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FEAR AND LOITERING IN LOS ANGELES: CONTEXTUALIZING FEAR IN THE
EFFICACY FRAMEWORK

by

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FEAR AND LOITERING IN LOS ANGELES: CONTEXTUALIZING FEAR IN THE EFFICACY FRAMEWORK

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University of Nebraska, 2016

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Using individual-level survey, and neighborhood-level contextual and social observation data from the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A. FANS), I extend social disorganization theory by examining the role of fear in understanding the link between neighborhood structure, collective efficacy, and crime. Results indicate that the association between social cohesion and informal control is weakened in neighborhoods with high levels of resident fear. Fear is significantly associated with decreased community efficacy, and it both mediates and moderates the effect of neighborhood disadvantage and disorder on efficacy. Further, the utility of collective efficacy to protect against the effects of adverse neighborhood conditions on crime is compromised in fearful communities. When neighborhood fear is considered, neither collective efficacy nor neighborhood concentrated disadvantage are associated with neighborhood robbery victimization. Fear, however, remains one of the primary correlates of neighborhood robbery victimization. These findings suggest that future research should incorporate resident fear in order to better understand the character and context of neighborhood organization. Without considering neighborhood-level fear, research ignores a key mechanism contributing to both community efficacy and the utility of collective efficacy to ameliorate the damaging effects of adverse neighborhood conditions.

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INTRODUCTION

The role of neighborhoods for individual and collective outcomes remains of key interest in the social sciences. Much of this interest originated from the early work of the Chicago School scholars, whose examinations of neighborhoods uncovered patterns of social problems—particularly crime and deviance—concentrated in specific areas, regardless of changing demographic composition. Neighborhoods that were characterized by core indicators of structural disadvantage—poverty, racial/ethnic heterogeneity, and residential instability—also tended to have increased arrest rates and an increase in offenders. These observations formed the basis of the theory of social disorganization (Shaw and McKay, 1942), a perspective critical for shifting theorizing about crime away from a focus on individuals, to instead address the characteristics of community context.

The introduction of the construct “collective efficacy” (Sampson et al. 1997) was a significant theoretical advancement for social disorganization theory, providing insight into the link between neighborhood structure and criminal and deviant behavior. This construct captures social cohesion between neighbors (gauging residents’ social ties and perceptions of trust and shared values between neighbors), as well as their willingness to intervene to address problem behaviors or conditions in the community (that is, to exert informal social control). Through these two processes—cohesion and intervention—residents are able to activate their social capital for the good of the community. Thus, neighborhood structural disadvantages contribute to neighborhood crime by undermining neighborhood collective efficacy; on the other hand, the presence of collective efficacy may mediate the effects of such adverse neighborhood conditions. The beneficial influence of collective efficacy has been found for numerous additional outcomes ranging

from health and well-being to adolescent socialization. However, although extensive research has focused attention on neighborhood social disorganization and collective efficacy, the latter construct rests on the assumption that cohesion and intervention should co-occur, and do so consistently across various neighborhood conditions. Yet this assumption neglects one particular social phenomenon likely to undermine the strength of the association between collective efficacy's constituent components: fear. Structural disadvantage contributes to resident fear, and fearful residents are less likely to form cohesive neighborhoods and to intervene on deviant behaviors.

To address this consideration, the current study examines the role of fear in understanding the link between neighborhood structure and neighborhood collective efficacy. Using data from Wave I of the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (LAFANS), tract-level contextual data from the 1990 U.S. Census, and OLS and multilevel models, I extend existing research on social disorganization theory in three ways. First, I show that the co-occurrence of social cohesion and informal social control is affected by neighborhood fear. Second, I examine the extent to which fear acts as both a mediator and a moderator of the effect of neighborhood structural conditions on community collective efficacy. Finally, I explore how fear undermines the utility of collective efficacy to protect against the effect of neighborhood disadvantage and disorder on crime.

The remaining sections of this thesis are organized as follows: first, I provide a brief overview of sociological and criminological theorizing about neighborhoods, focusing particularly on the development of social disorganization theory and its subsequent extensions via attention to the intervening mechanism of collective efficacy.

Second, I review the current state of knowledge on the influence of collective efficacy for various indicators of community and individual well-being, and introduce resident fear as a potential risk factor undermining the utility of collective efficacy as a universal, generalizable construct. In the third section I introduce the data, measures, and analytic strategy. The study's research questions are explored and the results discussed fully in the fourth section of the paper. The final section discusses the study's broader conclusions, contributions to scholarship, and implications for policy.

BACKGROUND

The Chicago School and Neighborhood Effects Research (A Brief History)

Early sociological theorizing about neighborhoods emerged from the research of scholars at the University of Chicago, particularly that by Burgess (1928), Park & Burgess (1937), and Wirth (1938). Rapid urbanization occurring in Chicago following the Industrial Revolution provided these scholars a unique position to examine neighborhood development and change. This early research used human ecology as the guiding framework for identifying and understanding the social forces that bring about the organization of persons and social institutions in a given social space (Park et al., 1925). In trying to understand the urban city, Park and colleagues (1925, pg. 7) described neighborhoods as “the simplest and most elementary form of association with which we have to do in the organization of city life.” The Chicago School scholars—Park and Burgess (1937), in particular—believed that society was a control organization, whose function was to organize, integrate, and direct the energies of its residents. Social control was reactionary, arising out of a specific need. Therefore, a key interest of the Chicago School scholars was to uncover why certain areas were unable to accomplish this

function of control; that is, to understand the factors undermining this process, giving rise to the physical clustering of social problems within the city. Population composition, variable housing structures (e.g., hotels, apartments, and tenements), and the presence of transient populations all contributed to neighborhood instability (Park et al., 1925; Wirth, 1938).

Notably influential among early contextual perspectives was the work by Burgess (1928) on urban zones and the physical (and social) patterning of neighborhoods in relation to city structure and industry. In what would later become his concentric zone model of urban structure was the understanding that central to the city of Chicago were business and industrial districts that depended upon a stockpile of inexpensive, immigrant labor. Most of these workers lived in dense surrounding areas with high rates population turnover and instability (the “zone of transition”). Areas further away from this central zone were characterized by higher stability and housing quality (Park et al. 1925). This work was one of the first attempts to transform principles of human ecology into contextual theories of place: to understand society as a fluid organism, whose fate revolved around constant interaction with the environmental aspects surrounding social and structural conditions.

Scholars in Chicago continued to focus on the clustering of social problems within physical space, and the implications of this for social relationships (and vice versa). Research by Wirth (1938) drew further attention to the effects of urbanization on the degradation of social control within communities. Wirth observed that the expanse of industry in urban areas (such as Chicago) created a need for (inexpensive) workers, thus encouraging an influx of immigrants into Chicago. As industry expanded, individuals

from a broad range of backgrounds entered the city for employment, while also being filtered into the working class (“transitional,” Burgess 1928) zones surrounding these jobs. The combination of dense housing and racial/ethnic population heterogeneity had a significant detrimental effect on the social interactions of residents within these neighborhoods. In particular, according to Wirth (1938, pg. 15), “...the close living together and working together of individuals who have no sentimental and emotional ties foster a spirit of competition, aggrandizement, and mutual exploitation.” This then resulted in the breaking down of local attachments and a weakening of restraints and inhibitions of groups (that is, it undermined social control)—which, along with residential mobility/instability, were responsible for the increases in social problems within certain neighborhoods in the city (see also Park et al. 1925). These neighborhoods became characterized by depersonalization and friction between residents.

While Wirth’s research highlighted how broader structural processes (e.g., industrialization, urbanization) shape neighborhood composition in ways that influence individual behavior, research by Shaw and McKay (1942) is among the most recognized and most frequently cited work providing foundational evidence in support of neighborhood effects on behavior. After observing the persistence of high juvenile delinquency rates in certain Chicago neighborhoods over time—particularly those concentrated in or near areas zoned for industry and commerce—and despite shifts in the neighborhood racial/ethnic composition, Shaw and McKay (1942) concluded that the neighborhood rates of delinquency were caused by some property of the neighborhood as a collective, rather than characteristics of individual residents. Delinquency rates were observed to decline in neighborhoods farther away from the center of the city. The

industrial invasion of particular neighborhoods made these areas less desirable for residents, which led to decreasing population as (the economically able) residents migrated out; this loss of population then undermined social order and social organization, leaving the neighborhood vulnerable to social disorder and deviance. They argued, in what came to be known as their theory of social disorganization, that low socioeconomic status, racial/ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility undermined social organization, facilitating delinquent subcultures and subsequent high rates of delinquency.

