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Abstract

For over a century, the city of Chicago has provided a natural laboratory for research on juvenile delinquency and child neglect and abuse. In an era of increasing globalization, it is easy to overlook the importance of local community context as a major focus of social reform and scientific investigation. A century ago, it was the city rather than the nation-state that was the key site of social agitation, political mobilization, and governmental action (Rodgers 1998). Chicago, in particular, became a symbol of the destiny of modern society. It was at "ground zero" when the forces of industrialization and immigration first hit the great cities, uprooting traditional rural communities and accelerating the spread of a highly complex and differentiated pattern of urban settlement. The social dislocations stimulated by these transformations made Chicago a leading focus of social reform during the Progressive Era and an important object of sociological investigation after World War I (Ward 1989).

Disciplines

Community-Based Research | Family, Life Course, and Society | Sociology | Urban Studies

Mark F. Testa and Frank F. Furstenberg

For over a century, the city of Chicago has provided a natural laboratory for research on juvenile delinquency and child neglect and abuse. In an era of increasing globalization, it is easy to overlook the importance of local community context as a major focus of social reform and scientific investigation. A century ago, it was the city rather than the nation-state that was the key site of social agitation, political mobilization, and governmental action (Rodgers 1998). Chicago, in particular, became a symbol of the destiny of modern society. It was at “ground zero” when the forces of industrialization and immigration first hit the great cities, uprooting traditional rural communities and accelerating the spread of a highly complex and differentiated pattern of urban settlement. The social dislocations stimulated by these transformations made Chicago a leading focus of social reform during the Progressive Era and an important object of sociological investigation after World War I (Ward 1989).

Two influential traditions developed out of the efforts to understand the problems and processes of modern urban society: the Chicago settlement house movement and the Chicago School of urban sociology. Not only do the studies that emanate from these traditions serve as important milestones in the development of urban social science, but they also gave rise to a powerful new perspective—social ecology—for understanding the problems of child protection and juvenile justice, and their interconnections.

When the Cook County Juvenile Court was established in 1899, prevailing opinion located the problems of juvenile delinquency, child neglect, and dependency squarely within the person or the family. The delinquent

child was thought to be innately inferior, psychologically abnormal, or both. The neglectful family was perceived as morally corrupt. Little regard was given to the larger community, institutional, or cultural contexts. The ecological perspective, in contrast, sought to understand human behavior within the contexts in which it naturally occurs—family, school, neighborhood, and the society at large. By applying this perspective to the problems of juvenile delinquency and child neglect, settlement workers and urban sociologists were able to uncover powerful new facts about the interconnections among early childhood development, adolescent problem behavior, and community context.

One fact, in particular, has been repeatedly documented: the tendency for delinquent and neglected children to concentrate geographically in a common set of Chicago neighborhoods. Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott (1912) identified this spatial pattern for delinquent youth as far back as the early 1900s. Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (1942) replicated their findings for the decades that followed. More recently, James Garbarino and Kathleen Kostelny (1992) found a similar distribution for reports of neglected and abused children who were likely to come under the jurisdiction of the Cook County Juvenile Court. The issue that this pattern raised back then and that its persistence raises today is the extent to which the production of delinquency, neglect, and abuse is not simply an attribute of the individuals and families who reside in these neighborhoods but also a systemic property of the neighborhoods in which these families reside.

Our chapter begins with a review of the pioneering work of the Chicago settlement house movement. It then examines the evolution of the ecological perspective within the Chicago School of urban sociology and follows its generalization to the interdisciplinary study of child and youth development as formulated by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) and others. It brings together these different literatures and looks at the interrelation between child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency. Finally, it considers the role that purposive community organization may play in the reduction of juvenile delinquency and child neglect and abuse, and in the prevention of formal child protective intervention by the state.

What is nearly as intriguing as the consistency of the empirical findings on the spatial clustering of juvenile and family problems in Chicago are the periodic breaks in the continuity of this knowledge. Although Shaw and McKay were aware of the work of Breckinridge and Abbott, they included only a single citation in their study, and this was to fault their predecessors for failing to compute population-based delinquency rates. Likewise James Garbarino and his associates were familiar with the work of Shaw and McKay, but their studies built on the ecological framework of developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner rather than upon the ecological perspective of the Chicago School of urban sociology.

To some extent, these breaks in cumulative knowledge reflect differences in academic orientations. Breckinridge and Abbott were faculty at a school of social work, Shaw and McKay were trained as sociologists, and Bronfenbrenner and Garbarino were educated as developmental psychologists. But another reason for them is the deficiencies that each succeeding generation of researchers found in the programmatic and policy prescriptions of their predecessors. The men of the Chicago School dismissed the educational and cultural programs of the women of the Chicago settlement movement as largely ineffectual against the natural social processes of urban growth and community disorganization that they saw as influencing juvenile and family deviance (Deegan 1988). Likewise, developmental psychologists perceived the indigenous experiments in community participation favored by urban sociologists as too scattershot to have much of an impact on the early childhood conditions that they linked to the development of adolescent problem behaviors.

Also working against meaningful collaboration was the incomplete institutionalization of the ecological perspective in program and policy. In spite of the well-known successes of Hull House (Addams 1910) and the Chicago Area Project (Schlossman et al. 1984), reformers and policymakers had difficulty translating the insights of ecologically informed research into the person-focused operations of juvenile courts, child protective services, and child welfare agencies. The juvenile court may have been created so that judges, probation officers, and social workers could exercise compassion and discretion by taking into account the social contexts in which juvenile and family deviance occurred. But the courts were largely incapable of affecting those contexts, lacking both the power and means for doing very much about neighborhood instability, family fragmentation, and concentrated poverty. In the absence of a broader institutionalized response, community-based experiments floundered, and promising research trails turned into dead-ends.

There are some encouraging signs that the cycle of rediscovery of the same old ecological facts may be coming to an end. Large-scale local studies, such as the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (Sampson, Morenoff, and Earls 1999) and the Illinois Subsidized Guardianship Waiver Experiment (Illinois Department of Children and Family Services 2000), are advancing the interdisciplinary study of the impacts of neighborhood context and government policy on juvenile delinquency and child protection. Under the dual influence of a thriving economy and the unforeseen successes of welfare reform, state and local human services organizations are finally attaining the capacity to combat the underlying conditions of neighborhood disadvantage that threaten community and family well-being. Since the early 1990s, child poverty, welfare receipt, juvenile crime, teenage pregnancy, foster care, and child neglect and abuse have all fallen. Whether the in-

stitutionalization of the new “ecologically aware” policies, such as work-related child care, generous earning-disregards in welfare, subsidized guardianship for kinship care, and family support centers, can survive the next economic downturn remains to be seen. In the meantime, it is important to take stock of the new lessons being learned, so that the last century’s cycle of rediscovery of the social ecology of child protection won’t have to be repeated in the current century.

