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UMI
An Examination of the Community-level Variables Associated with Street Crime and how they have been Affected by the Welfare State.

(C) Kiall Weiske

Submitted to the Department of Criminology, University of Ottawa, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Criminology.

1998
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Abstract

The volume of conventional street crime in society is influenced, to a considerable extent, by numerous community-level variables. These community properties exert an influence over the frequency of predatory criminal behaviour which is independent from that of individual-level characteristics. There are two broad categories of community variables which affect the volume of criminal conduct within an area - cultural and structural. The former refers to the relative balance between commitment to individualistic and communitarian values. Although neither cultural condition can be described as entirely emancipatory or destructive in nature, by virtue of encouraging the establishment of social networks which evoke duties and responsibilities towards others which strengthens the primary institutions of social integration and control, moderately communitarian societies are prone to experiencing lower levels of street crime than moderately individualistic societies. Community structure refers to the actual neighbourhood properties which are directly associated with criminal behaviour. These include residential mobility, unemployment, poverty, the physical condition of the local infrastructure and building stock, and crime itself. Both community culture and structure are highly sensitive to the pressures of broad political economic forces, including those of the modern welfare state. The institutionalization of welfare provision in the United States has undermined communitarianism and has encouraged residential mobility, the concentration of poverty, the concentration of unemployment, and to a lesser extent, the physical deterioration of neighbourhoods.
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Introduction

Although the primary concern of criminology has traditionally been limited to gaining an understanding of personal criminal involvement and developing intervention strategies that will change individuals, and upon occasion, families, (Clarke 1980), there nevertheless exists an important body of literature which indicates that community structures and cultures also bear tremendous influence over rates of offending (Hope & Shaw 1988; Sampson 1995; Bursik & Grasmick 1995). Evidence gathered by researchers working from within this framework suggests that the volume of crime experienced within a particular community is affected by the properties of the community itself, independent of the individual characteristics of local residents (Bursik 1988; Sampson 1995; Hope 1995; Bursik & Grasmick 1993:29; Sampson 1994; Skogan 1986a). Residential mobility, the concentration of poverty, and lack of home ownership are only three examples of neighbourhood properties which have been found to be closely associated with criminal behaviour (Sampson 1995; Bursik 1988).

Factors such as these facilitate crime because they undermine our collective capacity for exercising informal social control; they inhibit community institutions from effectively transmitting and enforcing norms and guidelines concerning appropriate codes of conduct. Thus, according to the logic of this approach, crime and victimization can be reduced by developing and strengthening the institutions which serve to integrate and regulate communities. These include the family, friendship networks,
various political and social organizations, means of employment, public and private agencies, and administrative structures (Hope & Shaw 1988). Such institutions are said to function most effectively when they complement and mutually reinforce the formal organizations of the criminal justice system - the police, the courts, and the prison system (Hope & Shaw 1988:2).

The idea that communities should be the target of measures aimed at reducing crime and victimization has been a flourishing theme in the theory and practice of criminological intervention of late. This development has, to a considerable extent, been fuelled by a growing consensus amongst politicians and academics over the importance of preventing rather than simply reacting to crime (Hastings 1996). The increasing priority afforded to proactive social control measures has generated a broader awareness of the importance of both involving and strengthening communities for the purposes of achieving reductions in crime and victimization. However, there are important limitations to this approach; the influence of community structure and culture on criminal conduct is restricted to a relatively narrow range of offenses - predatory street crimes. State and white-collar crimes are, for all practical purposes, immune to the pressures of the community; they remain unaffected by the extent to which local communities are able to integrate and control their members (Bursik 1988). Similarly, conventional crimes for which there may be relatively high levels of tolerance, such as drug use, also tend to remain unaffected by the degree to which communities are integrated (Braithwaite 1989). However, such tolerance, which varies
considerably by community, is limited to the illicit act itself, and not its corollary behaviours; whereas there may be considerable tolerance for the private use of narcotics, the same does not hold true for their street-level sale.

The relationship between communities and predatory street crime is one of the central concerns of this thesis, which for present purposes, can be summarized as follows: when neighbourhoods are no longer able to effectively integrate and regulate their members, the volume of street crime increases. The cultural and structural conditions which affect the ability of local communities to perform these functions will be examined in detail. In terms of culture, this includes the relative balance between commitment to individualistic and communitarian values. By encouraging the development of social networks which invoke duties and responsibilities towards others, communitarianism strengthens the primary institutions of informal social control and thereby prevents manifestations of criminal behaviour (Braithwaite 1989). In terms of structure, these include the actual physical and social properties of a neighbourhood which directly influence the volume of crime within its boundaries. Specific examples include poverty rates, the physical condition of the local public infrastructure and private building stock, and levels of unemployment.

