by cash.

Obviously, routine activities theory does not focus on explaining the motivation of crime; under the ontological assumption that human beings in nature are hedonistic and self-centered thus have crime motivation, routine activities theory focuses on the activities and situational context in a place that put would-be targets at the risk for crime (Smith, Frazee & Davison 2000; Wilcox, Land & Hunt 2003). This cannot be expressed more clearly in Cohen and Felson's article in which they formulated routine activities theory: "Unlike many criminological inquiries, we do not examine why individuals or groups are inclined criminally, but rather we take criminal inclination as given and examine the manner in which the spatial-temporal organization of social activities helps people to translate their criminal inclinations into action" (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p.589). In their later works, particularly those of Felson (e.g., Felson & Boba, 2010; Felson & Cohen, 1980), they veered away from their initially formulated term "motivated offender" (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p. 591) and used "offender" instead. What they truly considered relevant was not the disposition or motivation to commit a crime but rather the physical factors that made it possible for a person to be involved in crime (Felson, 1995).

The Empirical Status of Routine Activities Theory

Empirical tests of this theory have generally provided support for the proposed cause of crime, targets and offenders elements on crime, especially when the test was conducted at the macro-level with the observation unit as neighborhood or city (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson & Cohen, 1980). For example, Stahura and Sloan used the 1972 and 1980 crime data from 676 American suburbs and found support for this theory. They measured criminal motivation by percent poor, percent unemployed, percent black and percent youth. Also, they took employment concentration and the percentage of multiple housing as indicators of crime opportunities and represented levels of capable guardians by police employment and expenditure. Their findings indicated that criminal motivation and opportunities were positively while capable guardians were negatively associated with both violence and property crime rates (Stahura & Sloan, 1988). In another study, attempting to identify the factors associated with burglary incidences in England and Wales, the United States, and the Netherlands, Tseloni and his colleagues found that the two-parent household structure and the presence of security measures inhibited burglary victimization (Tseloni, Wittebrood, Farrell & Pease, 2004).

The results from the micro-level analysis on routine activities theory, however, have reflected a mixed picture. Some studies yielded support for the theory (e.g., Osgood, Wilson, O'malley, Bachman & Johnston, 1996; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003). For example, examining how the absence of authority figures and unstructured time affected youth delinquency, Osgood and his colleagues found poor parental monitoring and unstructured time both bred youth delinquency, and these factors from routine activities perspective exhibited their effects on delinquency independent of social bonds and delinquent peer involvement (Osgood et al., 1996). However, there

were also tests results that countered the propositions of the theory (Kennedy & Baron, 1993; Miethe, Stafford & Long, 1987; Schreck & Fisher, 2004). For example, using data from the U.S. National Crime Survey, Miethe and his colleagues (1987) examined respondents' lifestyles based on their activities both in and away from home. They found that routine activities theory only explained property but not violent crime victimization (Miethe, Stafford & Long, 1987). They speculated that unlike property crime, from which the offender might materially benefit, violent crime often involved interpersonal conflict or disagreement thus defying the assumption of routine activities theory that criminals were rationally motivated and able to calculate the risks of their crime (Miethe et al., 1987).

The Guardianship Against Crime in the Context of Reentry: Parole Practice

The consideration of guardianship against crime and delinquency should be contextualized. For juvenile delinquency, guardianship can well be the supervision of parents. In the context of individuals' reentry, one major source of the guardianship comes from parole supervision. About 80% of released prisoners will be put under parole supervision or other forms of community supervision, which lasts an average of about two years in the U.S. (Hughes, Wilson, & Beck, 2001; Petersilia, 2003). To apply the mechanism of routine activities theory in the context of reentry, the quality of parole supervision and practice should be a consequential source of guardianship to prevent released prisoners from recidivism. Whether the liberty of an individual under supervision is revoked can often depend upon which parole officer is supervising the case. There have been many instances in which "Offender A" commits an infraction and has formal action taken against him or her, while "Offender B" commits the same infraction and receives no formal action. Instead, "Offender B" receives a warning

when the parole officer, exercising discretion, believes a warning to be a better intervention (Jones & Kerbs, 2007, p. 10).

However, the disparity in parole practice may not only come from officers' divergent attitudinal outlooks. Community context is a core concept in our understanding of disparate treatments individuals receive when they have contact with the criminal justice system. Research illustrates that criminal justice actors' focal concerns explain the variations in policing, prosecution, and sentencing (Albonetti, 1991; Spohn & Cederblom, 1991; Steffensmeier, 1980; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2000, 2001). The focal concerns perspective begins with the assumption that criminal justice actors constantly make sanctioning decisions; meanwhile, they always need to secure efficiency in the large institutional environment even when they have limited knowledge of the offenders from the cases they are processing (Dias & Vaughn, 2006; Ulmer & Johnson, 2004). For example, judges, facing uncertainty from the limited information of offenders, use important cognitive signposts to make decisions in order to maximally decrease the likelihood of recidivism. Their sentencing decisions reflect their perceptions of 1) the offender's perceived threat to public safety, 2) the offender's blameworthiness, and 3) practical constraints of the court bureaucracy (Johnson, Ulmer, & Kramer, 2008; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998). These perceptions that guide judges to make sentencing decisions can reflect their stereotypes of certain individuals and communities. This is captured by their patterned responses to some types of criminal cases (Cho & Tasca, 2018; Spohn & Cederblom, 1991; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2001; Stacey & Spohn, 2006). For example, focusing on court decisions in communities that are more politically conservative, Helms and Jacobs (2002) find offenders who are unemployed, male, and black are perceived to

pose a higher threat to the local communities; hence, offenders with these characteristics received longer sentences in court.

Compared to a large body of literature on the location-sensitivity of policing (Bass, 2001; Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006; Klinger, Rosenfeld, & Deckard, 2016; Smith, 1986), less attention has been paid to examine whether parole practice (e.g., parole revocation) is sensitive to neighborhood environment (for an exception, see Lin, Grattet, & Petersilia, 2010). Although focal concern theory has been primarily applied to the practice of judges and prosecutors, it is also applicable to parole practices.

Parole officers (hereafter POs), like other criminal justice actors, are sensitive to local politics and culture. As correction officers, they are well-informed about the condition of each community they serve; thus, they can differentiate local communities ridden by disorder from those that are not. Similar to police, prosecutors, and judges, parole officers aim to decrease the risk that a released prisoner poses to local communities. There are uncertainties in a parolee's likelihood of success; driven by their focal concerns, parole officers may rely on their pre-conceptualization of individuals and community with certain characteristics to make supervision decisions (Huebner & Bynum, 2006; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2006; Ulmer & Bradley, 2006; Ulmer & Johnson, 2004). If parole officers perceive parolees from disordered neighborhoods as more likely to reengage in crime, they may be more punitive toward this parolee group and impose tighter supervision. In contrast, in a community characterized by cohesion and networks, the social distance between POs and parolees may be shortened by the ties. In this type of community, POs may be more likely to demonstrate a work orientation that is characterized by support.