ORIGINS OF THE ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The reformers and social workers who spearheaded the settlement house movement in Chicago were among the earliest to champion the ecological point of view. Hull House founder Jane Addams rejected the person-focused accounts of deviant behavior. Instead, she argued that many of the city’s child and family problems arose from the lack of fit between the Old World ways of newly arriving immigrant groups and the New World ways of modern city life (Addams 1910). Although her primary prescription was to Americanize the foreign-born, she sought to accomplish this goal by fostering a reciprocal exchange of sympathy and understanding between immigrant and American-born groups through a new form of social organization: the settlement house.

The settlement house concept was rooted in Protestant “social gospel” teachings in England and the United States. It was inspired by the belief that all people were united in an organic “human brotherhood of Christ” (Carson 1990, 10). By bearing witness to the plight of the disadvantaged and acquainting Hull House’s mostly middle-class residents with their less fortunate neighbors, Addams hoped to stimulate public empathy for the poor and promote first-hand knowledge of their conditions. A critical piece of this endeavor was the insistence that every new philanthropic undertaking be preceded by carefully ascertained facts.

These basic tenets of the settlement house movement found expression in one of the first systematic studies of delinquency in Chicago, *The Delinquent Child and the Home*, by Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbott (1912). Their inquiry relied on careful case-record transcription and tabulation of a decade’s worth of delinquency cases handled by the Cook County Juvenile Court. From these records, they were able to obtain information on the number, nationality, and age of the children, and the disposition made of their cases. They supplemented these data with additional information collected from home visits with the parents and interviews with the probation officers of children brought to the court. Their descriptions frequently blurred the distinctions among delinquent, dependent, and neglected children. They noted that while the court dealt under the statutes with three classes of children—

dependent or neglected, truant, and delinquent—it was often difficult to draw such hard and fast distinctions in practice.

In their chapter on neighborhoods, Breckinridge and Abbott made an important observation that would become a staple of all future ecological studies of juvenile delinquency. Borrowing a method of investigation that Chicago settlement workers had used two decades earlier in *Hull House Maps and Papers* (1895), Breckinridge and Abbott located, by block, the home addresses of all delinquent children in the city. The resulting map revealed that the densely populated Near West Side of the city, the segregated vice district and “black belt” of the South Side, and the Italian quarter on the North Side were the most conspicuous centers of delinquency. Because they plotted only addresses and did not compute rates of delinquent cases per child population, it took another couple of decades of data collection and mapping for the famous “concentric circle” pattern to take shape and capture the imagination of urban ecologists.

After World War I, descriptive surveys of urban problems in Chicago gradually gave way to systematic analyses of the ecological processes that contributed to delinquency, neglect, and dependency. A key figure in this development, which came to be called the Chicago school of urban sociology, was Robert Park. His seminal contribution was to view juvenile delinquency and other forms of personal and social disorganization as “socially constructed.” According to Park (Park and Burgess 1925), it is at the level of the organizational community, which originates with the local neighborhood and extends outward to encompass the city, state, and nation, rather than within the person or the family, that we have juvenile delinquency and child neglect. This is not to deny the everyday reality of harms committed by and against children outside and within the home. But it is only when such behaviors are observed, reported, investigated, and processed by the formal organizations of the school, police, hospital, child welfare department, and the juvenile court that they become the official facts of juvenile delinquency and child neglect.

Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay (1942) were among the first urban sociologists to apply Park’s insight to the systematic study of the spatial distribution of juvenile delinquency in the city. Their work established two powerful facts. The first was that rates of official delinquency formed a consistent spatial pattern. Like their predecessors, Shaw and McKay had laboriously gathered information on all official delinquents in Chicago from police records, juvenile court hearings, and correctional commitments for various periods between 1900 and 1940. In addition to plotting the home addresses of each juvenile on a city map, they computed incidence rates based on the ratio of delinquent cases to the number of youth in a census area. In this way, they uncovered a pattern of “concentric circles” that Ernest W. Burgess (Park and Burgess 1925) had first popularized as characteristic of the growth of most

industrial cities. Official delinquency rates were highest in the inner-city areas adjacent to the central business district, and they declined progressively the farther away one traveled from this core. Second, they found that this spatial pattern correlated with several social conditions of the neighborhoods in which these juveniles resided. The highest delinquency areas were characterized by physical deterioration, population decline, concentrated poverty, and racial and social isolation.

Plates 1 and 2 reproduce the famous data from *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas* on male delinquents brought before the Cook County Court during the years 1934–40 and 1962–65. We follow the measurement conventions used by Shaw and McKay (1942). Delinquency rates are first formed by dividing the number of official delinquents in a community area by the total population of males aged 10–16. An index ratio is then computed by dividing the community rate by the grand mean rate for the entire city. An index ratio of 1.0 means that a community area has the same delinquency rate as the average for all community areas. An index ratio of 0.5 means that the community rate is one-half of the average rate, and an index of 2.0 means the community rate is twice the average rate. The color shadings correspond to grouped indexes of community delinquency rates ranked from highest (red) to dark green (lowest). The fanning-out of hues from the red around the city's Loop area to orange and light green at mid-distance from the Loop to the dark greens of the surrounding city suburbs vividly illustrates Shaw and McKay's central finding.

Today this pattern is regarded as commonplace. But what was remarkable for the time was that Shaw and McKay were able to show that this spatial pattern and accompanying statistical correlations persisted decade after decade even though the ethnic and racial makeup of these residential areas had changed from the European immigrants of German, Irish, Italian, and Polish decent in the early twentieth century to the southern blacks and Latinos at mid-century. Plates 1 and 2 illustrate the first of two key points. First, the top seven areas that had twice or greater the average delinquency rate for the years 1934–40 reappear in the top twelve list for the years 1962–65. Three of the five next highest delinquency areas for 1934–40 move into the top twelve for 1962–65. Second, the five areas in the second tier of highest delinquency rates for 1934–40 were inhabited entirely by whites. Two decades later, African-Americans were in the majority.

If innate inferiority or moral depravity were at the root of the problem, Shaw and McKay reasoned, then suburban delinquency rates should have risen proportionately as the children of the foreign-born made their way outward from the tenement slums. But they did not; rather, the relative ordering of community delinquency rates remained unchanged. Instead of reinforcing conventional thinking that personal traits or family abnormality were at fault,

Shaw and McKay's findings suggested the spatial concentration and social isolation of people in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods were somehow implicated in the production of delinquency.