The relationship between street crime and community structures and cultures is not a recent "discovery" of criminal justice researchers and policy-makers. Quite to the contrary, there exists a long and rich
tradition of criminological literature on this complex relationship which can at least be traced as far back as the 1920s and the work of University of Chicago sociologists. Largely, though not exclusively, owing to the global devastation caused by World War I, 1920s America underwent a period of rapid social change characterized by large increases in urbanization, technologicalization, industrial and agricultural consolidation, political centralization, industrialization, and immigration (Pfohl 1985:139). The pace and magnitude of these changes caused considerable tension and anxiety in many sectors of American society, particularly amongst those who were most affected, such as the urban poor and rural labourers, and ultimately culminated in a heightened level of social conflict. Direct manifestations of this increased dissension included strikes, urban riots, organized political protests, and in some areas, street crime (Pfohl 1985:140). Against this backdrop, sociologists from the University of Chicago abandoned previous individually centred constitutional and hedonistic explanations of crime, and concluded that deviance was the natural outcome of rapid social change. When social transformations occur swiftly, normative dissensus arises and thereby impedes the effective transmission and reinforcement of social norms (Pfohl 1985:139). This in turn was believed to strip communities of the ability to control the behaviour of their residents. The concept of "social disorganization" was thus introduced by University of Chicago sociologists to describe situations where the assumed standard processes of socialization and informal control break down.

The first major contributors to this thesis were W.I. Thomas and
Florian Znaniecki who, based upon their analysis of the experiences of Polish immigrants in large American cities such as Chicago, first formulated the notion of social disorganization (Thomas & Znaniecki 1958). These researchers noted that many immigrant families and communities, arriving in large numbers to an already destabilized social environment, were unable to adequately socialize and supervise their individual members - the processes of informal social control were weakened to the point of near collapse. Consequently, many recent immigrants were believed to have experienced a normative vacuum whereby they abandoned their "old world" norms without having yet internalized those of their adopted community (Pfohl 1985:146). When this occurred, such individuals were presumed to be more susceptible to various forms of personal and social disorganization, including criminality, illness, and mental disorder. Using these observations as the basis of their conceptualization, Thomas and Znaniecki introduced the notion of social disorganization, which they defined as "a decrease of the influence of existing social rules of behavior upon individual members of the group" (cited in Pfohl 1985:145).

The social disorganization thesis as well as the other early community-centred approaches that will be discussed later, it should be noted, were plagued by two major limitations. First, their approach assumed that normative consensus was pervasive throughout American civil society, thereby ignoring or simply dismissing the presence of extensive ethnic, racial, class, religious, and ideological conflict (Bursik 1988). Second, these early approaches also relied exclusively on official
statistics to inform their analyses of the relationship between communities and crime (Bursik 1988). Consequently, their models and explanations of this relationship embodied the inherent biases of such records. Despite these weaknesses, however, the early community-centred approaches like social disorganization theory did nevertheless provide some important insights into the study of street crime and are thus worthy of further discussion.

Writing in the mid-1920s, Robert Park and Ernest Burgess significantly expanded the original formulation of Thomas and Znaniecki by introducing an ecological model to the study of disorganization (Pfohl 1985:146). Building upon the principle that rapid social change resulted in the breakdown of informal controls, these authors injected the idea that certain "natural areas" were prone to experiencing higher levels of deviance than others. According to the logic of their approach, "high-deviance areas were spatially the most susceptible to the competitive invasion of the forces of rapid change. Low-deviance areas were least susceptible" (Pfohl 1985:147). Evidence to support these assertions was gathered through a process of identifying and studying the characteristics of the "natural physical areas" of the city of Chicago. Five concentric zones were identified, each of which possessed a population whose qualities, interests, and cultural characteristics were both similar to, and inherently different from, one another. At the centre of the five zones was Chicago’s central business district, a dynamic area from which most urban social change originated. Levels of deviance were highest in the zone which immediately surrounded the
constantly growing entrepreneurial core, and progressively diminished as one moved further away from this epicentre of social change (Pfohl 1985:149).