When offenders perceive positive relationships with their parole officers, they report feeling personal loyalty and accountability toward them, which bodes well for future client outcomes (Chamberlain, Griecius, Wallace, Borjas, & Ware, 2018). Within the context of a perceived positive relationship, a parolee might be more willing to confide in an officer and communicate treatment and service needs (Robinson, 2005). Empirical studies on parolee-parole officer relationship and reentry outcomes demonstrated that the support provided by parole officers was positively associated with higher rates of parolees' compliance (Blasko et al., 2015; Ireland & Berg, 2008; Vidal, Oudekerk, Reppucci, & Woolard, 2015), lower rates of drug use (Blasko et al., 2015) and reoffending (Ireland & Berg, 2008). For example, one study found that juvenile offenders who perceived positive relationships with their parole officers had lower rates of reoffending, and this protective effect was strongest for youths lacking parental support. However, few reentry studies have explored whether parole practice is sensitive to the neighborhood context in which parolees reside (Vidal et al., 2015).

Another question relevant to the interplay of neighborhood and parole practice is parolees' receptivity to POs' advice and instructions. From an interactionist approach (Albonetti, 1991; Becker, 1963; Sudnow, 1965), residents from divergent communities may have disparate levels of confidence in criminal justice practitioners. Offenders who reside in disordered neighborhoods, experiencing or witnessing the harsh treatment community members receive from criminal justice practitioners, may hold less confidence in parole officers. This, in turn, undermines the efficacy of parole officers' support and supervision during their reentry. In contrast, a cohesive

community has more capacity to foster better relationships between criminal justice authorities and residents. Compared to residents from disordered neighborhoods, residents from cohesive communities are less likely to be exposed to police brutality or other forms of discriminative treatments from law enforcement (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011; Nix, Wolfe, Rojek, & Kaminski, 2015; Kirk & Matsuda, 2011). Parolees from this kind of community are likely to hold less resistance to POs; as a result, they may be more receptive to the advice and instructions from POs. This, in turn, strengthens the positive effect of PO support and supervision on their reentry outcomes.

While the literature above has added a great deal to what we know, most research examined neighborhood context and parole practice in reentry in isolation; few studies have tested these two factors simultaneously and allow them to interact. This study fills the literature gaps by analyzing data from *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*, a multistate, a longitudinal study that was conducted by the Urban Institute from 2002 to 2005 (Visher, La Vigne, & Castro, 2003). The data were collected against the background of decarceration when communities saw large numbers of prisoners came back home. One advantage of this reentry data set is that it is one of just a few data sets that captured released prisoners' interactions with parole officers as well as their perceived neighborhood conditions.

External Control v. Internal Control

One may argue that crime opportunities and weak informal social control are actually the same things, though they are put into two distinct camps, namely, social disorganization and routine activities theories. The presence of physical incivilities and truant juveniles, widely recognized as signs of community disorganization and

poor informal social control, can be also conceptualized as a sign of inadequate guardians and motivated offenders. For example, in a disorganized community, neighbors don't keep an eye on others' property on the street; this could be perceived as weak guardians.

However, I caution against this tempting argument. Poor informal social control in a community should not be the synonym of a rich pool of crime opportunities. Crime should be explained by both people's innate control as well as external control—guardian's supervision and monitoring. People's internal control can be driven by bonds with family, friends and neighbors, because people who are emotionally attached to their important others are less likely to engage in deviant behavior so as not to disappoint the people they cherish or respect (Hart & Mueller, 2013; Hay, 2001; Hirschi, 1969). In the context of crime in a neighborhood, if residents respect neighbors and care for the community, they refrain from crime so as not to be shamed or blamed by the neighbors.

In contrast, direct/instrumental monitoring and supervision is independent of people's social bond-based internal control (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hagan, 1989; Wells & Rankin, 1988). In the context of crime in a neighborhood, a resident who thinks highly of the community's order and neighbors' respect will not commit a crime; this is not because there are surveillance cameras. Capable guardians, a form of direct and instrumental monitoring, inhibit crime even when offenders have little bonds to hold them in conformity because the formal sanctions deter offenders from committing a crime. Of course, internal control and external control are not completely independent of each other. The installation of surveillance cameras in a neighborhood could be a result of the collective efforts by the residents, and residents

may feel safer and be more active in participating community organizations after the installation of surveillance cameras. Therefore, direct/instrumental supervision can to some extent, affect and be affected by the informal social control of a community, but it should not replace or be equated with informal social control. Offending, as a social behavior, happens due to both reasons falling into internal (e.g., bonding with family) and external control (e.g., police patrol).

Control theorists, regardless of the micro or macro level, contend that it is the social bonds people have that protect them from the risk of crime. This argument has been inducted from a wide array of research work, including youth surveys (e.g., Hirschi, 1969) and interviews conducted to former prisoners (e.g., Sampson & Laub, 1993). However, it is still open to question whether the reflections from teenagers or mid-aged delinquent individuals can be representative of the whole population. Is a relationship with someone the key answer to the abstinence from crime? From the standpoints of Sampson and Laub, it is. In their pioneer study on Glueck's boys, they discovered that their respondents who had close relationships with family veered away from a deviant lifestyle.

However, in the real world, lots of people do not have close ties with family and friends; staying relatively reclusive and solitary, they still turn out to be law-abiding citizens throughout life. Humans, as adaptive creatures, can learn to stay with their own thoughts as well as obeying the law even without connected too much with other people. Therefore, counting the relationships with other people as an unfailing armor against or cure-all remedy to crime issue has its limitations. To broaden our understanding of crime, the rational choice framework can be considered a potential prism (Nagin & Paternoster, 1993; Loughran, Paternoster, Chalfin & Wilson, 2016).

It holds that crime is a rational choice and that the cost of crime can come in the forms of guardian's supervision, formal sanction, as well as the breakup of family relationships and neighbor's shaming. It can well accommodate the postulations from both the perspectives of internal control and direct supervision.

Chapter 5

THEORETICAL INTEGRATION

The Rules of Theoretical Integration

In the past three decades, the scholarly literature on criminological theory has shifted increasing interest to integrated theories (Antonaccio, Tittle, Brauer & Islam, 2015; Colvin, Cullen & Vander Ven, 2002; Messner, Krohn & Liska, 1989; Pratt & Godsey, 2003; Rorie, 2015; Tittle 1995, 2004; Wikström et al., 2012). As Anderson and Dyson explained, “The idea of theoretical integration appears to be a logical stage in the evolution of theoretical development” (Anderson & Dyson, 2002, p. 244). Thornberry defined criminological theoretical integration as “the act of combining two or more sets of logically interrelated propositions into one larger set of interrelated propositions, in order to provide a more comprehensive explanation of a particular phenomenon” (Thornberry, 1989, p. 52). From the schema of Tittle, the approach of integrating theories of crime is “to combine, synthesize, or integrate one or more existing theories, or theory fragments, into more comprehensive or adequate formulations” (Tittle, 1995, p. 89).

How are theories actually integrated? Criminologists have formulated different approaches to integrate theories of crime (e.g., Hirschi, 1979; Tittle, 1995). Here I will illustrate Hirschi’s (1979) schema of integration, one of the most cited schemas to conduct theoretical integration, under which I have developed the integrative framework of contextual and individual risk factors to explain recidivism. In Hirschi’s

schema, there are four approaches to conduct theoretical integration: end-to-end, side-by-side, up-and-down and cross-level.