THE SOCIAL ECOLOGY OF CHILD ENDANGERMENT

Shaw and McKay, like Breckinridge, Abbott, and others before them, recognized that delinquency was not an isolated phenomenon. They observed that communities characterized by high rates of delinquency were also areas of high rates of infant mortality, low birth weight, tuberculosis, and other social problems. Other scholars educated in the Chicago tradition documented similar patterns for suicide (Cavan 1928) and mental illness (Faris and Dunham 1939). Not until laws about reporting child abuse and neglect went into effect in the late 1960s, however, were researchers able to add child abuse and neglect to the list.

In their 1912 study, Breckinridge and Abbott had noted that the juvenile court faced a major obstacle in finding children from what they called the degraded home: "the home where there are brutality, drunkenness, immorality, or crime" (105). They were convinced that many of the court's delinquent children were victims of neglectful and abusive surroundings, but lamented the lack of any sure method of reaching these children until it was too late. Although the home conditions might be shockingly bad, as long as the parents maintained outward appearances, they despaired, there would be no occasion for an outside agent to enter the home.

This changed in the 1960s. A Denver pediatrician, C. Henry Kempe, and his colleagues published an article entitled "The Battered Child Syndrome" (Kempe et al. 1962). Based on 302 emergency room cases of physical abuse of small children, they concluded what Breckinridge, Abbott, and others could only allege, that these injuries were inflicted by the parents. In the storm of publicity that ensued, the U.S. Children's Bureau promulgated model legislation for the states that would require physicians to report suspected cases of child maltreatment. Between 1963 and 1967, all fifty states passed some version of reporting legislation (Nelson 1984).

With regard to the development of child abuse and neglect reporting laws, Robert Park's concept of social problems as properties of the organizational community becomes especially useful. Just as the meaning of delinquency cannot be taken for granted, the kinds of behaviors that are recognized as child abuse and neglect also change. As Robert Dingwall (1989, 28) notes, during the past several decades the problem of child abuse has undergone considerable "diagnostic inflation." C. Henry Kempe and his associates originally framed the problem narrowly in terms of the battered child syndrome: "a clin-

ical condition in young children who received serious physical abuse, generally from a parent or foster parent" (Kempe et al. 1962). This definition was later incorporated into the child abuse reporting laws that most states passed. Since that time, state and federal lawmakers have enlarged the definition of child abuse and neglect beyond physical abuse to encompass malnutrition, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, risk of injury, excessive corporal punishment, lack of supervision, and, most recently, fetal drug exposure. Occasionally, the label has also been narrowed, for example, to exclude spiritual healing or parental abandonment of children to the care of relatives.

A substantiated finding of child maltreatment means that an allegation of abuse and neglect has been reported and investigated, and that sufficient reason was found to suspect child maltreatment. According to the latest government figures, physical abuse of children now accounts for only one-fifth (21 percent) of all substantiated findings of child abuse and neglect in the United States (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2001). The majority of substantiated reports are for neglect (58 percent), which includes depriving a child of the physical, medical, or educational necessities of life. Sexual abuse accounts for another 11 percent, emotional abuse for 8 percent, and the remaining percentages cover miscellaneous harms, such as abandonment, fetal drug exposure, and failure to thrive.

The creation of state child abuse and neglect registries that named victims and perpetrators in all substantiated cases of child maltreatment created the opportunity to study the social ecology of child maltreatment just as juvenile court records had done for juvenile delinquency decades earlier. One of the first Chicago-based studies was by James Garbarino and Kathleen Kostelny (1992). Focusing on the same Chicago community areas that figured in Shaw and McKay's work, they found a strong relationship between per-capita reports of child abuse and neglect and socioeconomic and demographic indicators of community context.

Plate 3 updates Garbarino and Kostelny's analysis with 1989–91 data on substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect supplied by the Office of the Research Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Comparing plates 1 and 2 with plate 3 illustrates the remarkable continuity in the set of communities at highest risk of delinquency in the 1960s and child abuse and neglect in the 1990s. The indexes of child abuse and neglect rates are mapped for Chicago community areas and townships of Cook County. Restricting attention to the seventy-five Chicago community areas that Shaw and McKay studied shows that all twelve of the highest delinquency areas for 1962–65 appear in the first or second tier of highest child abuse and neglect areas for 1989–91. The simple ecological correlation between 1962–65 community delinquency rates and 1989–91 abuse and neglect rates yields a Pearson's r of 0.79. This means that *almost two-thirds of the variation in 1989–*

91 community abuse and neglect rates from their grand mean is explained statistically by the community's 1962–65 delinquency rate.

This is an important finding that has not been previously reported. The high correlation between 1989–91 child maltreatment and 1962–65 juvenile delinquency illustrates a continuity and linkage between community-level maltreatment and delinquency rates that earlier research was not able to demonstrate because of the lack of geographically coded child abuse and neglect data. The fact that child neglect and abuse tends to concentrate in neighborhoods of historically high delinquency yields a similar set of correlations with neighborhood conditions that Shaw and McKay were able to establish for delinquency and Garbarino and Kostelny were later able to establish for child abuse and neglect reports.

For measures of community poverty, Shaw and McKay had to rely on public assistance statistics, median rental costs, and home ownership rates. Beginning in 1970, the U.S. Census Bureau began publishing community-level statistics based on Mollie Orshansky's poverty index. This statistic, which takes into account family size, more broadly measures the prevalence of child and family poverty separate from welfare receipt. Plate 4 shows the familiar spatial pattern for the plot of indexes of 1989 child poverty rates in Cook County. Other measures of community conditions, such as rates of single parenthood, are highly correlated with family poverty. In order to replicate the statistical associations that Garbarino and Kostelny found for community abuse and neglect, we performed an ecological regression analysis of community-level counts of child abuse and neglect on child poverty and single parenthood (plate 5). To ascertain the extent to which racial composition matters, we also include the counts of black children in the community (plate 6).

Our procedure is as follows. First, we adjust for the number of children at risk of abuse and neglect by computing the differences between the logarithm of the count of abused and neglected children for 1989–91 and the expected count based on the best-fitting line for the regression of the former on the logarithm of the 1990 census count of children in the community. This divides communities into higher-than-expected and lower-than-expected counts of child abuse and neglect based on child population size only. We do the same for counts of child poverty, single parenthood, and African-American children. Second, we correlate these adjusted counts with the same for abused and neglected children.