Although social disorganization theory established the “theoretical blueprint” of neighborhood effects, early work faced challenges identifying and measuring the key social components of this process (Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003). Racial/ethnic heterogeneity, low SES, and residential mobility were the focal correlates of disruption, but the *processes* through which these measures *created* neighborhood disorganization and social problems—that is, intervening social mechanisms—were not well understood (see also Sampson and Groves 1989). Early applications of social disorganization theory highlighted how specific circumstances led to disruptions in community organization, but lacked the data and methods necessary to understand the mechanisms at work. The only large-scale neighborhood data sets available at that time were census products, which failed to provide necessary information on social networks and interaction between neighbors. Without accurate measures and data to examine the intervening mechanisms of social interaction, social disorganization theory faded into the background until its revival in the 1970’s.

The Reviving (and Extending) of Social Disorganization Theory

Continued interest in neighborhoods, coupled with a new ability to measure the social dynamics within, facilitated renewed attention to social disorganization theory. Especially important was the work of Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) which introduced a “systemic model” that involved understanding society as a series of interrelated systems driving community attachment. The social networks within and between neighborhoods, neighborhood composition, residential stability, participation in formal organizations, and other structural factors foster residents’ connection to their neighborhood and the creation of friendship networks within them. The findings from their community survey showed that residential stability (length of residence) was a primary factor that predicted community attachment; friendship, kinship, and associational community ties were also significantly associated with attachment. These factors were more influential than housing density or population size, which were shown to have little to no influence on attachment. This study prompted a shift in the application of social disorganization theory to network factors both within and outside of the community. Although there has been ethnographic evidence supporting the systemic model of social disorganization, these studies have been criticized [e.g., by Sampson and Groves (1989)] for their limited sample size and generalizability. Further, the use of official crime rates may neglect issues of over-policing and fail to capture the specific neighborhood characteristics that affect relations between police and community members.

To address these limitations and extend the work initiated by Kasarda and Janowitz (1974), Sampson and Groves (1989), in what they argued was the first “direct test” of social disorganization theory, analyzed data from over 10,000 residents in 238 British communities from the British Crime Survey (BCS). The contribution of this study

is its inclusion of measures of both neighborhood structure and social organization/social control. The structural correlates of neighborhood social disorganization tested included SES (a scale comprised of percent college educated, percent in professional/managerial positions, and income), racial/ethnic heterogeneity (percentages across five racial/ethnic categories), residential mobility (percentage of residents brought up within a 15-minute walk from home), family disruption (proportion divorced/separated and percentage of households with single parents with children), and urbanization (central-city location). Neighborhood social organization/control was measured via indicators of local friendship networks (number of friends within a 15 min walk), residents' organizational participation (e.g., participation in community groups, committees, clubs, etc.), and residents' assessments of the presence of unsupervised teenage peer groups (how common for them to hang out and be a nuisance, vandalism- aggregated to area). Self-reported data provided information on victimization, including instances of muggings, robberies, and the prevalence of stranger violence within communities.

The results supported the systemic model and confirmed the expectations of social disorganization theory, showing that residential stability was positively associated with friendship ties net of disorder. Heterogeneity and urbanization negatively influenced informal social control, and the presence of unsupervised peer groups was associated with higher rates of crime. Most importantly, friendship ties and participation in community organizations had a negative association with crime, while residential stability had no significant effect. These findings highlight the adverse effects of social disorganization on the community, and the importance of individual connections in mediating these effects. This focus on bonds and connections within and between

communities helped to expand social disorganization theory by including measures of the social mechanisms presumed in Shaw and McKay's (1942) original formulation. Most importantly, these results provided some of the first direct evidence on the mediating effects of community social organization.

This continued focus on neighborhood mechanisms, prompted largely by the Sampson and Groves (1989) study, also incorporated ideas from the concept of social capital. This concept, popularized during this time by Coleman (1988), highlights the value of the connections people share. Central to this idea are individuals' connection to social networks, and their ability to activate these networks for mutual benefit. The idea of individuals activating their networks for the greater good provided a foundation for Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) to develop the mechanism that would become an essential component of social disorganization theory and neighborhood effects research: collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is the application/extension of social capital at the community level. Communities whose residents have strong bonds and possess a willingness to intervene for the greater good are presumed better able to collectively protect themselves against the negative consequences of adverse neighborhood conditions. Neighborhoods with high rates of collective efficacy experience a buffering of the adverse effects of social disorganization. In this way, the revival of social disorganization highlighted that structural features tied with early social disorganization theory are filtered through social interactions within the community.

Collective Efficacy: Bridging Structure and Behavior

The introduction of collective efficacy (Sampson et al. 1997) was a major contribution to the advancement of social disorganization theory specifically, and

neighborhood effects research more broadly. While early neighborhood effects research alluded to assumptions surrounding the role of social processes in reducing community crime, collective efficacy provided researchers a way to finally capture empirically the social mechanisms within neighborhoods that explain variations in neighborhood violence across socially disorganized communities. Collective efficacy is comprised of two complementary constructs: social cohesion and informal social control. Social cohesion relates to the connections people share, and the trust they develop with their neighbors. In order to measure aspects of social cohesion, survey respondents are asked about their relationships within the community, such as whether they perceive it as a close knit neighborhood, if neighbors generally get along, and if neighbors trust each other (Sampson et al., 1997; Sampson and Groves, 1989). As these social bonds increase, neighbors gain more opportunities to foster pro-social norms within their community. Neighborhoods high in social cohesion see protective benefits, and are able to activate their networks to effect positive change. One of the main ways this is accomplished is through informal social control.

Measures of informal social control involve resident perceptions of whether their neighbors would do something to intervene when faced with deviant or criminal behaviors in the neighborhood. These questions typically ask residents if their neighbors would intervene when kids are skipping school or loitering, doing graffiti, fighting, or showing disrespect to an adult (Sampson et al., 1997). This is an improvement over residents' reports of the presence of unsupervised teen groups (Sampson and Groves 1989) because it gauges residents' (expected/perceived) behavior/response to potential social incivilities. Although uncertainties surround what it means for neighbors to "do

something,” Scarborough (2010) explains that there may be benefits to this vague language. While direct informal social control involves neighbors intervening in criminal or deviant behaviors, indirect informal social control involves calling the police (who then engage in formal social control). Other methods of informal social control may involve contacting family, friends, or parents of those engaged in the behavior. Regardless of the type of informal social control present, neighborhoods with high levels of social cohesion and informal social control tend to experience mediating effects of adverse neighborhood conditions.

A number of studies support the mediating capacity of collective efficacy, particularly with respect to protecting against neighborhood crime and deviance. Using data from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN), Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (Sampson et al. 1997) showed that collective efficacy was a highly reliable neighborhood measure that explained variation in rates of community violence. Although concentrated disadvantage, immigrant concentration, and residential instability were associated with higher rates of offending, neighborhood collective efficacy mediated this relationship. Collective efficacy has also been shown to mediate the negative effects of neighborhood physical disorder (e.g., litter, drug paraphernalia, and abandoned cars) and social disorder (e.g., presence of gangs, prostitutes, or drug dealers) (Sampson et al., 1997). On the opposite end of this spectrum, further research by Morenoff, Sampson, and Raudenbush (2001) found that neighborhoods with low collective efficacy and high concentrated disadvantage had significantly higher homicide rates.

The benefits of collective efficacy have been demonstrated across a variety of outcomes. For instance, research by Odgers and colleagues (2009) examined the influence of collective efficacy on antisocial behavior in children. Their findings showed that neighborhood collective efficacy has a negative association with antisocial behavior, but only in communities characterized by disadvantage. These findings have been echoed by O'Brien and Kauffman's (2013) study of adolescents in a small New York town. Their results show that neighborhoods with high levels of collective efficacy are associated with greater prosocial behaviors. Kilewer (2013) found collective efficacy was associated with better coping strategies for those confronted with community and peer violence, and Sampson (2003) has expanded the collective efficacy framework to a discussion of the association between collective efficacy and general outcomes of better health and well-being.

Collective Efficacy: A Panacea? The Rise of Inconsistencies

Yet despite the work discussed above, as researchers continue replicating tests of collective efficacy in a variety of cities and communities, the generalizability of the efficacy construct for explaining the disadvantage – crime link has increasingly been called into question. Central to these criticisms are inconsistencies in the mediating effects of collective efficacy on crime outside of Chicago, and a growing interest in social mechanisms which may significantly undermine community intervention. For instance, research by Burchfield and Silver (2013) examined collective efficacy in Los Angeles County, finding that levels of collective efficacy were highest, and the mediating effects of collective efficacy significant, for non-Latino neighborhoods only. Sutherland and colleagues (2013) examined collective efficacy in London, England. Their results showed

that although collective efficacy was associated with reduction in crime, it did not significantly mediate adverse neighborhood-level structural conditions. An examination of perceived collective efficacy in Florida only found a significant effect for two of the neighborhoods examined (Swatt et al., 2013).