The end-to-end integration is also referred to as sequential integration (Dodson, 2001; Liska, Krohn, & Messner, 1989; Paternoster & Bachman, 2001). In this method, the dependent variable of one theory becomes the independent variable of another (Barak, 1998; Dodson, 2001; Hirschi, 1979; Liska et al., 1989; Paternoster & Bachman, 2001). This form of integration is concerned with the causal order, meaning the variable in the first theory comes before the variables of the second theory (Bernard & Snipes, 1996). Theory one comes first and affects theory two, which causes or affects criminal behavior. According to Brown and his colleagues (2001), this type of theoretical integration is the most common approach. With the advancement in statistical analytical approaches, the direct and indirect causes of a dependent variable can be detected using structural equation modeling in which researchers can fit longitudinal panel data to a cross-lagged model to discover both direct and indirect causal relationships between the exogenous and endogenous variables (Brown, Kar & Keller, 2001).

The second approach is the side-by-side approach, also known as horizontal integration (Dodson, 2001). “One theory is assumed to explain one component, and one or more other theories explain other components. The integrated theory is the sum of different components” (Paternoster & Bachman, 2001, p. 307). Hirschi (1979, p. 35) pointed out that this form of integration “leaves each sub-theory free to define delinquency in its own terms.” This is nice as, “Everyone wants to defend their own theories to their death...” (Bernard & Snipes, 1996, p. 305). This form of integration may allow individual theories to stay in their pre-integrated form.

The third approach is up-and-down theoretical integration, also known as deductive integration. This form of integration raises the level of abstraction (Bernard & Snipes, 1996; Hirschi, 1979). Put another way, up-and-down integration "...is accomplished by identifying a level of abstraction or generality that will incorporate some of the conceptualization of the constituent theories" (Liska et al., 1989, p. 10). Up-and-down integration appears to be the least common approach to theoretical integration (Paternoster & Bachman, 2001).

The last approach is the cross-level theoretical integration. Cross-level integration is very complex; it attempts to combine macro and micro theories (Dodson, 2001; Liska et al., 1989). The goal of this type of integration is to increase the explanatory power of any single theory (Dodson, 2001). By integrating macro and micro theories, this approach allows researchers to use individual and social factors simultaneously to explain crime and delinquency. Insofar as the causes of crime are complex, the integration of individual and macro-level theories may produce an effective tool for the explanation of criminal behavior.

Integrating Social Disorganization, Routine Activities, and the Age-Graded Informal Social Control Perspectives

From a methodological standpoint, the feasibility of integrating these three theories can be justified for three reasons. First, these theories share the same ontological and epistemological positions (Anderson & Dyson, 2002; Berger & Zelditch, 1993). Age-graded informal social control, social disorganization, and routine activities theories all derive from the control tradition. They are based on the ontological assumption that humans have a hedonistic nature and rationally weigh the cost and benefit of crime. Social disorganization theory highlights that weak social

control relaxes individuals from the regulation of norms, thus resulting in crime (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Kornhauser, 1982). Routine activities theory contends that crime motivation is a given and that it is the crime opportunity that explains the variation of crime rates (Cohen & Felson, 1989). Age-graded informal social control theory proffers that people refrain from crime not because of their lack of motivation, but because of conventional social bonds and their high stakes in conformity (Sampson & Laub, 1993).

Additionally, these theories all conceptualize the deterrence of crime as a variable rather than a constant across people. From the social disorganization framework, networks with and relationships with community members can be conceptualized as the cost of crime; individuals who have close ties with neighbors are reluctant to break norms and rules while those with little ties have a higher risk to offend. From the routine activities theoretical prism, soft deterrence such as parents' supervision or street lights installed in a dark alley can explain the variation of delinquency across people; those under proper parents' supervision have a lower risk of delinquency when other factors are held constant. From the angle of age-graded informal social control, a truncated education, school dropout, and the loss of a job can all be conceptualized as costs of crime that discourages individuals who desire an advanced education and a promising career from committing a crime.

Third, the paradigms of side-by-side and cross-level integrating approaches can be used to integrate these three theories (Hirschi, 1979; Tittle, 1995). Routine activities theory and social disorganization theory, as two macro level theories addressing the social control and crime opportunity in a geographical area, respectively, can be integrated by a side-by-side approach (Bernard & Snipes, 1996;

Paternoster & Bachman, 2001). Then by the cross-level approach (Dodson, 2001; Liska et al., 1989), the macro factors formulated from the side-by-side approach can be integrated with the individual level factors from the age-graded theory of informal social control. This integration will allow the three perspectives to shed complementary insights on each other to explain desistance in the current study.

From a substantive perspective, the three theories also are compatible. First, the key concepts and propositions of social disorganization theory are compatible with those of routine activities theory. Disorganized neighborhoods have more crime opportunities. When neighbors have no willingness to keep an eye on the property of others or watch other residents' children on the street, this community has weak informal social control. Crime results. From the prism of routine activities theory, residents' unwillingness to keep an eye on the incivilities and unsupervised youth on the street becomes a proxy of inadequate guardians of this place. Crime results due to the poor capacity of guardians.

At the same time, a crime opportunity element in a place can, in turn, affect the variation of informal social control. Take alcohol outlet density, a neighborhood level characteristic, for example. People who go out to buy alcohol may leave their youth at home unsupervised. This poor social control, in turn, can increase the rates of crime and youth delinquency in that area. At the same time, there is a more nuanced path in which the alcohol outlet density affects informal social control. A place with a high volume of liquor stores is often accompanied by a high level of alcohol consumption by its residents. When people are under the influence of alcohol, they have a higher risk of engaging in quarreling, physical fights, domestic violence, and child maltreatment. Quarreling and other incivilities between neighbors directly hamper

neighbors' networks in a community. An increase in domestic violence and child maltreatment may further deteriorate the social organization of a neighborhood as other residents are discouraged from developing ties with the families ridden with these issues. When a community is featured with fractured networks and attenuated relationships, there is less likelihood for neighbors to work collectively to curtail alcohol retailing.

Second, from the age-graded theory of informal social control, individual-level costs of crime can be the loss of the primary social bonds. However, this does not necessarily mean the role of guardians sheds no light on the prediction of crime. Only after being caught will people face the expulsion from school and/or loss of a job. Therefore, when delinquents realize that there are inadequate guardians, and therefore little probability of being caught in a neighborhood, they are less likely to fear sanctions that may result in the loss of educational or employment opportunities. Therefore, the macro-level elements from social disorganization and routine activities theories can be connected to the micro-level variables from individuals' stakes in conformity to jointly explain a person's offending patterns.

In prior studies, there have been a handful of initiatives to integrate social disorganization and routine activities theories, which have resulted in promising findings (Miethe & Meier 1990; Rice & Smith, 2002; Weisburd, Groff & Yang, 2012). For example, Rice and Smith (2002) combined the predictors from routine activities and social disorganization theories and found that the combined factors explained more variation in auto theft incidents at the block level in a mid-sized southeastern U.S. city. In a recent book, Weisburd, Groff, and Yang (2012) built upon these studies not only to refine and strengthen the previous observations but to propose an explanation

for the observed crime concentrations, by integrating the concepts from social disorganization and opportunity theories of crime. These precedents of integrative studies provide support to my proposition of integrating these three theories to better explain justice-involved individuals' recidivism during reentry.