The partial *R*-squares displayed in column 1 of table 9.1 show that counts of children living with single parents and counts of children living in poor homes are both highly correlated with community levels of indicated child abuse and neglect reports of all types. The count of African-American children adjusted for child population size is only moderately correlated. The remaining columns in table 9.1 disaggregate the overall child abuse rate by al-

Table 9.1

Community-level predictors of the 1989–91 community rates of substantiated reports of child neglect and abuse by type of maltreatment, Cook County

Community predictors	(1) All Child Abuse and Neglect	(2) Physical Abuse	(3) Sexual Abuse	(4) Substance- Exposed Infants	(5) Lack of Supervision
	Partial R^2	Partial R^2	Partial R^2	Partial R^2	Partial R^2
Child poverty	0.8079	0.6163	0.6352	0.8078	0.7520
Single parenthood	0.8536	0.6512	0.6578	0.8555	0.8058
African American	0.5292	0.3884	0.3219	0.5518	0.5468

Source: Office of the Research Director, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, 2000.

legation type into physical abuse, sexual abuse, infant substance exposure, and lack of (parental) supervision. These four allegation types account for over half of all indicated findings of child abuse and neglect. The partial R -squares show much weaker ecological correlations with physical and sexual abuse as compared with the neglect allegations of substance exposure and lack of supervision. Thus most of the association between community variables and child abuse and neglect is attributable to the underlying correlation with neglect findings rather than with abuse findings. This is important because it suggests that physical and sexual abuse are more evenly distributed among neighborhoods, while child neglect, lack of supervision, and drug addiction tend to cluster in areas of high neighborhood poverty and family fragmentation.

THEORIES OF THE SOCIAL ECOLOGY OF DELINQUENCY, NEGLECT, AND ABUSE

A century of investigation into the social ecology of juvenile delinquency and child neglect and abuse in Cook County reveals that rates of official reports and findings vary systematically and consistently across community areas. In the past, these rates correlated strongly with immigrant populations, residential mobility, and public relief. As socioeconomic census data became available, community poverty and single parenthood emerged as prominent predictors. Although the ethnic composition of neighborhoods also matters, its relative importance is clearly secondary to economic and family indicators of high-risk neighborhoods. What theories have researchers drawn upon to explain these facts?

The theoretical framework that Breckinridge and Abbott proposed in *The Delinquent Child and the Home* would now be recognized as a variant of culture conflict theory (see chapter 7, by John Laub, in this volume). Their

analysis echoed themes that Jane Addams had earlier advanced in her 1909 monograph, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*. Nearly three-fourths of delinquent children brought before the Cook County Juvenile Court during its early years had parents who were foreign-born. Although these statistics reinforced prevailing stereotypes, Addams and Breckinridge and Abbott were quick to point out that the disproportionate representation of the children of foreign-born parentage did not mean that they were any "worse" than children of native-born parentage. Rather they framed the problem in terms of a conflict of cultures: the Old World's emphasis on child obedience and wage contributions to the family economy versus the New World's emphasis on personal autonomy and investments in secondary education. When immigrant families were slow to become assimilated to New World ways, Breckinridge and Abbott argued, truancy ran high, children became alienated from parental authority, and the lure of the streets brought juveniles within the reach of the court.

Shaw and McKay also located the source of delinquent behavior in a conflict of values. But it was not just the disarticulation between Old World and New World values that Breckinridge and Abbott had identified. Shaw and McKay argued that there also existed within areas of high "social disorganization" a competing cultural system that condoned delinquent acts in direct opposition to the mainstream values symbolized by the family, the church, and other conventional institutions (see chapter 7 in this volume). To account for the persistence of these delinquent subcultures in community areas, they turned to the theory of urban growth that Park and Burgess (1925) had developed.

According to the ecological theory of urban growth, impersonal market and technological forces tend to bring about a typical geographical sorting of the city's population. These geographical groupings develop over time a local organization and neighborhood identity of their own. Once formed, the neighborhood imposes itself as an external structure that defines the quality of life and opportunities of its residents. In this way, a neighborhood takes on an organized existence of its own that is more or less independent of the individual persons and families who temporarily inhabit it.

Shaw and McKay adapted this general theory to their explanation of juvenile delinquency. First, they distinguished between neighborhoods with high and low degrees of social organization. Neighborhoods with low degrees of organization comprised diverse immigrant and racial groups whose cultural standards conflicted with each other and with the larger society. In addition, these neighborhoods were constantly besieged by the destabilizing forces of high mobility, chronic unemployment, family breakdown, and a host of additional urban ills. Under these disorganizing conditions, immigrant and poor families lost control of their children to the competing influences of local

street gangs. Local gangs then became the primary transmitters of criminal traditions and delinquent values to each successive generation of children that inhabited the streets of these disorganized areas.

In many respects, Shaw and McKay's social disorganization theory complements Breckinridge and Abbott's culture conflict theory. Despite the enduring relevance of their respective works, however, later theorists have found both theories lacking because of the missing element of the ontogenic development of the child. Not all children from immigrant homes became delinquent; not all children in disadvantaged neighborhoods were abused or neglected. What accounts for the difference?

LINKAGES BETWEEN CHILD MALTREATMENT AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Later researchers such as Sutherland (1939), Glueck and Glueck (1968), and Tannenbaum (1938) began to appreciate that delinquency was a manifestation of an unfolding sequence of underlying problems that often was initiated long before birth and that could be located as well in community conditions. They located children's developmental trajectories in the cultural and community conditions that shaped both the structure and process of family life. Instead of looking for single causes resulting in distinctive outcomes, later students of the ecological approach to child and youth development examined more broadly the ways that community processes shaped the socialization of children. The focus on socialization provided a way of exposing how community conditions insinuated themselves in the development of the child, both inside the family early in life and later on as the child moved into school, formed peer relationships, and engaged in the life of the surrounding community. This process of movement through progressively larger contexts was a way of understanding the formation of problem behaviors over the early part of the life course. It also showed how syndromes of behavior could be traced back to very early childhood: neglect, illness, accidents, poor mental health, low cognitive skills, and physical disabilities early in life; truancy, aggressiveness, and school failure in primary school; and delinquency, dropout, sexual promiscuity, drug use, and suicide in the teen years.

In the middle decades of the last century, sociologists and psychologists began to study the origins of aggressive behavior in children and its link to later forms of delinquency and low achievement. Discoveries by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck (1968) and later by Lee Robins (1974) traced the origins of delinquency to early behaviors in the family that often gave rise to social responses by parents, teachers, and neighbors that reinforced rather than extin-

guished acting out. (For more recent versions of this argument, see Dodge 1986). The interplay between children's actions and the responses of adults and the larger community traces the development of delinquent careers in what Edwin Lemert (1951) referred to as the process of "secondary deviance," the response of significant others to the initial acts of misbehavior (see also chapter 7 in this volume).