Perhaps most notably, Bruinsma and colleagues (2013) tested models of social disorganization as they have developed over time. Their findings (from a Dutch sample) raise questions about the association between neighborhood structure, collective efficacy, and crime. Although concentrated disadvantage was significantly associated with increased offense rates, collective efficacy had no significant effect. Furthermore, many key factors of early social disorganization (e.g. ethnic heterogeneity, immigrant concentration, residential stability, and heterogeneous values systems) remained insignificant across their models. This evidence raises questions about the extent to which we may be able to generalize collective efficacy across a variety of community and regional contexts.

A separate but related line of inquiry has explored the link between collective efficacy and deviant opportunity structures (that is, alternate forms of opportunity rooted in illicit behavior; e.g., gang membership, drug dealing, prostitution, stealing, etc.). Kingston and colleagues' (2009) examination of Denver neighborhoods found certain structural factors (e.g. low SES, population heterogeneity, residential mobility, and single parent households) led to weak social networks and low levels of collective efficacy. These factors were associated with residents' reduced perceptions of opportunity for success through traditional educational and/or occupational pathways. These perceptions were then shown to be one of the strongest predictors of problem behavior (e.g. violence

and property offending). Furthermore, a qualitative study of social networks in a middle class black neighborhood found high levels of crime and delinquent opportunity structures in the face of high levels of social cohesion and strong social networks (Pattillo, 1998). Research by Portes (1998) suggests that highly cohesive neighborhoods are not universally characterized by the positive/prosocial use of social capital.

Collective efficacy is predicated on the presence of strong ties, but Gau (2014) explains that weak ties can have just as much influence as the strong social bonds used in the efficacy framework, and encourages researches to be aware that offenders can be embedded within cohesive networks. By examining the adverse effects of strong social networks and delinquent opportunity structures, it is reasonable to presume that cohesion within a neighborhood could reflect gangs and drug dealers just as much as community watch groups or a variety of social enclaves (Browning, 2004; Browning, 2009). In light of these considerations, it is plausible that participants in deviant networks may actualize their cohesion in order to preserve structures rooted in criminal behavior. The effect of such deviant networks on community collective efficacy should then be considered in the context of a key individual characteristic that is associated with both neighborhood structural factors and the presence of deviant networks, and that has implications for the formation and utility of community collective efficacy: resident fear.

The Neighborhood Context of Fear

Research aimed at identifying the factors influencing individual levels of fear have typically focused on individual characteristics such as gender, age, race, and education, and presumed that those who are most vulnerable are also the most fearful (Scarborough, 2010). This presumption tends to be supported: women and the elderly are

more fearful, regardless of their actual risk of victimization. Although early studies suggested that individual characteristics have a direct association with perceptions of fear, individuals do not live in a vacuum, and as such, are likely also influenced by risks within their immediate environments. For instance, Gainey (2011) explains that the initial association between gender and fear may lose significance when controlling for neighborhood structural factors (e.g., social and physical disorder, trust, and perceived risk). Findings show that gender loses significance when controlling for perceived risk, and that trust mediates the relation between physical/social disorder and fear. Most significantly, neighborhood social and physical disorder are key structural features that explain variation in individual effects on fear (Gainey, 2011). Research by Scarborough (2010) supports this claim, showing that the effect of individual race loses significance when controlling for neighborhood physical and social disorder. Factors such as neighborhood poverty, incivilities (e.g., physical and social disorder), and dilapidation of housing are associated with increased resident fear (Ferguson & Mindel, 2007). Other research (Brunton-Smith and Sturgis, 2011) shows that visible signs of disorder and weak social, economic, and structural characteristics increase resident fear. This suggests that individual characteristics may be better seen as moderating the effects of neighborhood structure on fear, rather than having a direct influence. This research suggests that the same adverse conditions highlighted by social disorganization theory may lead to increased fear among residents.

Collective efficacy is presumed to mediate adverse neighborhood structural conditions, but several recent studies suggest that fear may undermine that effect. For instance, Scarborough's (2014) examination of Kansas City neighborhoods found that

fearful residents were less likely to know and trust their neighbors. Neighborhoods characterized by high levels of fear (among residents) also showed low levels of social cohesion. Beyond this, Kleinhans and Bolt's (2014) qualitative analysis showed that residents were much less likely to intervene when they experienced fear, regardless of levels of cohesion within the neighborhood. These results show that "while 'bad' and 'good' neighborhoods clearly differ in terms of collective efficacy, the distinction is much less clear when we focus on actual interventions in unpleasant situations..... Residents who do not feel safe are more likely than others to emphasize the risks of intervening and to refrain from any action" (Kleinhaus and Bolt 2014, p. 440). These studies represent a significant advancement towards understanding the consequences of fear at the neighborhood level, and particularly its relevance for the application of collective efficacy.

While research has explored individual and (some) structural factors associated with fear, this work has largely neglected how fear affects the co-occurrence of social cohesion and informal social control—the two fundamental components of collective efficacy. If deviant opportunity structures exist within a (disadvantaged) neighborhood, signs of social and physical disorder may lead to increased fear among residents. As resident fear increases, individual residents' willingness to intervene (and thus overall neighborhood-level informal social control) will be reduced. Regardless of the methods of informal social control being used, fear may limit ones' capacity for both direct informal intervention and indirect formal intervention (e.g., calling the police). This has serious implications for the utility of collective efficacy to ameliorate adverse structural conditions within a community.

The Current Study

Motivated by research uncovering conflicting and/or unexpected findings regarding the role of collective efficacy in the link between neighborhood structure and crime, the purpose of the current study is to incorporate fear as a “missing piece” in the larger neighborhood effects puzzle. Expanding both social disorganization and collective efficacy theories, this study explores how resident fear may alter individuals’ behavior (and/or even expectations about behavior), undermining the protective role of collective efficacy in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Collective efficacy has become the focal mechanism in tests of social disorganization theory. The actualization of collective efficacy is predicated on residents’ willingness to intervene; however, this neglects the possibility that fear (itself influenced by the same structural conditions linked to crime) may very well undermine residents’ willingness to intervene, thus compromising both the internal consistency of collective efficacy and its overall effect. Drawing on these considerations, the current study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does fear undermine collective efficacy (CE) via its effect on the constituent components of CE: social cohesion and willingness to intervene?
2. Does fear mediate and/or moderate the effects of neighborhood structural conditions (disadvantage and disorder) on collective efficacy?
3. Is the utility of collective efficacy compromised in fearful communities?

METHODS

Data

Data are from Wave I of the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A. FANS), which was collected in 2002 (Pebley and Sastry, 2011). The purpose of L.A.

FANS was to examine neighborhood effects on child development and well-being, as well as the mental and physical health of adults and children. The sampling design consisted of a stratified random sample of 65 neighborhoods (census tracts) in Los Angeles County; poor neighborhoods and households with minor children were oversampled. Although the sampling design was constructed using census tracts, L.A. FANS also collected data at the census block level, which is the smallest geographic unit used by the U.S. Census Bureau and one that tends to correspond to a city block. Households were randomly selected from the 422 census blocks within the 65 census tracts. While there is an extensive literature debating the appropriateness of census tracts as measures of neighborhoods (e.g., Grannis 1998; Sampson et al. 2002; Bernard et al. 2007; Hipp 2007), the use of census tracts as proxies for neighborhoods remains the standard approach in the literature, particularly in analyses of nationally representative or other large-scale secondary data sources. In total, 3,085 households were randomly selected—2,308 with children and 777 without children. Within each household, one adult was randomly selected (identified as the RSA) for the main interview protocol (the adult questionnaire); interviews were completed by 2,619 RSA. Of these adults, 1,081 also completed the primary caregiver (PCG) protocol (an additional 963 PCG interviews were completed by adults not selected as the RSA, but who were identified as the primary caregiver). Interviews were also completed by 2,001 randomly selected children (RSC) and 1,160 siblings (SIB). In total, the sample (across adults, primary caregivers, focal child, and sibling) is comprised of 6,747 respondents.

Analytic Sample

The current study utilizes three sources of L.A. FANS data. First, the adult questionnaire (administered to RSA's) includes general demographic information, measures of neighborhood collective efficacy, an indicator of neighborhood fear, and a measure of victimization in the neighborhood. Computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI) were conducted by trained interviewers in English or Spanish (depending on respondent preference), with self-administered modules used for sensitive questions. In total, 2,619 respondents completed the adult questionnaire. The analytic sample excludes respondents missing on dependent (victimization [$n = 28$]) and independent measures (education [$n = 43$], fear [$n = 41$], race [$n = 4$], and age [$n = 2$]). In total (exclusions not cumulative), 90 cases were excluded due to missing data, resulting in a final analytic sample size of 2,529 respondents. Individual respondents were geocoded with their respective census tract and block numbers, allowing for the aggregation of data to larger geographic units, and the linking of neighborhood contextual and compositional data. The 2,529 respondents were nested in 65 census tracts, with an average of 39 respondents per tract.