Chapter 6

RESEARCH METHOD OVERVIEW, DATA, AND MEASUREMENTS

Research Design

Given that the individual attributes—attitudes, family bonds—only provide part of the story of recidivism, this study enriches our standing of reentry by addressing the role of community conditions to which released prisoners return (Currie, 1998; Gottfredson & Taylor, 1985; Kubrin & Stewart, 2006). Specifically, this study is one of the first endeavors to test the influences of social cohesion and disorder in a community on former prisoners' recidivism.

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses flow from my theoretical model. The central questions explored in this work focus on how the context of the community and the individual risk influence reentry.

Detailed hypotheses include:

H1: Released prisoners' likelihood to experience financial difficulty is positively associated with neighborhood disorder while negatively associated with neighborhood cohesion.

H2: Released prisoners are more likely to have a stronger determination to desist when they reside in cohesive neighborhoods while they have weaker determinations when they live in disordered communities.

H3: Respondents will receive more PO support in more cohesive neighborhoods and less support in disordered neighborhoods.

H4: Respondents who have stronger determination to sever the criminal past will have lower odds of recidivism.

H5: Net of individual risk effects, respondents who dwell in cohesive communities will have lower odds of recidivism while they will have higher odds to reoffend when living in disordered neighborhoods.

H6: PO support has a more pronounced protective effect against recidivism when respondents reside in more cohesive and better ordered neighborhoods.

Target Population and Sample

This research revolves around the recidivism of released prisoners. Specifically, it disentangles the influences from neighborhood conditions and individual risk factors. Given the dearth of data documenting the experiences of former prisoners' returning to their homes and communities, in 2001 the Urban Institute in Washington, DC launched *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*, a multistate, longitudinal study designed to explore the process of prisoner reentry, the challenges that returning prisoners and their families face, and the pathways to successful reintegration (see e.g., Visher et al., 2003). From 2002 to 2005, the study identified prisoners serving at least one year in state prisons of Ohio, Illinois and Texas who returned to Cleveland, Chicago and Houston, respectively. Potential respondents were identified either through compulsory prerelease programs where prisoners were already convened (Illinois and Texas) or from lists of individuals who were within 60 days of release (Ohio). The Ohio and Illinois cohorts consisted of male respondents while the Texas cohort was a mixed-gender sample. A member of the

research team provided an overview of the study and details of informed consent to assembled groups of potential respondents. Individuals who agreed to participate (more than 80%) were given consent forms and asked to complete a self-administered survey. The samples of prisoners in each state were generally representative of all the prisoners being released to the study areas in the previous year in terms of race, sentence length, and time served.

After each individual's release, experienced interviewers conducted three personal interviews within 15 months. For respondents in Illinois and Ohio, two post-release interviews were administered while for their counterparts in Texas, three post-release interviews were conducted. Respondents were paid US\$25 for each interview. Those who had returned to prison due to recidivism received the interview in prison. The current analyses utilize the data from both the pre-release interview (hereafter T1 interview) and two post-release interviews (hereafter T2 and T3 interview, respectively). T1 interview contained information about respondents' demographic characteristics and prior records (Table 1). T2 interview was conducted approximately 2-3 months after release, and T3 interview was conducted 12-15 months after release (Table 1). T2 interview featured with questions pertaining to a wide variety of prisoners' reentry experiences such as employment, relationships with family members, substance use, and mental health issues. T3 interview tapped into the neighborhood conditions of the respondents. Respondents' reincarceration data were drawn from official data provided by the local department of justice.

Given that only the Texas sample contained a relatively small number of female offenders, and that including these female respondents in the analysis might bring biased results due to the unbalanced portion of male and female respondents, the

sample used in this study consisted of male respondents from the three states who were under parole supervision after release (N = 549).

Measurements in the Analysis

Dependent Variables

T3 recidivism. Recidivism was captured by the occurrence of new incarceration after release, measured through official records at one year after release. It was a binary variable; respondents who recidivated had a value of one for this variable while those did not recidivate had a value of zero.

T3 determination to desist. This measure of reentry success was assessed with three questions assessing their self-reported likelihood to reoffend. The first question asked, “If you thought you could do it without getting caught, how likely you would commit a crime in the next six months?” The responses were on a Likert-type scale ranging from (1) very likely to (4) very unlikely. The second question asked, “how easy or hard it has been for you to not commit crimes?” and the third question asked, “how easy or hard it has been for you to stay out of prison?” The responses for these two questions were on a Likert-type scale ranging from (1) very hard to (4) very easy. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) verified the unidimensionality of the three items (Appendix A). There was only one factor with an eigenvalue larger than one and all three items loaded relatively strongly onto this factor. Standardized factor scores were used to construct the value of T3 determination to desist. While this indicator is placed here in the dependent variable section, it is also used as an independent variable in some models to predict recidivism.

Measurements of Independent Variables

Individual Level Predictors

T2 post-release family bond. The variable of family bonds was adaptively created from the scale for family relationships developed by the MOS social support survey (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991). It was assessed with five questions asking the degree that respondents felt close to family, wanted family involved in their lives, had someone in the family to talk to, to understand their problems, and to love them. Answers ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree. CFA results confirm the unidimensionality of the items and all items loaded relatively strongly onto the composite of family bonds (Appendix A). Standardized factor scores were used to create the value of this composite.

T2 post-release financial difficulty. This variable was assessed with three questions asking the respondents how hard it was to make enough money to support themselves, find and keep a job, and pay off debts. The answers ranged from (1) very easy to (4) very hard. CFA verified the unidimensionality of the items and standardized factor scores were used to create financial difficulty (Appendix A).

PO support. The parole officers' support measure developed by the Urban Institute (Yahner, Visher, & Solomon, 2008) was used to construct PO support. It was based on seven items asking about respondents' perception of PO support: (1) parole agent was helpful with his transition, (2) parole agent seemed trustworthy, (3) parole agent gave him correct information, (4) parole agent acted too busy to help him, (5) parole agent treated him with respect, (6) parole agent acted professionally, and (7) parole agent didn't listen to him. The answers ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree. The fourth and seventh questions were recoded so that a higher score

indicated a higher level of PO support. CFA results confirmed the unidimensionality of the items and all items loaded relatively strongly onto the composite of PO support (Appendix A). Standardized factor scores were used to create the value of this composite.

Neighborhood Contextual Predictors

T3 neighborhood cohesion. I used the construct of neighborhood cohesion developed by the Urban Institute (Lynch & Sabol, 2001). This variable was a composite constructed from four respondent-reported items on perceived social cohesion in their neighborhoods. The items asked the magnitude of respondents' agreement with the statements: (1) You think your neighborhood is a good place for you to live, (2) You care about what your neighbors think of your actions, (3) If there is a problem in your neighborhood, people who live there can get it solved, and (4) You expect to live in this neighborhood for a long time. Likert-scale response categories ranged from (1) strongly agree to (4) strongly disagree. The responses were recoded so that a higher score indicated a higher level of neighborhood cohesion. CFA results confirmed the unidimensionality of the items; all of the items loaded relatively strongly onto the composite of neighborhood cohesion (Appendix A).

T3 neighborhood disorder. This construct was also developed by the Urban Institute (Lynch & Sabol, 2001). It was a composite based on four items. The items assessed the magnitude of respondents' agreement with the statements: (1) Your neighborhood is a safe place to live, (2) It is hard to stay out of trouble in your neighborhood, (3) You are nervous about seeing certain people in your neighborhood, and (4) Drug selling is a major problem in your neighborhood. The answers ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree. I recoded the first item so that a

higher score indicated a higher level of disorder respondents perceived about their community. CFA test results confirmed the unidimensionality of this construct (Appendix A).