Other social scientists began to devise more systematic ways of understanding the social ecology of deviant and conforming behaviors. Notable among these is Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), who mapped a broad conceptual scheme for studying the worlds of children. Bronfenbrenner viewed the ecological system as a set of Russian dolls, providing a set of ever-widening contexts in which children grow up—each successively embedded in a larger one. The smallest system is the *microsystem* of immediate family, friends, and neighbors. The circle then widens to encompass the *mesosystems* of schools, playgrounds, clubs, and peer groups. These systems in turn are embedded in the larger *exosystems* of parental workplace, neighborhood, local government, and other aspects of what Park called the organizational community. Finally, there is the *macrosystem* of culture, nationhood, and globalization. When the contexts are integrated and coherent to children, as they are in some societies, successful incorporation into adult society is very likely. When they are not, children often lack the necessary skills and competencies that are required in adulthood, and they may acquire traits that are ill suited to moving from one context to another (for example, from the family to the school or the school to the labor force).

In many respects, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory has much in common with the ideas of Émile Durkheim (1951), which were later imported into the sociology of deviance by Robert Merton (1968) in his well-known essay, "Social Structure and Anomie." Like Durkheim, Merton argued that lack of social integration creates the conditions under which deviance arises because it fails to instill common or achievable objectives that can be realized with the social means available to participants in that system. The result is that individuals will devise means to realize the goals or opt out altogether.

Many researchers have pursued these two closely related avenues of understanding the development of problem behavior. Both theories focus attention on how the social system generates and forms problems that it condemns. In the following decades, researchers from both sociology and psychology began to document these theories. (See, for example, Richard and Shirley Jessor 1977; Robert Cairns and Beverly Cairns 1994; and K. Hurrelmann and S. F. Hamilton 1996). As the scope of this research has broadened, it has become more explicitly comparative, going beyond communities to examine the nations across time (Furstenberg et al. 1999).

EXPLAINING THE LINKAGES BETWEEN MALTREATMENT AND DELINQUENCY

The co-occurrence of high rates of child maltreatment in the same community areas with high rates of juvenile delinquency raises a question about the nature of the linkages between these two phenomena. As with other social problems, there are several possible explanations for the correlation. One is that the co-occurrence simply reflects the tendency of families and persons with a proneness toward child neglect, domestic violence, and juvenile delinquency to concentrate in the same neighborhoods. Differences in community child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency rates may simply mirror differences in the population composition of the neighborhoods. This is a restatement of the longstanding hypothesis of child abnormality and family pathology that social ecologists have historically found wanting.

An alternative is the ecological proposition that it is the context of the neighborhood that matters. Concentrated poverty, single parenthood, social isolation, and residential mobility strain the individual and collective child-rearing capacities of families, resulting in neglect and abuse when children are young and in juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and other problem behaviors when children are older. This formulation makes no assumption about the neglected child growing up to become the delinquent juvenile. Rather it could just be that a common set of social factors independently weaken family capacity at crucial stages of the child's development in the absence of an ontogenic link between early experiences and later behavior. Neglected infants can grow up to be well-adjusted adolescents, and delinquent youth can come from upstanding homes.

But the possibility of an ontogenic link between child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency offers still another explanation for the co-occurrence. Child maltreatment may reinforce certain psychological adaptations and behavioral tendencies early in life that fix the child on a future trajectory that is likely to culminate in juvenile delinquency, regardless of changes in community context. Clinical studies and retrospective surveys have shown that juvenile delinquents and adult criminals have a much higher rate of reported abuse than the general population (Lewis et al. 1989; Vissing et al. 1991). Catherine Widom's prospective studies (1989, 1996) demonstrate that child maltreatment is associated with a moderate but significant difference in future arrests (26 percent among the maltreated sample versus 17 percent among the matched controls). Because children tend to stay in the same (or similar) neighborhood in which they were raised, communities with high rates of child maltreatment will show up as areas with high rates of juvenile delinquency.

Several lines of research have attempted to sort out these alternatives. One line has maintained a problem-specific focus, seeking to understand

the etiology of particular social ills in the structural, cultural, or individual circumstances. Research on substance abuse, suicide, and mental illness often look for special (often biologically based) explanations for the onset and maintenance of problem behavior. Alternatively, some researchers have argued that such behaviors arise developmentally as part of a careerlike sequence of behaviors or a syndrome of related actions. Jessor's research on early precursors of serious problem behavior has led to a lively debate over the clustering and ordering of problem behaviors. Other researchers have sought to understand not the etiology of problem behavior but its persistence. Robert Sampson and John Laub (1993) in their longitudinal follow-up of the Gluecks' sample are able to show how and why certain criminals desist when they become engaged in conventional activities and find it difficult, inconvenient, or costly to continue their criminal careers.

A different line of research has focused on the contexts that give rise to problem behaviors. Again, much of this research examines one context at a time, giving special emphasis to the role of the family, peers, school, or neighborhood either in promoting problems or in protecting individuals from problem behavior. This context-specific research has often acknowledged that some settings can be "risky" and others "supportive" to the development of conventional behaviors; however, only rarely has research considered the impact of multiple contexts.

Much of the research on contextual influences, moreover, assumes that individuals are influenced by contexts, not taking full account of the way that individuals react differently to contextual influences depending on their perceptions of the context and their personal skills in addressing risks and opportunities. Sociologists have sometimes too readily assumed a position that is very nearly deterministic. Surely, poverty in the family, schools, and neighborhoods significantly structures opportunities in later life, but individuals who endure the same conditions do respond quite differently.

THE MACARTHUR NETWORK ON SUCCESSFUL ADOLESCENCE

In 1988, the MacArthur Foundation set up an interdisciplinary Research Network on Successful Adolescence in Disadvantaged Communities to explore the developmental paths to success during adolescence among youth living in difficult or less than privileged circumstances. The network, headed by Richard Jessor, included other psychologists (Albert Bandura, Jacques Eccles, Norman Garmazy, and Arnold Samaroff), physicians (Beatrix Hamburg, James Comer, and Robert Haggarty), and sociologists (Tom Cook, Glen Elder, Delbert Eliot, Frank Furstenberg, Marta Tienda, and William Julius Wilson). (For a description of the origins of the network, see Jessor 1993).

Drawing heavily upon the Chicago School tradition, the ecological theories and research of Urie Bronfenbrenner and his students, and the ideas and work of William Julius Wilson on the consequences of growing up in high-poverty neighborhoods, the network set out to build a series of related studies (using a common conceptual framework and related approaches to data collection) that would identify some common principles of successful development during the adolescent years. Wilson's own ideas are indebted to the Chicago School, especially in the way that he draws links between the composition of neighborhoods and the development of adolescents.