Second, the Neighborhood Services and Characteristics (NSC) database contains information on several tract-level characteristics (based on 1990 tract definitions): neighborhood services (e.g., healthcare services/facilities), population characteristics, housing characteristics, family and household socioeconomic status, education, and employment and earnings. Data sources for this information include the 1980, 1990, and 2000 U.S. Censuses, California Association of Realtors, Labor Market Information Group of the California Employment Development Department, and InfoUSA. These

data were appended to the survey data (at the census tract level), and provide information on structural features and indicators of neighborhood disadvantage.

Finally, utilizing a systematic social observation (SSO) approach (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999), the L.A. FANS Neighborhood Observations database contains information on neighborhood disorder collected on the 422 Census blocks in 65 sampled census tracts in Los Angeles County. Census blocks were the smallest geographic unit sampled for L.A. FANS, and all households selected for the study resided in one of these census blocks. Neighborhood observations were completed for each face block and any alleys in the census block by trained interviewers. Face blocks are defined as both sides of the street along one side of a block. Trained observers collected data on the physical and social conditions of face blocks (e.g. presence of abandoned cars, drugs, trash, prostitution, gangs, etc.) An average of three independent observations were completed by separate interviewers, providing multiple observations of face block conditions. These multiple observations (within face blocks) were aggregated to the face block level, then aggregated further to the block, block group, and finally census tract and appended to the survey data from the RSA adult questionnaire.

Measures

Dependent Variables

Collective Efficacy. Residents' perception of neighborhood collective efficacy is comprised of two scales: social cohesion and informal social control. *Social cohesion* is a mean-rating scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$) based on the following 9 items: (1) would you consider this to be a close-knit neighborhood?; (2) are there are adults in the neighborhood that kids can look up to?; (3) are people in the neighborhood willing to

help their neighbors?; (4) your neighbors generally don't get along (reverse coded)?; (5) people in your neighborhood don't share the same values (reverse coded)?; (6) people in your neighborhood can be trusted?; (7) parents in neighborhood know kids friends?; (8) adults in neighborhoods know local kids?; (9) parents in neighborhood know each other? Response options range from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree (recoded to 0 = strongly disagree 4= strongly agree). The 4 items comprising a mean-rating scale of *informal social control* (Cronbach's alpha = .85) gauge respondents' perceptions of whether: (1) neighbors would do something if kid hangs out and causes trouble; (2) there are adults in the neighborhood that watch out that kids are safe; (3) neighbors would do something if they see kids doing graffiti; (4) would scold kid if showing disrespect. Response options for these items ranged from 1 = very likely to 5 = very unlikely (recoded to 0 = very unlikely 4 = very likely). *Social cohesion* and *informal social control* are analyzed separately (as described below) and also combined to produce a scale measure of *collective efficacy* (Cronbach's alpha = .95). Social control, social cohesion, and collective efficacy were grand mean centered (at the tract level) for the multivariate analyses.

Victimization. Neighborhood victimization is measured by responses to the question, "Has a household in this neighborhood been robbed in the past year?" Response options are 1 = yes, 0 = no.

Independent Variables

Fear. Resident *individual fear* was measured by one item asking: "How safe is it to walk around alone in your neighborhood?" with responses ranging from: (1) completely safe; (2) somewhat safe; (3) somewhat dangerous; (4) extremely dangerous.

This variable was reverse-coded to range from 0 = completely safe to 3 = extremely dangerous. *Tract fear* is a tract-level aggregate measure of individual fear, and is centered at the grand mean for analyses. Although criticisms may be raised surrounding the use of perceptions of safety as a proxy for fear, Franklin and colleagues (2008) note that perceptions of safety represent cognitive perceptions of risk associated with neighborhood fear. This measure has been used by multiple studies, and is often incorporated as a baseline for comparison (Franklin et. al., 2008).

Neighborhood Structure. Drawing from social disorganization theory, the analyses include three indicators of neighborhood structure and composition from the L.A. NSC database, created by the L.A. FANS research team. *Concentrated disadvantage* is a tract-level factor-based measure that includes the percentage of residents (1) in poverty, (2) with a family income of under \$24,000, (3) in female headed households, (4) receiving public assistance, (5) non-white, and (6) the population under 18 years of age. *Residential instability* is a factor-based score comprised of the percent of households in multi-unit housing, percent of owner-occupied housing, percent of residents that have lived in their home for the past 5 years, and the percent of non-family households in the tract. Because the original computed measure captures residential stability, I multiplied the score by -1 so that higher scores correspond to *instability*. *Immigrant concentration* is factor-based score of the tract-level percentage of foreign-born residents, percent non-citizen, percent post 1990 immigrants, percent post 1995 immigrants, percent speaking Spanish, and percent Latino.

Neighborhood Disorder. Neighborhood observational data were collected from multiple interviewer observations of face blocks. Trained interviewers reported on their

observation of the presence of 10 indicators of *physical disorder*: (1) abandoned cars, (2) trash or junk, (3) broken glass, (4) drug paraphernalia, (5) empty beer or liquor bottles, (6) cigarette butts or packs, (7) graffiti, (8) painted over graffiti, (9) burned or abandoned homes, and (10) damaged exterior walls. These items were combined into a single scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$). Interviewers also reported whether they were told (1) there was gang activity, (2) prostitutes, (3) homeless people, (4) drug dealers, (5) or drunks on the block and recorded if they directly saw (6) adults loitering or hanging out, (7) prostitutes, (8) homeless people, (9) drug dealers, (10) people drinking, (11) intoxicated people, or (12) heard loud music on the block. These 12 items were combined into a single index of *social disorder* (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$). As noted above, multiple interviewers observed face blocks (mean = 3 observations per block) and these separate observations were aggregated within face blocks, and then face block scores were aggregated to their respective census block and tract level.

Demographic controls. Several individual characteristics were included as control variables in the analyses. Respondent race/ethnicity is measured with four dummy variables created from respondent self-reports of the race/ethnicity with which most identify: *Black*, *Latino*, and *Other* (with *White* as the reference category). Gender is measured via a dummy variable for *female*. Age of the respondent is a continuous indicator, centered at age 18. *Education* is a categorical variable coded as 0 = high school or less, 1 = some college, 2 = college, and 3 = graduate school.

Analytic Strategy

The current study investigates three research questions, each with a unique analytic strategy. Research Question 1—to what extent does fear undermine collective efficacy?—is assessed via a series of bivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models where neighborhood-level social control (a continuous indicator) is regressed on neighborhood-level social cohesion as shown in Equation 1.

$$\hat{y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + e \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

Here, \hat{y} is the predicted level of informal social control. β_0 is the intercept, $\beta_1 x_1$ is the coefficient for informal social control, with a random error of e . These models are stratified by a 3-category indicator of neighborhood-level fear (neighborhoods were classified as *low*, *medium*, or *high* fear based on a trichotomized measure of the neighborhood average of residents' fear [described below]). Equality of coefficients tests are used to test for significant differences in the effect of neighborhood social cohesion on neighborhood social control across levels of neighborhood fear.

The second Research Question—does fear mediate and/or moderate the effects of neighborhood structural conditions on collective efficacy?—is assessed via OLS regression, where collective efficacy (a continuous, neighborhood-level measure) is regressed on neighborhood-level structural disadvantage, disorder, and fear (as shown in Equation 2).

$$\hat{y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \mathbf{StructuralDisadv} + \beta_2 \mathbf{Disorder} + \beta_3 \mathbf{Fear} + e \quad (\text{Eq. 2})$$

Where \hat{y} is the predicted level of collective efficacy; $\beta_1 \mathbf{StructuralDisadv}$ captures the vector of traditional social disorganization variables (concentrated poverty, residential

instability, immigrant concentration), β_2 **Disorder** is a vector representing measures of physical and social disorder, and β_3 **Fear** captures neighborhood-level fear.

Because the indicators are all tract-level measures for the first two research questions, it is not necessary to utilize multilevel modeling. However, Research Question 3—is the utility of collective efficacy compromised in fearful communities?—incorporates both individual- and neighborhood-level predictors of victimization. Thus, for the final research question, I use two-level hierarchical generalized linear models (HGLM) to adjust for the complex structure of the clustered L.A. FANS data, since adults were nested within census tracts. I specified a logit link function for robbery victimization, since the response options for the survey question were dichotomous. In this multilevel model (Equation 3), the level-1 model captures the within-tract variation in residents' reports of victimization in their neighborhood, while the level-2 model captures variation between tracts. Specifically, the level-1 structured model is:

$$\eta_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}\text{Fear} + \beta_{2j}\text{Demographics} \quad (\text{Eq. 3})$$

where η_{ij} are the log odds of robbery victimization for individual i in neighborhood j ; $\beta_{1j}\text{Fear}$ captures individual-level fear and $\beta_{2j}\text{Demographics}$ representing a vector of demographic characteristics (age, gender, race/ethnicity, education). At level-2, I model β_{0j} as a function of the level-2 predictors:

(Eq. 3.1)

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}\text{StructuralDisadv} + \gamma_{02}\text{Disorder} + \gamma_{03}\text{NHProcess}$$

where $\gamma_{01}\text{StructuralDisadv}$ is a vector of measures of neighborhood-level disadvantage, $\gamma_{02}\text{Disorder}$ is a vector of measure of neighborhood disorder, and

γ_{03} **NHProcess** is a vector capturing neighborhood collective efficacy and neighborhood-level fear.