Control Variables

To achieve unbiased results of the influences of neighborhood conditions and individual risk factors, I included the control variables of T1 age, T1 race (a categorical variable with three categories: white, black, and other, and white is used as the reference group), T1 education attainment, respondents' education level reported at T1 survey (1= 6th grade or less, 2= 7th to 9th grade, 3= 10th to 11th grade, 4= high school grad, 5= GED, 6= some college, 7= college grad, 8= post-grad study), and T1 prior prison terms, the level of prior incarcerations respondents reported during T1 survey. T1 prior prison terms had a skewed distribution; not surprisingly, there were large numbers of respondents with zero or a small number of prior incarcerations while few respondents with more than seven incarcerations. Therefore, I recoded this variable into a variable with seven scales representing having zero, one, two, three, four, five, six and more than six past incarcerations, respectively.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics for all variables used in this analysis. The average age of respondents was 36, and a commanding majority of them had prior incarcerations (78%). About 74 percent were black while nearly 13 percent of them were white. Because neighborhood cohesion is a standardized latent factor with a mean around zero and standard deviation around one, a mean closer to the maximum rather than the minimum value means that on average respondents had relatively

positive responses with regard to their neighborhood cohesion. I found that on a scale from -2.77 to 1.90 (from the lowest score to the highest score of neighborhood cohesion), respondents reported an average score of 0.01 on their community cohesion. This indicated that respondents generally reported a high level of social cohesion in their neighborhoods. Switching to neighborhood disorder, on a scale from -1.56 to 2.89 (from the lowest score to the highest score of neighborhood disorder), respondents reported an average score of 0.10 on their community cohesion, which was closer to the value of -1.56. This indicated that generally, they perceive disorder issues as a less serious issue in their communities. To examine whether multicollinearity was an issue in the analysis, I obtained the variance inflation factor (VIF) scores of the variables in the model (Appendix B). The highest value was 1.57, much lower than the generally accepted limit of 4 (Neter, Nachstein & Wasserman, 1996). Thus, multicollinearity was not a concern in this analysis.

Analytical Approaches to Assess Neighborhood Contextual Effects

There are approximately four analytical approaches to assess the contextual effect of a place on individuals' behaviors. When respondents are nested in a community or a school, researchers can use multilevel modeling to analyze data to assess how individual predictors and the characteristics of a cluster (e.g., school, neighborhood) simultaneously affect an outcome variable. When there are only a handful of clusters, researchers can use interaction terms between clusters and individual level variables to assess if the effect of an individual attribute is universal or contextual. For example, when respondents were from two countries, a categorical variable representing the two countries can be included in the model. Finally, when data are organized at only one level and there are no designed nests or clusters among

the respondents, respondents' self-reported family or neighborhood conditions may be treated as their individual level characteristics and there is no necessity to use multi-level modeling.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics (N=549)

Variables	Mean or percentage	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Time of data collection
Dependent variables					
Recidivism	24.02%		0	1	12 months after release
Determination to desist	0.00	1.00	-2.95	1.83	2-3 months after release
Independent variables					
Financial difficulty	0.00	1.00	-1.96	2.05	2-3 months after release
Family bond	0.00	1.00	-3.58	1.03	2-3 months after release
Neighborhood cohesion	0.01	1.05	-2.77	1.90	12-15 months after release
Neighborhood disorder	0.10	1.02	-1.56	2.89	12-15 months after release
PO support	0.00	1.00	-3.49	1.28	12-15 months after release
Control variables					
Education level	3.59	1.43	1.00	7.00	Two months before release
Age	35.64	9.93	19.00	65.00	Two months before release
Race (White)	13.3%				Two months before release
Race (Black)	74.24%				Two months before release
Race (Other)	12.47%				Two months before release
Prior records	2.52	1.95	0.00	6.00	Two months before release

In this study, 549 respondents went back to 440 neighborhoods across Ohio, Illinois, and Texas. Upon an examination on the frequency of respondents in each neighborhood, the majority of these neighborhoods had only one respondent. The maximum number of respondents in one neighborhood was three. This is due to the fact the research design was not nested in neighborhoods. Thus, there was no necessity to treat the data as nested within neighborhoods. The community conditions released prisoners reported can be treated as level one variables in the model.

Chapter 7

ANALYTICAL RESULTS

Correlation Analysis Results on Hypothesis One

According to social disorganization theory, neighborhoods that suffer disorders are also resource depleted. To apply this proposition to the individual reentry process, released prisoners who reside in resource-desert places should experience more difficulty securing employment and thus encounter financial difficulty during their reentry. In contrast, social disorganization theory stipulates that neighborhoods with social cohesion have the capacity to secure resources for residents. Therefore, released prisoners who reside in cohesive neighborhoods may have less risk to experience unemployment and financial difficulty. H1 assumes a positive correlation between neighborhood cohesion and respondents' financial difficulty while a negative correlation between neighborhood disorder and respondents' financial difficulty.

Correlation test results partially supported this hypothesis (Table 2). Financial difficulty was significantly and positively associated with neighborhood disorder ($r = .13, p < .0001$). However, there was no significant correlation between financial difficulty and neighborhood cohesion ($r = .05, p = .19$) (Table 2). The correlation results indicated that respondents were less likely to obtain financial security in disordered neighborhoods, which could well attribute to the depletion of resources and job opportunities in this kind of neighborhood (Hipp & Yates, 2009).

Table 2 Correlations between Neighborhood Conditions and Financial Difficulty Experienced by Released Prisoners

Variables	Financial Difficulty	Neighborhood cohesion	Neighborhood disorder
Financial Difficulty	1		
Neighborhood cohesion	0.05 (P=0.19)	1	
Neighborhood disorder	0.13 (P<.0001)	-0.48 (P<.0001)	1

Correlation Analysis Results on Hypothesis Two

The second set of correlation tests I conducted was to assess the informal social control function of community cohesion. According to H2, individuals' determination to desist is stronger when they live in communities featuring social cohesion while weaker when living in disordered communities.

Correlation results supported this hypothesis. I found that both neighborhood cohesion and disorder were significantly related to one's intention to desist, as the correlation coefficients were with p values lower than .05. Neighborhood cohesion was positively correlated with determination to desist ($r = .13, p < .0001$) (Table 3); it seems a cohesive community in which residents are embedded in networks and ties is a conducive environment to foster a strong determination to straighten life out for released prisoners. In contrast, respondents who dwelled in disordered neighborhoods had a significantly stronger intention to reoffend. There was a strong negative correlation between neighborhood disorder and individuals' determination to desist ($r = -.18, p < .0001$) (Table 3). Obviously, the environment of one's community is quite relevant in our understanding of human agency in desistance. To better understand an offender's transformation toward a non-offender lifestyle, their neighborhood environment should be a relevant concept in this inquiry.