Wilson (1987) argues that a central fact of urban neighborhoods is the growing spatial concentration of poverty. The withdrawal of the middle class and the decline of employment opportunities in the inner city created in the 1970s and 1980s a sharp increase in joblessness. This, in turn, Wilson reasons, results in a shrinking pool of marriageable males and an increase of female-headed families. These families, to a growing extent, become segregated in distinct urban neighborhoods that create a "ghetto-specific" culture that affects the aspirations and opportunities of children.

Wilson's theory suggests that children living in certain neighborhoods will be exposed to distinctively different styles of socialization via the family, peers, and neighbors that affect their likelihood of gaining the values, motives, and skills necessary for incorporation into mainstream society. Specifically, Wilson argues that in areas of concentrated poverty, young people are exposed to a limited range of mentors and models who demonstrate how to succeed. They also lack the social ties and networks that help them gain opportunities and the institutional support to equip them with the human capital needed to function in the marketplace. Finally, Wilson suggests that family life itself is corrupted by the absence of work and civic roles that are conspicuously absent in high-poverty neighborhoods.

Many scholars in the 1990s began to examine the influence of neighborhoods on the developmental trajectories of children and youth. However, as Christopher Jencks and Susan Mayer (1989) note in an important synthesis of the literature on neighborhood effects, the evidence of direct neighborhood influences was, at best, only suggestive. Indeed, the most compelling data came from qualitative data of fieldworkers who observed that children in highly disadvantaged neighborhoods did indeed appear to be drawn to the life of the streets and had great difficulty during the transition to adulthood. However, the ethnographic data is not typically comparative and as such is not well designed to speak to the issue of whether neighborhood influences help to shape life-course trajectories of youth.

The MacArthur Network on Successful Adolescence took up the challenge of investigating this question but recast it to allow for the possibility that youth in poverty neighborhoods are exposed, in fact, to multiple and differ-

ing contexts. As indicated earlier, the assumption that residents of a high-poverty community are homogeneous in their response to local conditions is highly questionable. Therefore, the network began to develop a series of studies in different communities involving a fieldwork component that looked in depth at how parents and adolescents navigated within communities with different levels of poverty and social disorganization. The fieldwork was accompanied by surveys of families that permitted systematic comparison of intra- and inter-neighborhood variation.

Over the past ten years, a series of studies have been produced from the work of the MacArthur Network that point to several interesting conclusions. First, differences across neighborhoods can be detected, but they are rarely sizable and never uniform. These differences are typically greater in the demographic and social features of neighborhoods or the level of resources available to families than in the values and behaviors of family members. Put differently, there is much more variation within than between neighborhoods in both the values of parents, styles of parenting, expectations for children, and the behavior of young people. Poor families are no more alike in their practices than are wealthy families. This was especially evident in parenting practices, such as warmth or discipline effectiveness, which showed very little neighborhood-level variation. On the other hand, parents in highly disadvantaged communities did adopt different family management strategies for monitoring their children and were far less likely to avail themselves of local social programs aimed at cultivating skills, in part because such programs were less available to them. By contrast, in the better organized (largely white) neighborhoods the availability of resources gave parents an opportunity to cosocialize with local institutions such as churches, schools, or preschool and after-school programs. While some problem behaviors may be concentrated at the neighborhood level, many are not. Several of the network studies show that delinquency in early adolescence is not strongly linked to neighborhood. However, adolescent problem behavior may be handled differently in different communities and hence may have more serious and lasting consequences in poverty communities than in working or middle-class areas. Thus, neighborhood differences exist and they can be quite important, but their specific impact may be contingent and related to a host of other conditions. This set of findings led the network to postulate that understanding developmental trajectories involves examining multiple contexts over time. It is insufficient to consider family *or* peer *or* school *or* neighborhood influences—taken one at a time—to understand a child's developmental pathway. Instead, we must consider multiple and overlapping influences through time if we are going to chart the pattern of successful development during the adolescent years.

It turns out that the relationship of "quality" contexts, however we measure the attributes of an environment for any particular child, is only moderate.

If children grow up in well-functioning families, they do not necessarily attend well-functioning schools, or live in well-functioning neighborhoods. Cook and his colleagues (1999) were able to demonstrate that the correlation from context to context is not nearly as high as might have been expected by most observers. This finding helps to explain the high amount of variation among children that occurs within particular settings (siblings within the family, or peers in school, or youth within the same neighborhood). These contextual differences generate specialized or distinctive clusters of experience among individuals within what appear from a distance to be similar environments.

In part, these differences are accounted for by sorting processes that take place by actors (parents and children) over time. Parents look for good neighborhoods when they can afford them or move when they are able to find better opportunities for their children. If they are unable to move, they look for the best schools that they can find and hence maneuver within neighborhoods to promote their children's chances of succeeding. Of course, better organized parents with greater material, social, and psychological resources are more adept at managing their children's course of development, but parents are by no means the only actors that sponsor their children. Teachers, coaches, and neighbors help children to navigate difficult environments, and children themselves show different abilities to locate such mentors and make use of their assistance. This element of agency on the part of parents and children has been greatly underappreciated and its importance has been underestimated in explaining successful development. When parents possessed high amounts of it, we referred to it as "successful family management," an aspect of socialization that has been largely overlooked because it pertains to oversight of the external world rather than to face-to-face interaction. Children's own managerial skills have received more attention in the psychological literature in the form of "self-efficacy" or cognitive skills related to mastery of tasks, but even the study of these qualities has not explored the full range of children's abilities to organize and navigate their own course of development.

Despite these individual-level characteristics, there can be no question that some environments are more difficult to manage because they are more chaotic, lack institutional resources, and provide sparse social networks or mentors who can provide access to opportunities for development. The Network on Successful Adolescence carried out several studies of youth in rural and suburban communities that reveal vast differences in the quality of contexts for youth in different parts of the United States. Indeed, it is interesting to speculate whether this uneven distribution of opportunities is more characteristic of the United States than other nations in the developed world. It is equally important to explore whether the quality of contexts changed over the course of the twentieth century, especially in the latter decades when economic inequality was increasing.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL POLICY

The development of the ecological perspective over the last century from the early investigations of the settlement house movement to the theoretically oriented studies of the Chicago School and recently to the interdisciplinary endeavors of the MacArthur Network has been propelled as much by a set of policy interests as by scientific concerns. The leaders of the Chicago settlement movement were explicit about their desires to apply scientific findings to practical solutions. The Chicago sociologists, while openly skeptical of the efforts of settlement workers to establish nonindigenous, philanthropic outposts in disorganized communities (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918–20), did recognize the necessity of understanding the values and culture of immigrant populations and the importance of strengthening the institutions of self-help and community organization as a means of linkage to the wider society (Janowitz 1978).