Other important contributors to the social disorganization perspective were Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay. After studying some 56,000 juvenile court records from the city of Chicago during the late 1920s, and extending the analysis of the ecological distribution of delinquency to other American cities during the late-1930s and early-1940s, these sociologists concluded that:

1. the spatial distribution of delinquency was uneven;
2. delinquency rates were highest in the "natural areas" closest to the central business district (transitional zones);
3. transitional zones consistently reported the highest levels of delinquency, regardless of the changing ethnic composition of their residents; and
4. zones which experienced the highest levels of delinquency also had the highest presence of factors presumed to be indicative of social disorganization, including low percentages of home ownership, cultural heterogeneity, and high percentages of welfare dependence (Pfohl 1985:149-150).

Whereas previous Chicago school sociologists had focused almost entirely on the normative aspect of social disorganization, Shaw and McKay injected a class dimension into their analysis. Specifically, they found that socioeconomic status was closely related to the distribution
of deviance - high crime areas consistently suffered from high levels of poverty (Pfohl 1985:150). However, aside from identifying economic deprivation as a potentially powerful explanation for criminal motivation, these researchers remained primarily concerned with the "disorganizational forces which freed the individual from the scrutiny and control of conventional society" (Pfohl 1985:150). Like the other Chicago school sociologists before them, they believed that rapid social change rendered some communities unable to effectively socialize and control their individual members, thereby predisposing these areas to experiencing high levels of crime. Based upon these assumptions, they believed the logical target of intervention should be the community itself.

The reason Shaw and McKay supported targeting intervention programs at communities rather than individuals did not arise from a conviction that "individualized methods of curbing delinquency - by inculcating moral values or providing standards of guidance - would be ineffective, but that the institutional infrastructure for implementing these methods was lacking" (Hope 1995:26, emphasis in original). Without strong community institutions to transmit norms about appropriate conduct and to enforce their compliance, programs targeting specific individuals for moral transformation would be futile. Thus, in order to compensate disadvantaged communities for their lack of institutional infrastructure, in 1932 Clifford Shaw established what is generally regarded as the first community focused crime prevention program - the Chicago Area Project. Introduced in six small areas of Chicago, the aim of the Project was to
encourage the development of social links with and between community residents in order to improve their collective capacity for socialization; the Project sought to increase social cohesion. Measures employed to achieve this goal included providing recreational opportunities for children, organizing campaigns to improve neighbourhood conditions, and establishing outreach programs (curbstone counselling) for gang-involved and troubled youths (Hope 1995:27). Although there is little evaluative evidence to suggest that the Chicago Area Project was successful in reducing crime and victimization (Hope 1995), as the first major crime prevention effort to target communities rather than individuals, its contribution should not be overlooked or underestimated.

During the 1960s, a new approach to community level intervention emerged. Known as the resource-mobilization model, this approach provided the conceptual framework for the community action programs of the often maligned "War on Poverty" (Hope 1995:35). Drawing heavily on Cloward and Ohlin’s opportunity-structure theory, this model suggested that it was insufficient to simply promote social cohesion if communities lacked the necessary resources to address the structural conditions that were undermining their cohesion. The heavy concentration of "offenders and poverty in certain neighbourhoods was seen no longer to reflect merely the deficiencies of indigenous institutions but the neighbourhood’s powerlessness and inability to capture economic resources that the urban process was distributing inequitably" (Hope 1995:35). Emphasis was thus placed on addressing the perceived root causes of offending, including unemployment, poverty, poor living conditions, and
discrimination. The goal of the resource-mobilization model was to empower local communities through the transfer of economic and political resources, provide disadvantaged youth with a stake in conformity, and relieve the frustrations caused by relative deprivation and blocked access to the legitimate opportunity structure.

Similar to the Chicago Area Project, evaluative evidence suggests that the community action programs of the resource mobilization model had no meaningful impact on crime and victimization rates (Hope 1995). While supporters claim the programs were simply under-resourced, their failure nevertheless served as a springboard for the rapid ascendency of a new paradigm in community crime prevention. Emerging during the 1970s, the "community defense" model stressed the need to enlist the support and active participation of residents in the maintenance of law and order in their local neighbourhoods (Currie 1988). Firmly grounded in deterrence theory, the differing variations of the community defense model all share an implicit "us versus them" attitude. Currie (1988:281) summarizes their conceptualization of the relationship between offenders and the community as follows:

Offenders are outsiders, strangers - as in Neighbourhood Watch, where the job is to monitor your 'turf' to see that 'they' don't get in; or in the environmental design model where you try and design them out in the first place; or in the 'broken windows' model, where they are defined as something like internal outsiders - unruly kids, marginal people - and the task is to get them off the street and out of the picture (Currie 1988:281).