Table 3 Correlations between Neighborhood Conditions and Released Prisoners' Determination to Desist

Variables	Determination to desist	Neighborhood cohesion	Neighborhood disorder
Determination to desist	1		
Neighborhood cohesion	.13 (P<.0001)	1	
Neighborhood disorder	-0.18 (P<.0001)	-0.48 (P<.0001)	1

Correlation Analysis Results on Hypothesis Three

The last correlation test in this section is to evaluate H3, which proposes the location-sensitivity of parole practice—the disparity of parole practice across different communities. Analysis results supported this hypothesis. Parole officer support was significantly negatively related to neighborhood disorder while positively related to neighborhood cohesion, at a p-value of .05 (Table 4). Parolees who went back to cohesive neighborhoods reported receiving a significantly higher level of support from their POs than their counterparts who returned to communities where networks and ties were absent ($r = .30, p < .0001$) (Table 4). Neighborhood disorder also affected how much support parolees received from parole officers. Those who went back to disordered neighborhoods reported receiving a significantly lower level of PO support compared to those who returned to well-ordered communities ($r = -.27, p < .0001$) (Table 4).

Table 4 Correlations between Neighborhood Conditions and PO Support

Variables	PO support	Neighborhood cohesion	Neighborhood disorder
PO support	1		
Neighborhood cohesion	.30 (P<.0001)	1	
Neighborhood disorder	-.27 (P<.0001)	-0.48 (P<.0001)	1

Regression Results on Hypothesis Four and Five

As stated earlier, H4 posits that human agency affects the outcome of recidivism. Using logistic regression, I examined if human agency variables still exerted significant influence on recidivism when covariates such as family bonds and financial difficulty were controlled. In addition, this model also tested H5 that an increase in neighborhood cohesion would suppress recidivism (Table 5).

Logistic regression results supported H4 but not H5 (Table 5). I found that the force of human agency, in the form of an intention to recidivate, did translate into a reduction of reoffending. Those who reported unreadiness to desist did have higher odds to recidivate. Released prisoners who were ready to sever a criminal past had only a fifth of the risk of recidivism compared to their counterparts who still desired an offender lifestyle (odds ratio=0.18). Meanwhile, financial difficulty but not family bonds was significantly associated with recidivism. Those who experienced financial difficulty demonstrated about 50% higher probability to recidivate.

The model results presented in Table 6 only partially support H5. When individual risk factors are controlled, neighborhood disorder but not cohesion exhibited a significant effect on recidivism. Neighborhood disorder was significantly and positively associated with former prisoners' odds of reincarceration. A unit

increase in the disorder in their neighborhood brought a nearly 60% increase in the odds of reincarceration (odds ratio=1.64). It seems drug activities and other incivilities in a community function as crime opportunities and released prisoners are snared by this detrimental aspect of community context. While affected by the disorder of the community they return to, it seems former prisoners benefited very little from neighborhood cohesion: Social cohesion in their community exhibited a significant effect on their reincarceration.

Among the control variables, age and prior records exhibited significant effects on the odds of recidivism. Those who were older had lower odds of recidivism. As age increased by one year, one's odds of reincarceration decreased by 4% (odds ratio=0.96). The effect size of age was minuscule; however, it was a continuous variable—the difference of odds of reincarceration between two respondents with a ten-year age gap would be sizable. Those who have intensive past records also experienced higher odds to recidivate; as past records increased by one level, the odds of recidivism increased by 34%.

Table 5 Logistic Regression Results of the Effect of Determination to Desist on Recidivism

Parameters	Recidivism (yes)	
	Estimate ^a	OR
Education level	0.01 (0.09)	1.01
Age	-0.04 ** ^b (0.02)	0.96
Black	-0.13 (0.24)	0.63
Other	-0.20 (0.36)	0.59
Prior incarcerations	0.29*** (0.08)	1.34
Financial difficulty	0.50*** (0.15)	1.64
Family bond	-0.21 (0.13)	1.24
Determination to desist	-1.73 *** (0.44)	0.18
Neighborhood cohesion	0.24 (0.21)	1.27
Neighborhood disorder	0.49* (0.24)	1.64

^a entries are coefficients from logistic regression, with standard errors in parentheses.

^b *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Regression Results on Hypothesis Six

Next, I examined whether PO support has disparate effects on recidivism depending on the neighborhood context. Logistic regression results supported this hypothesis (Model 1 and Model 2 from Table 6). In order to illustrate both the main effect and interactional effect of PO support and neighborhood conditions in the context of reentry, I adopted a stepwise examination using two regression models. First, a logistic regression model was conducted to test the main effects of PO support, neighborhood contextual and individual level risk factors such as family bonds and

financial difficulty. After that, I used another logistic model to assess the interactional effect of PO support and neighborhood conditions on recidivism. Overall, I found partial support for H6: PO support interacted with neighborhood disorder but not cohesion to affect recidivism.

Model 1 of Table 6 illustrated the main effect of the predictors on recidivism. PO support exhibited a strong and inhibitive effect on recidivism. When PO support increased by one unit, respondents' odds of reoffending decreased by 25% (odds ratio=.75). At the same time, neighborhood disorder aided in the risk of recidivism, with an effect size that was the largest in the model. Every one-unit increase in neighborhood disorder brought a 103% increase in the risk of recidivism (odds ratio=2.03). While respondents' reentry was undermined by their neighborhood disorder issues, they received little benefit from the cohesion of their neighborhoods: Social cohesion exhibited no significant influence on recidivism.

Switching to the individual risk factors, unsurprisingly, financial difficulty during reentry was significantly and positively related to recidivism; when financial difficulty went up by one unit, respondents had a 79% increase in the odds of committing another crime (odds ratio=1.79). Determination to desist, the human agentic force, also exhibited a significant inhibitory effect on recidivism. Those who had readiness to sever a criminal past had only a fifth of the risk of recidivism compared to respondents whose determination to desist was weaker by one unit (odds ratio=.18). Interestingly, family bonds exhibited no significant effect on recidivism. Among control variables, age and prior incarcerations were found to exhibit significant effects on the risk of recidivism. Older respondents had lower risks of recidivism compared to their younger counterparts (odds ratio=.93). Meanwhile, those

with more prior incarcerations had higher odds of returning to prison (odds ratio=1.47).

Table 6 Logistic Regression Results of the Effects of Individual and Neighborhood Risk Factors on Recidivism

Parameters	Model 1 Recidivism (yes)		Model 2 Recidivism (yes)	
	Estimate ^a	OR	Estimate	OR
Education level	0.16 (0.10)	1.18	0.17 (0.10)	1.19
Age	-0.07*** (0.02)	0.93	-0.07*** (0.02)	0.93
Black	-0.29 (0.28)	0.40	-0.30 (0.29)	0.38
Other	-0.36 (0.45)	0.37	-0.35 (0.45)	0.37
Prior incarcerations	0.39*** (0.09)	1.47	0.38*** (0.09)	1.46
Financial difficulty	0.58*** (0.18)	1.79	0.56** (0.18)	1.74
Family bond	-0.18 (0.16)	1.20	-0.20 (0.16)	1.23
Determination to desist	-1.71 *** (0.39)	0.18	-1.71 *** (0.39)	0.18
PO support	-0.30* (0.14)	0.75	-0.34* (0.15)	0.72
Neighborhood cohesion	0.29 (0.24)	1.33	0.30 (0.25)	1.35
Neighborhood disorder	0.71** (0.28)	2.03	0.82** (0.29)	2.27
PO support* Neighborhood cohesion			0.32 (0.22)	
PO support* Neighborhood disorder			0.38† (0.20)	

^a entries are coefficients from logistic regression, with standard errors in parentheses.