While the Cook County Juvenile Court looked favorably upon community-based experimentation in delinquency prevention and family support, there was very little it could do in the form of service provision or funding. Legislative action was required, and it wasn't until the expansion of juvenile justice, child protective, and child welfare services at the county and state level in the 1960s that much attention could be focused on the community conditions of juvenile and family deviance. With the creation of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services in 1964, a floor of child protective and child welfare services was created in every county in the state. This facilitated the establishment of a system of community planning and organization that is now woven into the formal operations of the Cook County Juvenile Court and Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Through the structure of Local Area Networks (LANs), the court and the Department of Children and Family Services plan and organize service delivery using the same Chicago community areas that the Chicago sociologists identified as the natural ecological areas of urban growth. Still the establishment of genuine reciprocal channels of influence between the indigenous leadership of the local community and the bureaucratic and market institutions of the wider society remains an ongoing challenge.

Several issues resurface time and again as reformers, activists, government officials, and sometimes researchers themselves attempted to translate the ecological outlook into practical action. The first concerns the extent to which successful community organization depends upon using locally based leadership and indigenous workers as opposed to importing professional staff from the outside. The settlement movement faced this quandary early on. On the one hand, their ideology accepted and sometimes celebrated the ethnic heritages of the people they were attempting to acculturate. On the other,

their unswerving belief in the superiority of American, middle-class values caused them to recruit professionally educated, nonindigenous workers for the task. Even though settlement workers may have believed in the organic unity of the different classes, the obvious disparities in language, dress, tastes, and education were not lost on local residents. It was precisely this tension between indigenous leadership and external staffing that led to an open split between the sociologists of the Chicago school and the social workers of the settlement movement. Chicago sociologist W. I. Thomas was among the first to question the effectiveness of externally sponsored experiments in community organization. In *The Polish Peasant* (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918–20), he argued that it was a mistake to suppose that a “community center” established by an outside agency could have much influence in reversing the effects of social disorganization. Such a purpose could only be fulfilled by organizing local self-help and encouraging indigenous leadership. His views later found expression in the organizing efforts that flowed out of the Chicago Area Project (CAP), which Shaw and McKay started in 1932. Taking their cue from Thomas, they proceeded from the proposition that community organization could be effective only to the extent that it drew from the local resources of the neighborhood in which the programs were situated. Consequently, they focused on the recruitment of indigenous leaders and workers to represent CAP and establish local affiliates in cooperation with other influential residents and groups. Part of this process involved the assignment of “detached workers,” preferably from the neighborhood, whose job it was to establish informal relationships with the youth and gang members in the area.

Shortly after the CAP started, it became the target of strident counterattacks. Settlement and social workers charged CAP leadership with encouraging anti-professionalism, relying on uneducated and untrained staff, and placing former criminals on the public payroll. It took years for the animosity between the social work establishment and CAP to cool down (Sorrentino 1959), but in the end many of the CAP precepts were absorbed into social work training and voluntary service efforts, such as community drop-in centers, peer-support groups, and family support programs (Weissbourd 1987).

The infusion of community concepts into bureaucratic operations through identifying and involving “community stakeholders” in the planning, implementation, and running of government juvenile justice and child welfare programs is now routine. Several major federal, state, and voluntary collaborations, such as federally funded family preservation and support services, and state and privately funded “Healthy Family America” initiatives, draw on many of the key concepts of community organization, family support, and local self-help.

While beneficial in many respects, the infusion of community concepts into bureaucratic operations touches upon a sensitive organizational nerve.

The community approach emphasizes particularistic needs and flexible responses, while the bureaucratic approach stresses universalistic definitions and uniform solutions. Although states and some county governments have the discretion to decide what constitutes child abuse and neglect, few communities can tolerate a definition of behavior as maltreatment in one section of town and as acceptable childrearing in another part. Sometimes a particular social group can mobilize political resources to carve out an exception, such as spiritual healing, but in most cases majority opinion prevails, as with the recent inclusion of ritual genital mutilation as abuse in many states. The consequence is that many community-based initiatives that are sponsored by government agencies tend to draw from a narrower range of cultural opinion and political leadership than might be optimal for effective organization and popular acceptance at the local level.

Although bureaucracy restricts the diversity of policy options at the level of goals, most government-sponsored, community-based initiatives encourage flexibility in the selection of means. For this reason, it is often difficult to evaluate the impact of multisite, community-based initiatives. For example, the decentralized structure of the CAP program permitted communities to tailor crime and delinquency prevention programs to local conditions. This made it difficult to identify common parameters of the intervention across sites for purposes of evaluation (Schlossman et al. 1984). The same holds true for more recent federal and state efforts, such as the 1993 Family Preservation and Support Services of Title IV-B of the Social Security Act.

Another complicating factor is that many of the problem behaviors, such as juvenile delinquency, child abuse, and neglect, that are the objects of community-based prevention programs are relatively rare even in the highest-risk communities. For example, the annual incidence of substantiated child abuse and neglect in Illinois LANs averages about 1.3 victims per 100 children with the highest showing 4.5 victims per 100 children in one of the most impoverished LANs. Delinquency rates average only slightly higher when the population base is restricted to adolescents. The rare incidence of these problems means that many more children than are likely ever to come to the attention of child protective authorities are rolled into the target population of community-wide prevention efforts. By diluting the dose of the intervention in this way, it becomes very difficult to detect a significant change, let alone link an improvement to a particular intervention.

In the absence of large-scale governmental involvement, the extent to which purposive community organization can realistically contribute to the overall quality of community life remains an open issue. The surviving remnants of the settlement movement and the Chicago School, such as Hull House and the Chicago Area Project, have taken on the person-focused attributes of the juvenile court and the traditional social service agencies for

which they were originally alternatives. Even with a large infusion of public dollars, skepticism remains. Most of the sociologists affiliated with the Chicago School were inclined to view political decisions as impotent to affect "social processes" (Shils 1961). Macrosystem economic and technological forces were assumed to be far more influential. Indeed, the significant fall in crime, child abuse and neglect, teenage pregnancy, and drug addiction that paralleled the uninterrupted expansion of the American economy in the last half-decade of the twentieth century makes a fairly compelling case for the power of economic and technological change over community organization. But while economic growth and declining unemployment may be necessary for community revitalization, without "ecologically aware" policies, such as publicly subsidized child care, earnings-disregards for welfare participation, and subsidized guardianship for kinship care, many of the societal-level advantages would not be efficiently channeled to local areas of greatest need.