The apparent failure of the anti-poverty programs of the preceding decade to measurably reduce crime was taken as definitive proof by
ideological conservatives that liberal social programs were not an effective means of controlling crime. As conservative governments began to be voted into power, the notion that crime rates could be reduced if residents simply assumed greater responsibility for detecting and reporting unlawful behaviour as well as protecting their own property had obvious political appeal. Community defense approaches offered the promise of not only reducing crime, but of doing so at a much lower cost than the failed social programs of the 1960s (Hope 1995:43). While there is some evidence indicating that measures which alter the physical environment are effective at reducing certain forms of property crime (Wilkinson 1977; Clarke 1992; Mayhew et al. 1976), research on the impact of programs designed to improve informal social control mechanisms and/or increase the efficiency of the criminal justice system through community mobilization has predominantly yielded negative results (Rosenbaum 1988).

Communities and Crime

Several important points emerge from this historical review of community intervention strategies. First, mobilizing communities and strengthening their basic institutions of integration and regulation has proven to be extremely difficult, especially in those areas which could most benefit from such efforts (Skogan 1986a; Rosenbaum 1987). Second, even when a degree of mobilization is achieved, participation rates tend to drop off rather quickly (Skogan 1990; Rosenbaum 1987). Third, efforts to mobilize whole communities around single issues such as crime, education, or poverty have generally achieved very little success (Skogan 1986b; Norris 1997).
However, despite the general failure of past community intervention strategies to appreciably reduce crime, the relationship between offending rates and community culture and structure remains undeniable; when communities are no longer able to effectively integrate or regulate their members, crime escalates (Rosenbaum 1988). Social disintegration has in fact been identified as one of the most important contributing factors to the apparent increase in official crime rates experienced throughout a preponderance of Western nations since the end of the Second World War: "The recent development of Western societies has been associated with a decline of interdependency and communitarianism and a progressive uncoupling of punishment and shaming. This has been a period when urbanization, residential mobility, delayed marriage and marriage breakdown, and an explosion of the 15–25 age group have occurred in most countries" (Braithwaite 1989:106). Stated differently, social, economic, and demographic changes transpiring since the end of World War II have weakened the ability of community institutions to socialize and control their individual members.

Most research on the relationship between communities and crime has focused either upon identifying the variables associated with the onset of community decline (Skogan 1986a; Schuerman & Kobrin 1986, Currie 1997), or on the dynamics of informal social control (Rosenbaum 1988; Bursik & Grasmick 1993, Bursik & Grasmick 1995). While these issues are both crucial for understanding the overall connection between crime and community structures and cultures, together they nevertheless only provide a partial explanation. The element which has received less
attention from researchers is the link between the ability of communities to integrate and control their members and the broader political economic environment in which they are located. For instance, while considerable attention has been conferred on how the concentration of poverty within specific geographic areas impedes these informal processes from working effectively (Currie 1997), analyses connecting unemployment to broad transformations in the structure of capitalist economies have been comparatively less common. Therefore, although research has established that community-level properties influence the volume of street crime, the explanatory powers of such properties have not been adequately grounded within a framework of the changing political economic environment.

**Thesis Statement**

There exists a long tradition of research indicating that the frequency of many conventional forms of street crime is influenced by the extent to which communities are able to integrate and regulate their members. Following in this tradition, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the community-level variables associated with offending, and to assess how they have been affected by the emergence of the modern welfare state. These variables, as noted earlier, fall into two general categories - cultural and structural. The former refers to the extent that local communities, and indeed whole societies, have developed a dense system of social networks grounded in communitarian principles. The latter refers to the actual neighbourhood properties or characteristics which are directly associated with criminal behaviour. Since a significant majority of the available material necessary for
undertaking this project is American, and owing to the inherent dangers of attempting to crudely transfer data and analytical models from the material context of their origins, this analysis will focus primarily on the United States.

Before proceeding, an important issue needs to be addressed. The underlying principle of this thesis is that "there are important community-level dynamics related to crime that are not simple reifications of individual motivational processes" (Bursik 1988:521). However, this assumption is somewhat misleading because in reality it is extremely difficult to distinguish between the effects of community- and individual-level characteristics on illegal behaviour. Whereas group dynamics exert an influence that transcends individual propensities, community structures and cultures are themselves greatly affected by the properties of their individual members; since individuals are the basic unit upon which all social institutions are constructed, including those of integration and control, personal characteristics are integral to understanding group dynamics. The criminogenic influence of community structures and cultures cannot be properly understood in isolation from the influence of individual propensities.