^b † p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

In Model 2 of Table 6, I examined if there was an interaction between PO support and neighborhood conditions in parolees' reentry outcomes. I found that although not reaching a significance below .05, the significance for the interactive effect of neighborhood disorder and PO support on recidivism was 0.1. While strong PO support inhibited former prisoners' recidivism, its protective effect was attenuated when former prisoners resided in disordered neighborhoods. This interactive effect can be illustrated by estimating the effect of PO support in neighborhoods with divergent levels of disorder. For example, in a neighborhood with a disorder level one standard deviation lower than the average, every one unit increase in PO support was found to decrease respondents' risk to recidivate by 30%. However, this protective effect would be attenuated if respondents went back to a community with a disorder level one standard deviation higher than the average. In this kind of neighborhood, every one-unit increase in PO support brought a 27% decrease in the risk of recidivism. There was no interaction between PO support and neighborhood cohesion to affect recidivism. For the effects of other predictors, Similar results were observed to the results from Model 1.

Chapter 8

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Discussion

Despite a longstanding paradigm of examining the contextual effects on individual acts in sociological and criminological studies, limited research attention has examined the influence of neighborhood social ecology on individuals' reentry process. Among a paucity of studies that have examined the neighborhood contextual factors on recidivism, the results are decidedly equivocal. The majority of these studies have included only a limited scope of the individual level risk factors (most of the time only demographic characteristics). Meanwhile, virtually all prior studies used community structural factors (income and poverty) to represent the community context, failing to capture the core concepts of social cohesion and disorder in the social disorganization perspective. Drawing the insights from age-graded theory of informal social control and sociology disorganization theory, this study embarked on integrating individual and neighborhood level risk factors to explain recidivism. I found some empirical support for the age-graded theory of informal social control; however, the contextual effect of a neighborhood also provided significant complementary insights on reentry over and beyond the explanatory power of individual attributes.

First, human agency emerged as a consequential force in the occurrence of recidivism. Released prisoners who are not determined to sever a criminal past demonstrated higher odds to experience another reincarceration during the first 12

months after release. This indicates that desistance, instead of being explained by family bonds and financial stress, should also be understood as a result of one's intentional effort to create a pro-social life. Human agency should receive credits in the process of successful reentry (Burke, 1980; Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Markus & Nurius, 1987). This finding does not support Sampson and Laub's view that one's subjective intention and determination toward desistance is irrelevant in explaining the cessation of offending (Sampson & Laub, 2016). The significant role of human agency revealed in this study suggests that desistance is more likely to take place when there is a conscious effort and intention of offenders to sever a criminal past, which echoes the findings from the identity theory of desistance (Paternoster, 2017; Paternoster & Bachman, 2017; Paternoster & Bushway, 2009) and other theoretical propositions that acknowledge the influence of human agency on offending behaviors (Giordano et al., 2002; Matsueda & Heimer, 1997; Silver & Ulmer, 2012). To better understand recidivism in the current deindustrialization era in which there is a much smaller supply of manufacturing jobs as opposed to the era of Glueck's boys, human agency should be a core concept in our analysis of reentry.

Second, the concepts of social disorganization are applicable to individual reentry: net of the effects of individual risk factors, neighborhood conditions exhibited significant influences on the reentry outcomes of released prisoners. Although attenuated family bonds, financial difficulty, and low PO support were individual-level risk factors that undermine reentry, they represented only part of the story. When individual risk factors were included in the model, neighborhood disorder still exhibited sizable effects on individuals' reentry outcomes over and beyond individual risk factors. Specifically, neighborhood disorder undermines the reentry process by

increasing individuals' risk of recidivism. Dwelling in disordered neighborhoods that are ridden with drug activities and other incivilities, respondents may be exposed to violence, bullying, victimization, and the presence of drugs. Dwelling in this kind of neighborhood environment, parolees have a more difficult time severing a criminal past. Neighborhood conditions should be considered as a central factor in developing an explanation for reentry success and failure.

Third, neighborhood cohesion and disorder exert disparate levels of influences on former prisoners' reentry outcomes. Perceived neighborhood disorder undermined former prisoners' determination to desist. Meanwhile, neighborhood disorder also increased the risk of recidivism. However, neither released prisoners' determination to desist nor recidivism is affected by neighborhood cohesion. Because individuals were particularly sensitive and vulnerable to negative neighborhood disorder, it is possible that living in more pernicious and dangerous neighborhoods have more exposure to opportunities for engaging in deviant behaviors that, in turn, renders them more likely to slip back to a criminal path.

One of the appraisal criteria researchers rely on to assess the relevancy of a theoretical concept is generalizability. Neighborhood social cohesion and collective efficacy have been touted to exert positive effects on residents' health outcomes (e.g., Echeverría, Diez-Roux, Shea, Borrell, & Jackson, 2008) and life satisfaction (e.g., Dassopoulos & Monnat, 2011), and inhibit neighborhood physical disorder (e.g., Bjornstrom, Ralston, & Kuhl, 2013). However, it seems the protective effect of neighborhood cohesion is task-specific rather than universal. Granted that cohesion helps residents secure education and other resources, it did not appear to help released individuals sever a criminal path.

To understand this finding, we should consider the primary needs many released prisoners have: finding a home, acquiring a job, attending education programs, and honing job skills (Phillips & Lindsay, 2011; Travis , 2005; Visher et al., 2004; Visher et al., 2011). However, to meet these needs, the social cohesion of a community seems to provide limited solutions. No doubt a cohesive community is more likely to successfully achieve a set of goals such as to socially control children, curtail alcohol retailing, and secure education resources (e.g., Sampson, 2003; Wickes et al. 2013), but providing help for former prisoners in the form of housing and counseling services is not a shared need in the community. Assisting released prisoners' reentry may not fall into the scope of residents' shared goals. In fact, one study found that residents were punitive toward released prisoners and thus were reluctant to interact with them (Bottoms & Wilson, 2004). As a result, social cohesion may provide limited facilitation to reentry success.

Fourth, parole practice, like policing, is sensitive to neighborhood conditions. Past studies on the location-sensitivity of criminal justice practice have greatly advanced our understanding of disparate treatments that individuals receive due to their neighborhood locations. PO support is an essential factor for sustaining successful reentry. Parolees who reported receiving more support from POs demonstrated a lower rate of recidivism. This effect still held even when other primary predictors of recidivism, such as financial difficulty and family bonds, were controlled. However, not all parolees received the same treatment from their POs, and this support was, in turn, affected by the conditions of their neighborhoods. Parolees from well-ordered communities received a substantially higher level of PO support. Therefore, reentry failure should be understood not only as a result of one's

employment stability and family relationship quality but also a consequence of the disparate support people receive from POs and community supervision officers. This finding has significant policy implications, which will be discussed shortly.