Although respondents are nested within households, the analytic sample is limited to the one randomly selected adult (RSA) for each household; therefore it is not necessary to also account for clustering within households.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents descriptive characteristics of the adult respondents and neighborhoods (census tracts) in the analytic sample ($n = 2,529$ and $n = 65$, respectively). The racial/ethnic composition of the analytic sample is approximately 57% Latino, 27% white, 9% black, and 9% other racial/ethnic background. The majority of the sample a high school education or less (56%), followed by some college (21%), college graduates (15%), and graduate school (8%). The average age of the randomly sampled adult is 22 (range 18-92 years of age), and 59% of the sample is female. The mean of individual fear is 1.192 (range 0-3), suggesting that, on average, residents feel somewhat safe in their neighborhood, which is interesting given that about 43% of respondents report that household robberies have occurred in their neighborhood in the past year. Neighborhood level social cohesion and social control are somewhat modest, with grand means of 2.441 and 2.563, respectively (on 0-4 scales). The range in these scores (from below 2 to just over 3) indicate variation in these social processes between neighborhoods. Measures of structural disadvantage indicate a fair amount of poverty and instability, not surprising

given that poor neighborhoods were oversampled, yet physical and social disorder do not appear particularly high (although ranges do suggest variation between neighborhoods).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Fear and the Formation of Neighborhood Collective Efficacy

Table 2 displays results of the bivariate OLS regressions assessing the association between social cohesion and informal social control across levels of neighborhood fear. Each census tract was classified into one of three categories of neighborhood fear (which was first created by aggregating individual respondent fear [which ranged from 0 – 3] within each tract). Neighborhood-level categories were created by recoding this tract-level fear (which ranged from 0 – 2.081) to reflect neighborhoods with *low* (.95 or less), *medium* (.951-1.5), and *high* (1.51-2.081) levels of fear. Across all three models (M1 – M3) neighborhood social cohesion is positively and significantly associated with neighborhood informal social control, as would be expected. In neighborhoods that residents considered to be close-knit, where people are willing to help their neighbors, neighbors got along, shared the same values, and could be trusted, residents reported that it was more likely that their neighbors would intervene in signs of trouble (e.g., if kids were hanging out and causing trouble, doing graffiti, being unsafe, etc.). These two processes—social cohesion and (informal) social control—co-occur, as explicated in Sampson and colleagues’ (Sampson 1997) introduction of the concept of collective efficacy. However, the strength of the relationship between the two is conditional on overall levels of fear within the neighborhood.

As Model 1 shows, in *low fear* neighborhoods, each 1-unit increase above the grand mean in social cohesion increases informal social control by 0.894. In *medium fear*

neighborhoods the increase is 0.843, while in *high fear* neighborhoods, the increase in informal social control is 0.815. That is, the association between social cohesion and informal social control is somewhat *weaker* in neighborhoods where residents are more fearful. Supplemental analyses (not shown) indicated that both structural disadvantage (particularly concentrated poverty) and structural disorder (physical and social disorder) were significantly associated with increased resident fear; thus, in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods, the ability of residents to actualize their social ties with each other and initiate the social control needed to combat neighborhood problems may be undermined by their own fear (itself enhanced by disadvantage and disorder). In order to assess if these associations were significantly different from each other across levels of neighborhood fear, I conducted an equality of coefficients tests for all three comparisons (*low fear* vs. *medium* and *high fear*; *medium fear* vs. *high fear*). The models indicated that there is a significant difference between effects, but only between *low* and *high fear* neighborhoods. Overall these results indicate that neighborhood fear undermines the association between social cohesion and informal social control.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Unpacking the Disadvantage – Collective Efficacy Link: Neighborhood Disorder and Fear

The introduction of collective efficacy into neighborhood effects scholarship (Sampson et al. 1997) was highly influential for revitalizing social disorganization theory because it illuminated the “process” through which structural characteristics (e.g., poverty, instability) are associated with neighborhood crime: neighborhood poverty contributes to neighborhood crime by undermining neighborhood collective efficacy (the

extent to which residents are able to work together to solve community problems). Yet as the analyses for Research Question 1 revealed, the strength of the association between the core components of collective efficacy—social cohesion and informal social control—are weakened by neighborhood levels of resident fear. Despite a wealth of “neighborhood effects” research on collective efficacy, few scholars have explored *how* neighborhood structural disadvantage undermines collective efficacy, and there has been particularly limited attention to the role of fear. To address this limitation, Research Question 2 explores the role of neighborhood fear in the association between neighborhood structural conditions (disadvantage and physical/social disorder) and collective efficacy.

Model 1 in Table 3 begins with the three key factors originally identified by Shaw and McKay (1942) as contributing to neighborhood social disorganization: concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration. All three are significantly (negatively) associated with neighborhood collective efficacy; that is, neighborhood structural disadvantage undermines collective efficacy—but *how*? Models 2 and 3 attempt to address this question, exploring the role of disorder (physical and social) and fear for understanding how structural conditions undermine collective efficacy. As Model 2 shows, physical (but not social) disorder is negatively associated with collective efficacy; the effect of concentrated disadvantage remains significant, but is somewhat attenuated ($b = -0.181$ reduced to $b = -0.132$).

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Neighborhood-level fear is added in Model 3, itself negatively associated with collective efficacy and undermining further the effect of concentrated disadvantage, suggesting that fear and disorder at least partially mediate the effect of concentrated

disadvantage on collective efficacy. The inclusion of neighborhood-level fear (Model 3) reveals that fear has implications for the effects of physical and social disorder on collective efficacy: it distorts the effect of physical disorder (reversing the direction of the sign from the previous model) and suppresses the effect of social disorder (as social disorder only becomes significant with the inclusion of fear). The suppression of the effect of social disorder on collective efficacy occurs because fear is negatively associated with collective efficacy and social disorder is positively associated with fear. Supplemental analyses (not shown) interacting fear and social disorder reveals that at average levels of both, each measure—independently—is negatively associated with collective efficacy (that is, they both operate in the expected directions). The distortion of the effect of physical disorder on efficacy occurs because the positive association between physical disorder and fear ($r = .89$) is much stronger than the association between physical disorder and collective efficacy (yet, supplemental analyses show that at average levels of both, each measure—independently—is negatively associated with collective efficacy). The positive associations between physical and social disorder and collective efficacy revealed in Model 3 indicate that, net of residents' fear, disorder actually increases collective efficacy. This may be understandable if we consider that awareness of and reaction to neighborhood disorder may increase residents' vigilance and/or their communication with neighbors (particularly about said disorder). However, it is essential to incorporate the role of fear in the associations between disorder and efficacy, which I do in the final model.

Model 4 (Table 3) explores whether fear moderates the effect of neighborhood structural disadvantage and/or disorder on collective efficacy. To test this, I include

interaction terms between neighborhood-level fear and concentrated disadvantage, physical disorder, and social disorder. As expected, fear has important implications for the associations between disadvantage, disorder, and collective efficacy. To facilitate interpretation of the results from Model 4, I graph the effects of concentrated disadvantage, physical disorder, and social disorder on collective efficacy at the three levels of neighborhood fear used in the previous analysis: high, medium, and low fear (see Figures 1-3). As Figure 1 shows, *low fear* neighborhoods are characterized by the highest levels of collective efficacy (as expected); however, collective efficacy decreases significantly in these neighborhoods as concentrated disadvantage increases (net of all else), suggesting that concentrated disadvantage is particularly detrimental to collective efficacy in *low fear* neighborhoods. *High fear* neighborhoods, on the other hand, have considerably low levels of collective efficacy, even at low levels of concentrated disadvantage. The slope of this line is slightly flatter, suggesting that in *high fear* neighborhoods, concentrated disadvantage does not undermine collective efficacy to the same extent that it does in *low fear* neighborhoods. In *high fear* neighborhoods, collective efficacy is already so low, that it essentially cannot go any lower, regardless of disadvantage. Interestingly, even at the highest level of concentrated disadvantage, collective efficacy is substantially higher in *low fear* neighborhoods than it is at any level of disadvantage in *high fear* neighborhoods.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the associations between physical (Figure 2) and social (Figure 3) disorder on collective efficacy at various levels of fear. A very different pattern emerges. In *low fear* neighborhoods, physical disorder (Figure 2) has little to no

effect on collective efficacy—the line is essentially flat. However, in *medium* and especially in *high fear* neighborhoods, increasing physical disorder is actually associated with increased collective efficacy. It is possible, as noted above, that awareness of and reaction to signs of physical disorder may actually prompt residents to be vigilant about disorder and/or speak with their neighbors about such physical disorder. Readers should be cautious, however, in interpreting these results as suggesting that increasing physical disorder may be a strategy to improve collective efficacy in *high fear* neighborhoods; rather, future research would benefit from exploring further the processes through which physical disorder may prompt efficacy in these particular neighborhoods. Supplemental analyses (not shown) replicated the analyses from Model 4 on social cohesion and informal social control separately; findings indicated that the significant effect of physical disorder existed only for informal social control. While further investigation of this unexpected finding is beyond the scope of the current study, it is an important avenue for future research.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