The difficulty of separating individual- and community-level influences also reflects the complexity of human nature; humans are both individualistic and social beings. To be emotionally healthy and stable, people need to develop both affective social bonds and a strong sense of individuality (Etzioni 1995). Humans are thus characterized by a desire
to embed themselves within social networks or groups while simultaneously developing and retaining elements of their own identity. These individualistic and communitarian propensities result in a tension which effectively impedes individuals from either remaining unaffected by group dynamics or from being totally engulfed by them (Baron & Byrne 1994:358-362; Etzioni 1995). Therefore, studying the relationship between community characteristics and crime necessarily involves discussing individual motivational processes to some extent because these two levels of variables are deeply interconnected and cannot be logically separated from one another; "group- and individual-level dynamics are actually complementary components of a comprehensive theory of crime" (Bursik 1988:523).

With this in mind, the first chapter of this thesis broadly examines the relationship between the cultural condition of communitarianism and crime. First, the concept is precisely defined. Next, its political and social implications, both positive and negative, are compared with those of individualism. Finally, direct evidence of its mitigating influence on conventional street crime is provided through an examination of its central importance in both Japanese and Swiss culture, two very low-crime societies.

The second chapter examines the actual social dynamics which enable communities to evoke conformity from their members. First, the importance of the differing levels of community integration and control on local crime rates are discussed. This is followed by an examination
of the influence of social support in fostering legal conformity.

The third chapter examines the structural properties of local communities which are known to directly influence the volume of street crime within their boundaries. These variables include residential mobility, unemployment, the concentration of poverty, physical deterioration, and crime itself.

The fourth chapter discusses how the development of the American welfare state has impacted on the ability of local communities to integrate and control their individual members. First, the general evolution of the American welfare state is broadly examined in terms of its comparative size and generosity. Next, the factors which have shaped its development are discussed. Finally, the impact of its evolution on the cultural and structural variables which are closely associated with conventional street crime because of their powerful influence on the social dynamics of conformity, is examined.

The final chapter of this thesis has a fourfold purpose. First, a summary of the major findings is presented. Second, the inherent limitations of the ability of local communities to evoke legal conformity from their members are examined. Next, some implications for public policy stemming from the nature of the relationship between street crime and community culture and structure are presented. Finally, some worthy avenues for future research on this complex relationship are discussed.
Communitarianism

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the relationship between the cultural condition of communitarianism and street crime. This general discussion will proceed in three segments. First, the concept of communitarianism will be broadly defined. Next, the assumptions as well as the political and social implications of communitarianism will be compared with those of individualism. Finally, evidence indicating that communitarianism discourages conventional crime will be provided through a brief examination of its central importance in Japan and Switzerland.

Defining Communitarianism

Communitarianism is a condition of societies, defined by the presence of high levels of individual interdependency; "the aggregation of individual interdependency is the basis for societal communitarianism" (Braithwaite 1989:85). The concept of interdependency refers to the extent to which individuals "participate in networks wherein they are dependent on others to achieve valued ends and others are dependent on them" (Braithwaite 1989:100). However, interdependencies are not simply relationships of convenience as between the sellers and purchasers of a good or service, but are grounded in strong feelings of mutual trust and obligation. Furthermore, interdependencies have symbolic significance as matters of group loyalty which take precedence over individual self-interest. Therefore, a communitarian society is one in which individuals
are deeply enmeshed in social networks which invoke duties and responsibilities towards others within a community of concern. These networks "are not perceived as isolated exchange relationships of convenience but as matters of profound group obligation. Thus, a communitarian society combines a dense network of interdependencies with strong cultural commitments to mutuality of obligation" (Braithwaite 1989:85).

Similar to the way individuals form the basic unit upon which community institutions are constructed, interdependencies represent the foundation of communitarian societies. The presence of a dense network of strong interdependencies results in high levels of communitarianism. The relative strength of an interdependency is determined by the permanence and intensity of the relationship and the breadth of the issues over which all individuals involved are dependent on one another (Braithwaite 1989:89). Thus, given the importance and level of emotional investment involved, children generally have stronger interdependencies with their parents than with their peers. However, the strength of an interdependency also hinges on the level of respect and obligation associated with the relationship (Braithwaite 1989:89); if parents lose the respect of their children, the strength of the bond between them is significantly diminished.