Fifth, there is an interplay between neighborhood context and PO support in the reentry process: The inhibitory effect of PO support on recidivism was not uniform across neighborhoods. PO support demonstrated an amplified protective effect against recidivism for parolees who dwelled in well-ordered communities. It is possible that a well-ordered neighborhood poses fewer challenges for individuals to adhere to the terms of their supervision, which increases their chance of having a positive parolee-PO relationship. It is also probable that individuals from better-organized neighborhoods make a more positive impression on criminal justice agencies; thus, they are more receptive to officers' advice and instructions. In contrast, parolees from disorganized neighborhoods are socially marginalized due to poverty and other forms of disadvantages that come along with the deterioration of their communities. With limited opportunities for education and job training, residents from disorganized neighborhoods can fall prey to their environment and be pushed to engage in illegal activities to financially survive and support their families (Burke et al., 2018; Clear, Rose, Waring, & Scully, 2003; Hipp et al., 2010). Once snared by the criminal justice system, parolee residents from these neighborhoods will experience another type of marginalization: When they strive to reenter society, the inadequate support they receive from community correction officers, unfortunately, pushes them toward a higher risk of reentry failure.

Residents in disadvantaged neighborhoods, mostly black and brown, face segregation in housing, social service resource, and job opportunities (Anderson,

1999; Wilson, 2012). As a result, their vulnerable social and economic status are sustained and replicated. This study illustrated that the criminalization of racial minorities and lower-income individuals are being replicated as well. As the study reveals, PO support is geographic sensitive; people from disorganized communities receive less PO support and face a higher risk of failing to complete parole and returning to prison. Therefore, racial and income-based disparities have a diffusive effect not only on the police service people receive but also on all aspects of the punishment system.

Limitations

Although this study has made a genuine contribution to the reentry literature, a few limitations should be noted. First, the predictors used in this study were from self-report measurements. The self-report measurements are not without bias; respondents may have reported inaccurate information about family bonds, and neighborhood cohesion. Future studies should use both official and self-reported data to examine whether the results in this study can be replicated if official data on respondents' community cohesion and disorder are used.

Second, although this study illustrated the contextual effects of community cohesion and disorder on reentry outcomes, some dimensions of community-level impacts on reentry outcomes were beyond the scope of this study. For example, the influence of local gentrification and service availability on criminal-justice involved individuals' reintegration was beyond the scope of this study. Future studies should capture the dynamic change in community context due to new urban developments and examine its impact on reentry outcomes. Meanwhile, due to data limitations, the structural aspect of community context was not examined in this study. Future studies

should assess how employment rate and social service resources in a community affect individuals' reentry process. Studies are also needed to compare the predictive power of both objective and subjective measures of neighborhood conditions on reentry outcomes.

Third, this study used the official record of reincarceration as a proxy for recidivism. Just as other types of measures of recidivism (e.g., self-reported rearrests), this measure is not without limitation. Some offenses parolees committed might have been unnoticed and thus not captured in their official records. Meanwhile, sometimes re-incarceration can occur due to reasons other than recidivism. A parolee can be imprisoned again for a technical violation. Due to data limitations, I could not examine the exact reasons for re-incarceration among respondents. Future studies should collect data that include the reason for re-incarceration, which can differentiate respondents who recidivate from those who are re-incarcerated due to technical violations.

Policy Implications

Apart from future directions, findings from this study can point toward useful recommendations for improved reentry programming. First, to assist individuals in the transition from prison to the community, some programs may be provided to individuals prior to release to help them prepare for what they may face when returning home. Neighborhood disorder and injurious acts deteriorate a community and take a toll on the people dwelling there. Released prisoners are particularly vulnerable to this situation because they have been imprisoned and may be less informed of the community situation and thus are not as adapted as other residents. Perhaps appropriate programming can help them develop some strategies to manage the challenges caused by returning to a disordered community.

Second, this study indicates that respectful and supportive treatment from POs can significantly facilitate parolees' reentry success. Community correction agencies should develop training programs that strengthen POs' capacity for communication with parolees. POs should build relationships with parolees based on respect and support, which can foster parolees' acceptance of POs' advice and instructions. Past studies demonstrated that parole officers showed significant increases in consistent behaviors (such as reflective listening) upon finishing an MI training workshop (e.g., Miller & Mount 2001). The demonstration of consistency in parole practice will likely enhance officers' capacity in building rapport with parolees. It is also imperative to include parolees' reentry outcomes as measures for POs' appraisal systems to evaluate POs' work performance.

Third, this analysis captured disparate treatment by POs depending on parolees' neighborhood conditions. To address this disparity in community correction practices, correction agencies should provide training for POs to enhance their professionalism and help them develop supportive relationships with the communities they serve, especially the vulnerable communities that are depleted of housing, health and other social service resources. Individuals from this type of community have been marginalized by society, and correction agencies should not marginalize them again during community supervision. A supportive relationship between POs and the community they serve can enhance the image of criminal justice practitioners in these communities, which facilitates effective communication between POs and parolee residents. After all, in order to break the malicious cycle of release and reentry failure, a synthesized effort from communities, correction and social service agencies must be fostered.

Fourth, policymakers should properly address the disorder issue in communities. This is not to suggest that authorities should impose the tightest policing in disordered neighborhoods. Community disorder should be resolved based on mutual trust and collaboration between community and criminal justice authorities, which is more likely to happen when authorities address procedural justice and provide resources (Horspool, Drabble, & O’Cathain, 2016; Liu et al., 2019; Stein & Griffith, 2017). With concerted efforts by criminal justice agencies, community organizations and social service institutions to administer resources and address disorder properly, released prisoners may have a real chance to break the cycle of release and reentry failure.

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Appendix A
ITEM LOADINGS OF LATENT VARIABLES

	Factor loadings
Financial difficulty	--
How hard is it to make enough money to support yourself? (1) very easy to (4) very hard	0.86
How hard is it to find a job?	0.77
How hard is it to pay off debts?	0.76
Determination to desist	--
If you thought you could do it without getting caught, how likely you would commit a crime in the next six months? (1) very likely to (4) very unlikely	0.61
how hard it has been to not commit crimes? (1) very hard to (4) very easy	0.87
How hard it has been to stay out of prison? (1) very hard to (4) very easy	0.81
Family bond	--
To what extent do you agree with the statement?	
There was someone in the family with whom I can relax. (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree	0.94
There was someone in the family with whom I can do enjoyable things.	0.96

There was someone in the family with whom I can spend time and get my mind off things.	0.92
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Support from parole officers (PO support)	--
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To what extent do you agree the statement? Parole agent was helpful with your transition. (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree	
Parole agent seemed trustworthy.	0.88
Parole agent gave you correct information.	0.86
Parole agent acted too busy to help you.	0.74
Parole agent treated you with respect.	0.84
Parole agent acted professionally.	0.89
Parole agent didn't listen to you.	0.76
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Neighborhood cohesion	--
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To what extent do you agree with the statement?	
You think your neighborhood is a good place for you to live.	0.72
You care about what your neighbors think of your actions.	0.75
If there is a problem in your neighborhood, people who live there can get it solved.	0.70
You expect to live in this neighborhood for a long time.	0.67
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Neighborhood disorder	--
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To what extent do you agree with the statement?	
Your neighborhood is not a safe place to live.	0.70
It is hard to stay out of trouble in your neighborhood.	0.72
You are nervous about seeing certain people in your neighborhood.	0.65
Drug selling is a major problem in your neighborhood.	0.79
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Appendix B

MODEL DIAGNOSTIC RESULTS ABOUT VARIANCE INFLATION FACTOR (VIF)

Variables	Variance inflation factor
Age	1.28
Race	1.05
Education level	1.07
Prior records	1.20
Financial difficulty	1.07
Family bond	1.19
Neighborhood cohesion	1.43
Neighborhood disorder	1.57
PO support	1.06