Different patterns by neighborhood fear are also observed for the effect of social disorder on collective efficacy (Figure 3). At the lowest levels of social disorder, collective efficacy is similarly near the grand mean for *low*, *medium*, and *high fear* neighborhoods. However, as social disorder increases, the patterns diverge. In *low fear* neighborhoods, increases in social disorder are actually associated with increases in collective efficacy—that is, in *low fear* neighborhoods, the presence (or perception) of “problem people” (e.g., gangs, drug dealers, homeless people, loiterers, etc.) prompts residents to activate their social networks and engage their social control. This is not

surprising; residents who feel safe in their neighborhoods are likely to take action in response to perceived threats in order to restore/maintain their neighborhood conditions. For *high fear* neighborhoods, however, the story is quite different. The very same types of “problem people” who spur action in *low fear* neighborhoods actually constrict collective efficacy in *high fear* communities. In these neighborhoods, as social disorder increases, collective efficacy is diminished. As Figure 3 illustrates, (and Model 4 confirms) the effect of social disorder in combination with fear is substantial ($b = -3.028^{***}$). Altogether, these results illustrate that neighborhood fear is an overwhelming force undermining collective efficacy, and the interaction between fear and social disorder is particularly detrimental. Structural disadvantage and physical disorder both have implications for collective efficacy (in some unexpected ways), but the effect of social disorder is considerable. While residents are likely to be alarmed by and concerned about signs of physical disorder in their neighborhoods, such as broken windows, graffiti, litter, etc.—and may even be prompted to communicate with their neighbors about this—social disorder seems to be the greater threat to collective efficacy because already-fearful residents are particularly fearful of *people* (e.g., gangs, drug dealers, homeless people, and loiterers).

[Insert Figure 3 about here]

Compromising the Utility of Neighborhood Efficacy: Contextualizing Fear

Research indicates that fearful neighbors are less likely to intervene, trust their neighbors, and form cohesive networks (Scarborough, 2014; Kleinhans & Bolt, 2014). The results of these analyses have so far supported the expectation that fear undermines the association between social control and social cohesion, while also acting as both a

mediator and a moderator for adverse neighborhood conditions. Although these results highlight that neighborhood fear is a significant factor affecting communities, little is known about the role fear may play in undermining the protective effects of collective efficacy. The final stage of analyses examines the effects of neighborhood disadvantage/disorder, fear, and collective efficacy on the odds of neighborhood robbery victimization in order to assess whether fear undermines the utility of collective efficacy. Results are highlighted in Table 4.

Model 1 contains tract-level indicators of structural disadvantage. Concentrated disadvantage is the only significant tract-level characteristic in the model. Although it is associated with a 22.3% increase in the odds of robbery victimization, this effect loses significance with the addition of physical and social disorder (Model 2). Physical disorder has a strong and positive effect on the odds of robbery victimization; each one-unit increase in neighborhood-level physical disorder is associated with 6.4 times greater odds of robbery victimization. Social disorder is (marginally) negatively associated with robbery victimization, but this may be because indicators of social disorder (e.g., people loitering on the street) could also capture the presence of “eyes on the street,” acting as somewhat of a deterrent. Collective efficacy is added in Model 3; it is significant, and in the expected direction (negatively associated with victimization). Each one-unit increase in community collective efficacy is associated with a 56% decrease in the odds of robbery victimization, while also partially mediating the effect of physical disorder. The addition of collective efficacy to this model reduces the effect size and significance level

of physical disorder, highlighting effects of community efficacy in line with Sampson and colleague's (1997) findings.

The next series of models explores whether the protective effect of collective efficacy is compromised by fear. The addition of tract-level fear in Model 4 is a significant predictor of increased odds of robbery victimization. Neighborhood-level fearfulness is associated with an 85% increase in the odds of robbery victimization. Individual-level fear (added in Model 5) also has a significant positive effect on the odds of reporting neighborhood victimization. In both models, the inclusion of fear reduces the effect of collective efficacy to non-significance, as expected. Although collective efficacy has a protective effect for adverse neighborhood structure, results indicate that fear undermines these benefits. In order to explore further the effects of fear, Model 6 includes tract- and individual-level fear; results indicate that neighborhood-level fear is not associated with neighborhood crime above and beyond the effects of individual-level fear (which is associated with a 71% increase in the odds of robbery victimization). The final model (Model 7) adds individual demographic characteristics, which themselves do little to change the observed effects, and are largely not associated with reported neighborhood crime. In this final model, both collective efficacy and concentrated poverty (central correlates of neighborhood crime in the bulk of neighborhood effects research) remain non-significant, while fear continues to be an important correlate of crime and something that very likely undermines the utility of collective efficacy.

[Insert Table 4 about here]

Discussion

Although initial investigation was limited by the available data at the time, early research on neighborhood effects illustrated the associations between social structure and crime. Neighborhoods characterized by poverty, racial/ethnic heterogeneity, and residential instability were found to have higher rates of offenders regardless of changing demographics (Shaw and McKay, 1942). As research progressed, a broad range of structural factors were proposed to affect social networks and interaction between neighbors. The work of Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) propelled the advancement of social disorganization theory by highlighting the significance of friendship/kinship networks and associational ties. These findings led to a revival of early neighborhoods research, more direct testing of structural correlates of crime (Sampson and Groves, 1989), and—perhaps most importantly—the development of construct of collective efficacy (Sampson et al. 1997). Perceptions of social cohesion and informal social control were found to be key indicators of the social processes that account for the effects of structural disadvantage.

Collective efficacy has become a core construct in capturing social mechanisms within communities. As research has expanded to include a broad range of neighborhoods in various geographic regions, inconsistencies in findings have raised questions about the extent of contexts across which collective efficacy may be applied. Drawing from research on the behavioral effects of fear, the current study addressed three research questions aimed at expanding social disorganization and collective efficacy theories. First, I “unpacked” collective efficacy, exploring the extent to which fear weakens the association between the constituent components: social cohesion and

willingness to intervene. The analyses illustrated that the association between social cohesion and informal social control is attenuated in high fear neighborhoods (see Table 2.). This suggests that fear may be limiting the ability of residents to both form cohesive networks and use those networks for the purpose of social control.

Second, I assessed whether neighborhood-level fear mediated and/or moderated the effects of neighborhood disadvantage and disorder on collective efficacy. Here, tract-level analyses suggested that neighborhood fear has both moderating and mediating effects (see Table 3; Figures 1-3). Although indicators of structural disadvantage remained negatively associated with collective efficacy, tract-level fear attenuated their effects and itself significantly undermined neighborhood efficacy. Further, significant interaction terms indicated that fear has a moderating effect as well, suggesting that what may be most detrimental to collective efficacy is not structural disadvantage and/or disorder, *per se*, but rather residents' fear. It also appears that residents are particularly fearful of the presence of social disorder in their neighborhoods—gangs, drug dealers, homeless people, loiterers—more so than the physical indicators of disadvantage.

Given that fear undermines the internal consistency of collective efficacy (Research Question 1) and both mediates and moderates the effects of neighborhood disadvantage and disorder on collective efficacy (Research Question 2), we are left wondering about the overall impact of fear on collective efficacy. That is, does collective efficacy still “work?” The final stage of analyses (Research Question 3) examined the extent to which fear undermines the function of collective efficacy via neighborhood residents' reports of household robbery victimization (see Table 4). The results indicated that collective efficacy mediates the effects of adverse neighborhood conditions, and

itself is directly associated with lower odds of robbery. These results are not surprising, as they are consistent with the crime/efficacy relationship proposed and illustrated by Sampson and colleagues (1997). However, existing research has yet to consider the role of fear, and the current study shows that the protective benefits of collective efficacy are diminished when one accounts for residents' fear. Furthermore, neighborhoods characterized by high levels of fear also see an increase in the odds of robbery victimization. Based on these results, it appears that fear does significantly undermine the utility of collective efficacy, which is particularly problematic given that the neighborhoods most in need of the protective benefits of collective efficacy (those experiencing the highest levels of disorder and disadvantage) are the very neighborhoods most fearful. Overall, these results suggest that the individual and community context of fear have important implications for the utility of the collective efficacy construct, social disorganization theory, and the larger field of neighborhood effects research.