Recent findings from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (Sampson, Morenoff, and Earls 1999) suggest that concentrated neighborhood affluence exerts a greater influence on supportive environments for children than concentrated disadvantage. For example, more affluent neighborhoods, as measured by the percentage of well-paid and highly educated residents with professional or managerial jobs, enjoy higher levels of adult supervision and child socialization by neighbors than less affluent neighborhoods, over and above the amount of private resources parents possess. Likewise, more affluent neighborhoods experience a greater degree of neighborly exchange and reciprocal help than less affluent neighborhoods. In addition, neighborhoods located near communities of concentrated affluence reap additional advantages simply from their ecological proximity, regardless of their own standing on measures of adult-child interaction and reciprocal neighborly exchange. In contrast, the usual measures of "underclass neighborhoods," such as the percentage of single-parent families, families below the poverty line, and unemployment rate, exhibited little systematic association with the above two indicators of supportive environments for children.

Without government involvement, the unequal advantages that accrue to communities of concentrated affluence are not likely to be successfully dispersed under existing conditions of economic differentiation and racial segregation in Chicago. It is more likely that some of the surplus affluence can be redirected through tax transfers and government policy to less advantaged communities by subsidizing local networks of adult-child interaction and mutual aid. Successful experimentation in promoting supportive environments for children at the microsystems and mesosystems of kinship, neighborhood, and schools are pointing to new ways of incorporating the ecological outlook into juvenile justice and child welfare policies. Instead of cutting off family, friends, neighbors, and teachers from involvement in the problems of parents

and children, the trend is to engage their active participation through family group conferences, conflict mediation, and publicly subsidized mutual aid. The purpose is not to substitute informal processes for formal ones, but to open up new channels of reciprocal influence so that bureaucratic goals can be achieved through flexible means that are fashioned in collaboration with the child's and parent's informal network of social support. The key to success is subsidizing a range of functionally equivalent solutions to a particular problem, such as work-related child care and subsidized adoption or guardianship by kin, so that local officials and citizens can exercise some choice over what solution works best in their particular circumstances.

The flexibility that the federal government has given states under Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and child welfare waivers to spend federal dollars are examples of this new direction (Cornerstone Consulting Group, Inc. 1999). After Congress converted the AFDC entitlement program into a block grant in 1996, many states used the flexibility to fund generous earnings-disregards so that welfare recipients could supplement beginning wages with welfare benefits. In Illinois, it is now policy to keep a TANF case for a family of three open until that family's income has reached 99 percent of the poverty level. This is a welcome change from AFDC, under which inadequate grant levels kept family incomes well below the poverty line. In addition, many states have reinvested TANF savings into work-related subsidies so that working families, both on and off TANF, can receive help in paying for child care. Since 1997, TANF caseloads have fallen 50 percent in Illinois and the nation as a whole with no adverse impact on child poverty or foster care.

Another way that states are using financial flexibility to promote "ecologically aware" policies is to subsidize the permanent care of children by relatives who become the adoptive parents or legal guardians of children who cannot live with their parents. In 1993, Congress gave the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services the authority to permit states to spend federal foster care dollars on new approaches to the delivery of child welfare services. In 1996, Illinois obtained waiver authority to offer the option of subsidized guardianship to relatives and foster parents who were hesitant about adopting but were willing to raise their foster children to adulthood. An evaluation of the subsidized guardianship experiment, which included random assignment to control and demonstration groups, showed that offering caregivers a choice produced a 15 percent boost in the rate of moving children to legally permanent homes as compared to the control group (Illinois Department of Children and Family Services 2000).

The common denominator in both TANF and the child welfare waivers is the greater flexibility that states have in establishing federal-state partnerships to address the social ecology of child endangerment. Greater attention to the needs of children, families, and communities at multiple system levels

is also a trend in the voluntary sector, such as the Neighbor-to-Neighbor program of the Hull House Association in Chicago and the Family-to-Family program of the national Casey Foundation. These efforts all recognize that improved coordination between informal and formal systems of prevention, support, and care is essential for preserving the vitality of community-based social capital as well as for legitimating the ongoing dependence of vulnerable populations on the financial capital of the welfare state.

CONCLUSION

Over the last hundred years, the urban environment of the Cook County Juvenile Court has shown a remarkable continuity. Despite significant demographic and economic changes, a common set of inner-city neighborhoods has produced a disproportionate share of delinquency, dependency, neglect, and (most recently) abuse cases. Three generations of researchers—social workers, sociologists, and developmental psychologists—have observed and carefully documented this pattern. In spite of differences in interpretation and policy recommendations, they reached similar conclusions.

Considered together, they found little evidence to buttress the “kinds of people” argument that innate inferiority, psychological abnormality, or deviant values of ghetto inhabitants accounted for the much higher rates of community delinquency, abuse, and neglect. In statistical terms, the within-community variance was larger than the between-community variance. Inhabitants of high-risk neighborhoods differed as much in natural proclivities, mental states, and value orientations as inhabitants of low-risk neighborhoods.

Shaw and McKay did the most thorough job in establishing that it was certain “kinds of neighborhoods” that consistently produced the highest delinquency rates, even though the demographic composition of the areas had repeatedly changed as successive waves of ethnic and racial groups moved through them. Economic competition and later racial segregation consigned the least advantaged of each newly arriving group to those sections of the city with the fewest available resources and highest density of need. This imbalance overburdens systems of informal control and support, and eventually leads to their collapse. Formal systems are then invoked to restore some semblance of order. At the early phases of child development, the imbalance depletes social networks of sharing and nurturing resources, and overwhelms individual parenting capacities, which leads to higher rates of child maltreatment and formal child protective intervention (Garbarino and Eckenrode 1997). At later phases, the imbalance inhibits the formation of effective, informal networks of supervision and control, which leads to higher rates of juvenile delin-

quency and formal juvenile justice intervention (Sampson 1997). Furthermore, there is some evidence of a direct carryover at the ontogenic level from child maltreatment to juvenile delinquency (Widom 1996).

These fundamental facts of the social ecology of child endangerment will probably remain valid well into the twenty-first century. The dilemma that policymakers will continue to confront is whether to buttress the coping capacities of disadvantaged communities to withstand the concentrated effects of poverty, family breakdown, and community disorganization, or to disperse these effects more widely through housing, transportation, and educational policies that put an end to the spatial isolation of the poor. The essential facts have been rediscovered time and again over the last hundred years. How a twenty-first-century democracy acts upon these facts remains an open issue.

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**A CENTURY OF
JUVENILE JUSTICE**

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