Communitarian societies experience lower crime rates because their individual members are highly integrated into mainstream society through a network of interdependencies. For such integration to occur, however,
a society need not be homogeneous; pluralistic, multicultural societies are in no way inherently incapable of developing and retaining a strong communitarian character (Selznick 1995). For example, Switzerland, whose citizenry is comprised of three major distinct ethnic groups, is widely recognized as a highly communitarian nation (Clinard 1978).

When individuals participate in social networks grounded in relationships of interdependency, they learn to distinguish between socially approved and disapproved conduct – they internalize a set of guiding moral principles or values by which to adhere. Moreover, through their continued involvement in these social networks, these behavioral norms are continually reinforced. Accompanying the socialization element of such participation is the enhanced capacity for informal control. The general and specific deterrent effects of informal sanctions are greater for persons involved in strong relationships of interdependency and affection because these individuals accrue greater interpersonal costs for transgressing normative boundaries (Braithwaite 1989:81). Conversely, although there are numerous mechanisms by which groups can control their individual members, including the use of shame (Braithwaite 1989; Braithwaite & Mugford 1994), informal control processes have "little influence over strangers or criminals who do not perceive themselves as group members and feel no pressure to conform" (Rosenbaum 1988:139).

Therefore, a reasonable summation of the relationship between communitarianism, interdependency and crime is as follows: "individuals
are controllable to the extent that they are committed to the group and the group is a cohesive unit" (Rosenbaum 1988:139). Of course, this is true not only of groups that are highly committed to the law, but also of those which do not hold it in high regard, and those who adhere to immoral statutes such as those which sanction the ownership of slaves. While these issues will be examined more thoroughly in the pages to follow, for present purposes it is sufficient to note that when interdependencies unravel, informal social control is weakened considerably. Stated differently, both commitment to mainstream (or subcultural) behavioral norms and the perceived costs of violating them are significantly curtailed.

Given the important influence of interdependency and communitarianism on crime rates, it is worth briefly examining the individual and social characteristics known to undermine their integrative capabilities.

**Age**: The most important variable affecting interdependency is a person's stage in the life cycle. Highly socialized children establish strong relationships of interdependency with their family, school, and, depending on the cultural environment in which they are raised, neighbourhood. By mature adulthood many of these interdependencies have weakened or been cut entirely, and replaced by a "new set of interdependencies with the nuclear family of procreation, the neighborhood in which that family lives, and the workplace" (Braithwaite 1989:90). However, between the severing of childhood interdependencies
and the full establishment of those of adulthood is a period of transition. This passing developmental stage typically occurs between the ages of fifteen and twenty five. The emergence of a prolonged period of adolescence in which relationships of interdependency are low is largely a twentieth century phenomenon that has been restricted to Western industrial societies, having intensified considerably since the end of the Second World War (Braithwaite 1989:91).

**Marital Status:** Marriage is perhaps the most powerful interdependency in which individuals become involved (Braithwaite 1989:91). Such unions create a reciprocal set of responsibilities for individuals to fulfil, and serve as powerful informal control mechanisms - the possibility of physical removal from a spouse through incarceration or of losing their emotional support because of disapproval increases the cost of offending. Those who remain unmarried are therefore free from an especially powerful source of interdependency.

**Gender:** The transition between childhood and adult interdependencies is considerably different for men and women in most Western societies. Whereas males proceed from a situation of interdependency to a period of relative independence to building a new set of interdependencies, females largely replace one set of interdependencies with another. Moreover, at every stage throughout the life cycle, women are generally more socially integrated than men (Braithwaite 1989:92). This of course is not a random occurrence, but is a result of differential socialization. While many women are taught to be generally passive, compliant, and dependent
on others, men are usually expected to be aggressive and self-reliant.

**Unemployment:** People "who leave school and then do not find employment are set free from the interdependencies associated with schooling without establishing the new set of interdependencies associated with work" (Braithwaite 1989:90). More than simply forfeiting a powerful source of interdependency, people who are unemployed also lose a major stake in mainstream society.

**Commitment:** Persons with low educational and occupational aspirations are less susceptible to the integrating aspects of school and work. Stated differently, such individuals are less likely to develop relationships of interdependency grounded in the values of these institutions.