Interestingly, while the advent of social disorganization theory shifted theorizing away from types of people to types of places, the results illustrated here suggest that residents may fear people more than places. Without considering where and how fear arises (and of whom we are fearful), or the behavioral effects of fear on community organization, models fail to account for a mechanism that results in significant neighborhood variations in social relationships and their implications for combating neighborhood crime and deviance.

Limitations

In light of the findings discussed above, there are a few limitations to note. First, the data are limited to residents of Los Angeles County; thus the findings are not

generalizable outside of this particular geographic area. Rather than providing evidence of universal patterns, the current study can be understood as providing evidence that—more generally—speaks to the need to explore neighborhood variation in both the correlates and consequences of collective efficacy. Second, the analyses are cross-sectional, limiting the ability to draw any strong causal statements regarding the association between fear and collective efficacy, and perhaps even fear and physical and/or social disorder; however, results indicate several significant associations that warrant future exploration. Third, analyses were limited to a unidimensional measure of fear that captured respondent perceptions’ of danger in their neighborhood. Future research would benefit from examining multiple dimensions of fear (e.g. fear of neighborhood, walking in neighborhood at night, or being alone at home). Forth, the victimization measure is not ideal. Although scholars (e.g., Burchfield and Silver, 2013) have used it as an indicator of “neighborhood crime,” it is an individual-level question that asks residents if they are aware of “households in the neighborhood that have been robbed in the past year,” thus possibly measuring awareness of crime more so than actual crime (additionally, this phrasing conflates robbery [a violent personal crime] with burglary [a property crime]). Lastly, data surrounding the presence of physical and social disorder were collected by trained observers. The perceptions of community members may be greatly different from those tasked with collecting this data. Observers may be primed to cite signs of disorder, which may introduce some bias into data collection. This brings some uncertainty to the accuracy of how people are classified as a prostitute or member of a gang.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding these limitations, the current study makes a number of contributions to existing research on neighborhood effects and collective efficacy. This research used tract level data to examine the extent to which fear affects community social mechanisms. Results indicate that (1) neighborhood fear affects the association between social cohesion and informal social control, (2) neighborhood fear undermines collective efficacy while mediating and moderating the effects of community disorder and disadvantage, and (3) fear undermines the utility of collective efficacy. These findings could be expanded through a number of avenues for future research. For instance, analyses that incorporate respondents' perceptions of their neighborhood size may increase the accuracy of these models. Additionally, longitudinal data would provide information on causality, which is crucial for understanding these vital social processes. Research should also continue to test the association between fear and community processes in a variety of geographic settings. The findings demonstrated herein speak to the need for incorporating fear into neighborhood effects research as a vital social mechanism with a broad range of influence. In addition, scholars and policy makers should identify the neighborhood features that exacerbate resident fear (e.g., social and physical disorder), and intervene in ways that limit resident exposure to these adverse conditions. Specifically, the results shown here highlight social disorder as particularly devastating to neighborhood efficacy. Residents are reacting to the presence of signs of disorder (e.g. loitering, drunks, gangs, etc.), but the way they react to this disorder is tied to cognitive perceptions of fear surrounding perceptions of safety and danger. Fear is particularly detrimental to collective efficacy; neighborhood social disorder contributes significantly to resident fear and the combination of the two hampers neighborhood

collective efficacy considerably. Intervention strategies that aim to increase residents' social ties/cohesion and/or improve citizen-police contact (e.g., community-oriented policing strategies [COPS]) are unlikely to be effective unless issues of resident fear are addressed. As the current study illustrates, neighborhoods can be collective without being efficacious. It is not simply a matter of cleaning up physical disorder or enhancing socialization—the fundamental issue is one of safety. As perceptions of fear decrease in neighborhoods, it follows that neighbors will develop stronger connections, increased trust, and a willingness to intervene for the greater good of their neighborhood.

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Appendix

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of Analytic Sample^a

	Mean/%	SD ^b	Range	
<i>Neighborhood Outcomes</i>				
<i>Neighborhood Crime</i>				
Robbery Victimization	42.70			
<i>Neighborhood Processes</i>				
Collective Efficacy ^c	2.502	0.299	1.851	3.179
Social Cohesion ^c	2.441	0.286	1.761	3.021
Social Control ^c	2.563	0.326	1.942	3.360
<i>Level-2 Indicators</i>				
<i>Structural Disadvantage^d</i>				
Concentrated Disadvantage	0.512	1.142	-1.247	2.868
Residential Instability	0.233	0.943	-1.310	2.171
Immigrant Concentration	0.534	1.065	-1.225	3.108
<i>Neighborhood Disorder</i>				
Physical Disorder ^c	0.417	0.177	0.108	0.666
Social Disorder ^c	0.084	0.037	0.022	0.212
Neighborhood Fear ^c	1.195	0.447	0.256	2.081
<i>Level-1 Indicators</i>				
Resident Fear	1.192	0.804	0	3
<i>Demographics</i>				
Gender				
Female	59.10			
Male	40.90			
Age	21.58	14.40	0	73
Education				
High school or less	55.80			
Some college	21.00			
College graduate	15.20			
Graduate school	8.00			
Race/Ethnicity				
Latino	56.70			
White	27.40			
Black	9.60			
Other	9.10			

Notes:

^a Source: Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Study (L.A. FANS), 2002 (n = 65 census tracts, n = 2,529 respondents); ^b Standard deviations and ranges not shown for dichotomously coded variables; ^c Measures grand mean centered (across all census tracts) for multivariate analyses; ^d Measures are factor based composite scores created by L.A. FANS

Table 2. The Role of Fear in the Formation of Collective Efficacy: Associations Between Neighborhood Social Cohesion and **Neighborhood Informal Control** by Neighborhood-Level Fear, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Coefficients

	Neighborhood-Level Fear		
	M2: Medium		M3: High Fear
	M1: Low Fear	Fear	
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Intercept	0.074***	-0.014**	-0.085***
Neighborhood Cohesion ^b	0.894*** ^c	0.843***	0.815***
<i>F</i>	1425.55***	1229.10***	909.41***
<i>R</i> ²	0.625	0.594	0.524

Notes:

^a Source: Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Study (L.A. FANS), 2002 (n = 65 census tracts, n = 2,529 respondents); ^b Indicator grand mean centered; ^c Coefficient significantly different from coefficient in “high fear” model

†*p* < 0.10, **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.01, ****p* < 0.001 (two-tailed)

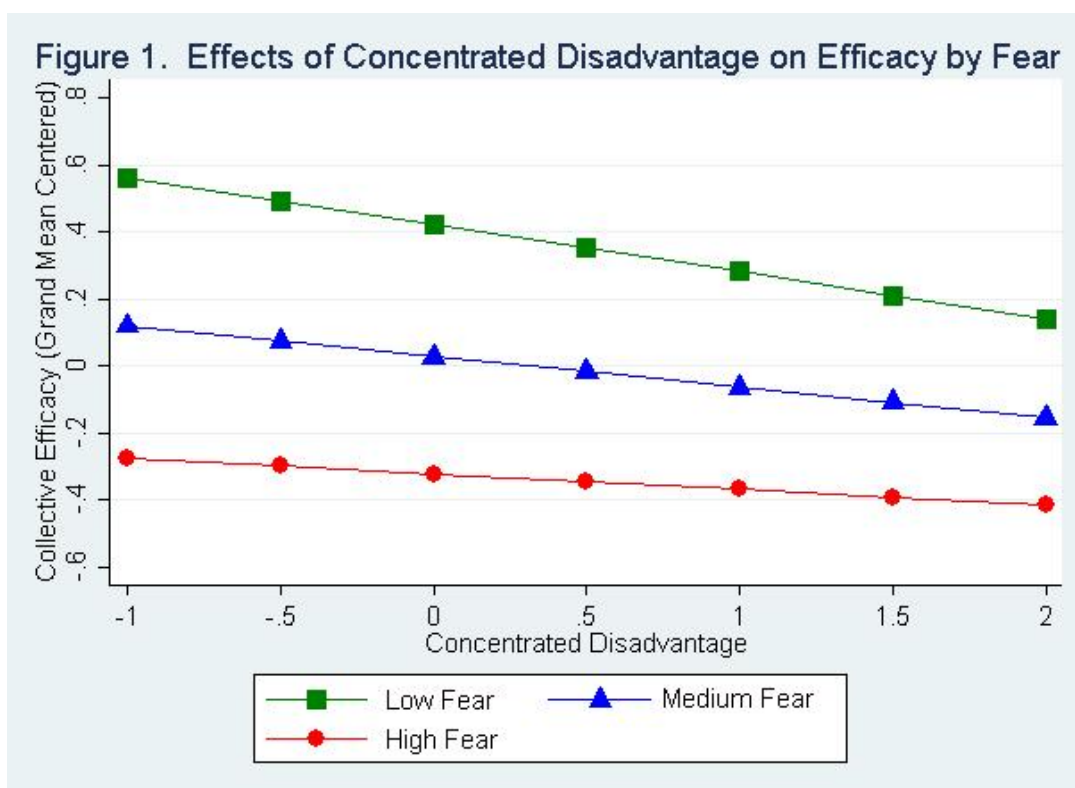
Table 3. The Effect of Neighborhood Structural Disadvantage and Disorder on Collective Efficacy, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Coefficients^a