**Residential Mobility:** When individuals frequently uproot their lives and relocate in a new environment, forging strong interdependencies with members of a particular residential community is extremely difficult. Moreover, when residential mobility becomes a wide-scale phenomenon, communitarianism suffers because neighbourhood stability is undermined; "neighbors cease to be significant others, relatives become geographically separated, even school and church affiliations become more transient, not only because parishioners and students are moving more often, but the teachers and preachers are more mobile as well" (Braithwaite 1989:86).
Urbanization: Similar to the issue of residential mobility, urbanization directly affects communitarianism. Urbanization fosters anonymity which decreases the likelihood that informal control mechanisms will operate effectively. This is compounded by the fact that when societies urbanize, individual networks of interdependence become less spatially localized, shifting from residential neighbourhoods to communities of interest based on workplace and leisure activities (Braithwaite 1989:172). The unfortunate consequence of this development is that individuals who are alienated from such networks like the unemployed, or who otherwise simply lack the resources to participate in them, are now likely to be much less socially integrated than in the past when local communities provided more opportunities for developing relationships of interdependency.

Individualism versus Communitarianism

Interdependency refers to the extent that individuals participate in social networks characterized by mutual trust and obligation, and which are interpreted as a matter of group loyalty rather than self-interest (Braithwaite 1989:86). The presence of an extensive network of strong individual interdependencies is the defining feature of a communitarian society. Communitarianism can therefore be described as "the antithesis of individualism" (Braithwaite 1989:86). Most Western societies, though especially the United States, can be described as far more individualistic than communitarian in character (Beiner 1995; Lipset 1990). Recently, numerous observers have actually remarked that America has become far too individualistic for its own good (Bellah et al. 1985;
Etzioni 1996, 1993; Selznick 1995; Bell 1993). The purpose of this section is to critically examine the assumptions as well as the social and political implications of both individualism and communitarianism. Each carries numerous advantages and disadvantages which warrant closer attention.

Liberal individualism is not inherently destructive or negative in nature. As a counter-force to communitarianism, it embodies such valued social ideals as liberty, self-determination, rational criticism, and tolerance for diversity. Consequently, the principal benefit of unleashing the forces of individualism is that it liberates people from the confining shackles of predetermined social roles. People are freed to "shape their lives according to their own notions, so that society offers no official guidance on how people are to conduct their lives in a meaningful way" (Beiner 1995:20). By releasing people from otherwise stifling social pressures, individualism serves as an important source of creativity and change for the community, and self-fulfilment for the person; it "limits the costs of maintaining social order, allows members of society to express idiosyncratic aspects of themselves, and enables the development of new social patterns that are more adaptive to the ever changing environment and internal balances than are traditional patterns" (Etzioni 1995:13). Also, as an ideology which stresses the importance of the rights of the person, individualism can reduce the potential for social repression and injustice.

Despite its many socially desirable effects, individualism is
nevertheless problematic when it becomes excessive, that is, when its disadvantages begin to outweigh its benefits. Perhaps the most important consequence of excessive individualism is a higher incidence of deviant behaviour, including street crime. When individualism is strong, the integrating and sanctioning capacities of communities are low. Faced with this vacuum, individualistic societies are obliged to rely on repressive state tactics to control crime (Etzioni 1996). This invariably creates an incentive to expand the powers of the police and other regulatory agencies which results in a curbing of the very liberties that individualism affords. Therefore, the irony of individualistic societies is that they have "little choice but to rely on the state as the all-powerful agent of social control: the ideology of the minimal state produces a social reality of the maximum state" (Braithwaite 1989:171).

Excessive individualism also inhibits the attainment of meaningful existences (Beiner 1995). Despite the benefits of creativity and change, when individualism becomes too rampant, experiences of coinvolvement and communal solidarity, which are integral for leading fulfilling lives, disappear. Participation in social networks based upon mutual trust and obligation is required for maintaining the integrity of the person and for providing individuals with the ability to form sound judgements. Being a member of a community increases the probability that people will care about issues which transcend their individuality. Hence, while people can survive in isolation from communities, "the thinner their community bonds, the more alienated and unreasoning they tend to be"
Finally, as individualism proliferates, social responsibilities often become neglected. When people begin to think predominantly in terms of maximizing their self-interest - a defining feature of individualistic societies - they become more willing to exercise their rights and less willing to fulfil their responsibilities (Mansfield 1997:631). The problem is that rights and responsibilities are frequently corollaries, one assuming the other (Etzioni 1996). For example, the constitutionally enshrined right to be tried by a jury of peers requires that citizens be willing to accept the responsibility of jury duty. When they are reluctant to do so, citizens inadvertently undermine their own right to a fair trial. Extreme individualism fosters a strong sense of personal entitlement while concomitantly inhibiting feelings of duty and obligation to the larger community; rights become "divorced from discipline and duty, including the disciplines that make freedom possible" (Selznick 1995:36).