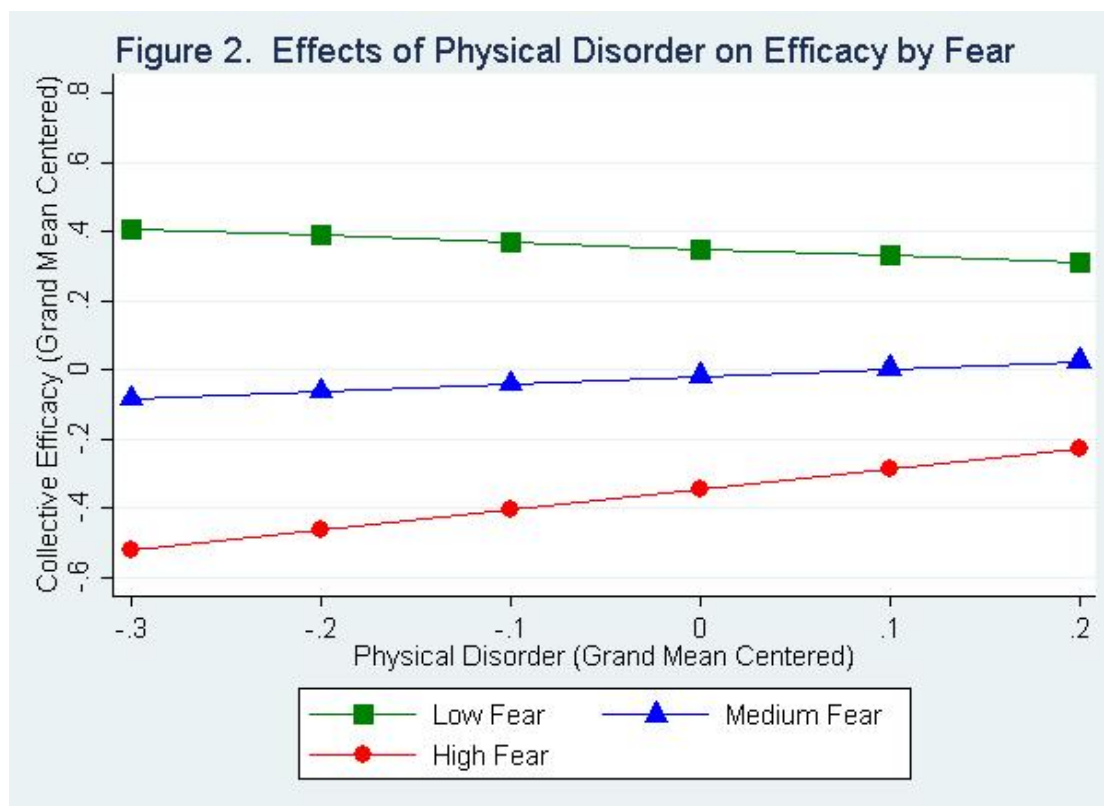
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Intercept	0.121***	0.081***	0.076***	0.058***
<i>Structural Disadvantage</i>				
Concentrated Disadvantage	-0.181***	-0.132***	-0.088***	-0.089***
Residential Instability	-0.062***	-0.064***	-0.037***	-0.037***
Immigrant concentration	-0.025***	0.003	-0.043***	-0.039***
<i>Neighborhood Disorder</i> ^b				
Physical Disorder		-0.526***	0.209***	0.215***
Social Disorder		0.156	0.532***	1.080***
Neighborhood Fear ^b			-0.399***	-0.437***
<i>Interactions</i>				
Disadvantage x NH Fear				0.055***
Physical Disorder x NH Fear				0.451***
Social Disorder x NH Fear				-3.028***
<i>F</i>	2577	1657	2076	1698
<i>R</i> ²	0.754	0.766	0.832	0.825

Notes:

^a Source: Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Study (L.A. FANS), 2002 (n = 65 census tracts, n = 2,529 respondents); ^b Coefficient grand mean centered

†*p* < 0.10, **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.01, ****p* < 0.001 (two-tailed)





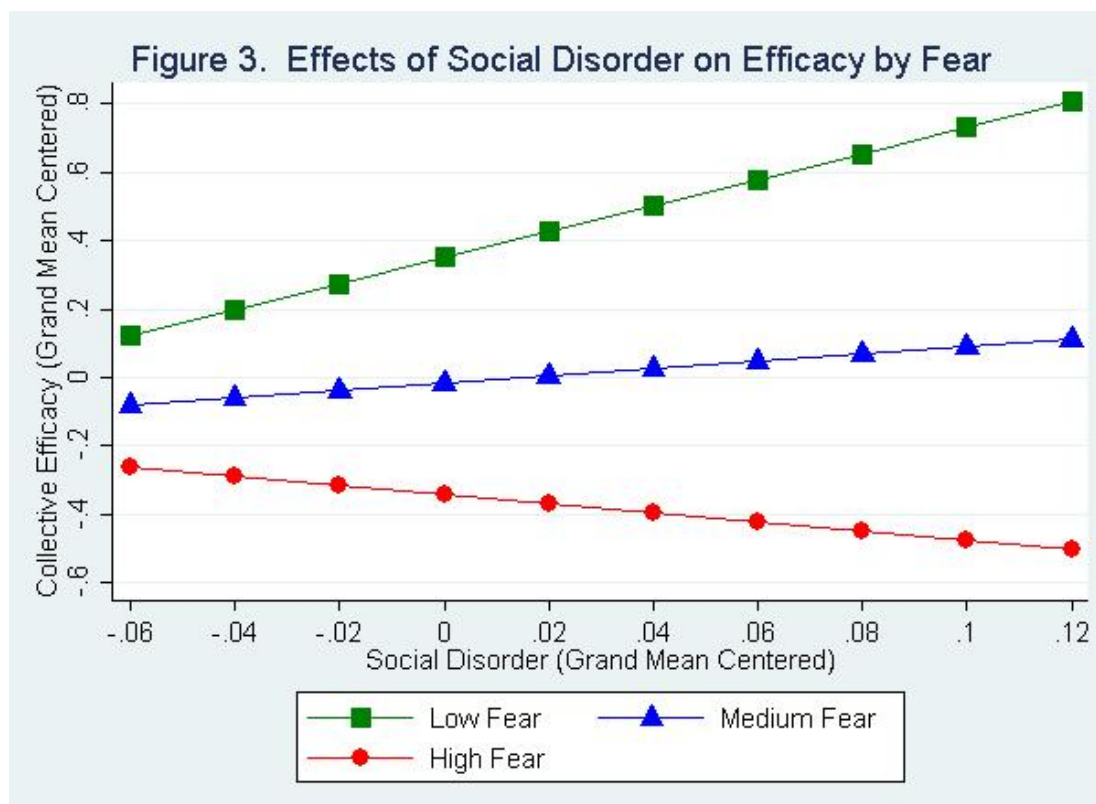


Table 4. Structural Disadvantage, Collective Efficacy, and Fear on Victimization, Odds Ratios from Binary Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models (HGLM)^a

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR
Intercept	0.692***	0.749***	0.799***	0.776***	0.405***	0.406***	0.417***
<i>Level-2 Indicators</i>							
Structural Disadvantage							
Concentrated Disadvantage	1.223***	1.113	0.999	0.988	0.990	0.989	1.039
Residential Instability	0.905	0.934	0.886†	0.875*	0.874*	0.873*	0.848**
Immigrant concentration	0.983	0.913	0.919	0.985	0.975	0.984	1.027
Neighborhood Disorder ^b							
Physical Disorder		6.406**	4.046†	1.617	1.861	1.643	2.135
Social Disorder		0.009†	0.011*	0.006**	0.005**	0.005**	0.002***
Neighborhood Processes ^b							
Collective Efficacy			0.438**	0.673	0.626	0.664	0.607
Fear				1.849*		1.093	1.139
<i>Level-1 Indicators</i>							
Fear					1.720***	1.714***	1.709***
Demographics							
Education							1.183***
Age ^c							1.003
Female							0.908
Latino ^d							0.812
Black							0.711†
Other Race/Ethnicity							0.595***
<i>Random Effects</i>							
Level-2 intercept	0.073	0.053	0.037	0.026	0.032	0.032	0.031
-2 Log Likelihood	3417.889	3409.638	3403.687	3399.075	3323.863	3323.774	3311.079

Notes:

^a Source: Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Study (L.A. FANS), 2002 (n = 65 census tracts, n = 2,529 respondents); ^b Coefficient grand mean

centered; ^c Coefficient centered at age 18; ^d Reference category is White

†p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001 (two-tailed)