Just as individualism is not inherently destructive in terms of social consequences, communitarianism is not innately emancipatory; the community can definitely have a dark side. Tightknit communities can be highly repressive and intolerant of all forms of diversity - ethnic, moral, or ideational (Selznick 1995). This intolerance not only puts enormous pressure on individuals to strictly adhere to community norms and thereby smother creative energies, but can also serve as an incubator for more dangerous forms of bigotry and ignorance. The majoritarian
aspect of communities can thus result not only in a general trampling of individual rights, but also in discriminatory practices specifically targeted against minorities; by producing stigmatized outgroups and legitimating their repression, communitarianism can itself be a source of criminality (Etzioni 1996). Furthermore, strong communities are also often prone to developing authoritarian power structures and rigid systems of social stratification. Therefore, despite its many advantages, communitarianism can spawn a very monolithic, conformist, racially and culturally intolerant, oppressive, and hierarchical living environment.

Though highly problematic when excessive, strengthening the integrative and control capacities of local communities in a highly individualistic society such as the United States nevertheless appears to be a reasonable strategy for reducing crime. However, it should be noted that American society cannot be described as uniformly individualistic. There are considerable variations in the relative levels of individualism and communitarianism across the country. For instance, communitarianism is extremely high in places such as Utah and rural Pennsylvania to name a few (Etzioni 1993:190). Thus, although the United States may be generally characterized as a highly individualistic society, important local and regional differences do exist.

Seeking to improve the integrative and control capabilities of communities does not necessarily imply attempting to resurrect the past; "the contemporary quest for community is neither antimodern nor
antiurban" (Selznick 1995:33). Nor does it require reviving traditional values and practices which often suppressed women and minorities. Efforts to enhance community institutions as a means of reducing street crime are not inherently grounded in some yearning for an idealised past in which suffering and brutality have either been conveniently forgotten or trivialized, or in the belief that the virtues of modern society like the rule of law, democratic government, material prosperity, and tolerance for ethnic, cultural, and ideological diversity must be forsaken. Rather, they can simply be rooted in the assumption that by releasing individuals from the bonds which integrate them into mainstream society, social fragmentation is a major underlying cause of crime and victimization.

This discussion of the integrative and control functions of the community requires that the concept be precisely defined. A community is a group of individuals who share affective bonds and a common culture. More specifically, a community is comprised of a network of affect-laden relationships among "a group of individuals (rather than merely one-on-one relations or chains of individual relations), relations that often crisscross and reinforce one another. And being a community entails having a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings" (Etzioni 1995:14). From such a definition, it is possible to distinguish between three types of communities. The first, and probably most commonly associated with the concept, are communities of place (Bell 1993:103). Often referred to as neighbourhoods, these are small geographical areas which can develop intricate social networks as well
as a tradition of identity and continuity over time (Bursik & Grasmick 1996). The boundaries of such areas are somewhat artificial because local communities are subsets of larger units; the traditions and norms of a neighbourhood are reciprocally interconnected with those of the broader social environment in which it is embedded. For example, residents of the community of Sandy Hill are also residents of the city of Ottawa which has its own idiosyncrasies, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, the province of Ontario, the country of Canada, and so on. Nevertheless, distinct communities of place or neighbourhoods can be identified relatively easily and uncontroversially.

The second type are communities of memory which refer to groups comprised mostly of strangers who share a common history that is expressed through the course of their daily lives (Bell 1993:126). Such communities carry a moral heritage "that helps to provide the narrative unity of our lives, which entails an obligation to sustain and promote the ideals and aspirations embedded in their history through memory and hope, linking our destiny to that of our ancestors, contemporaries, and descendants" (Bell 1993:126). A community of memory is something that is both learned and passed on through the process of socialization. National and religious traditions are two examples of these types of communities. For example, the sense of sharing a particular history that is unique from any other and of having certain moral obligations (such as preserving the integrity of the French language) which stem from that history has been one of the major forces unifying and driving Quebec nationalism.
The third type are psychological communities which refer to groups of individuals who, through participation in common activities, develop a shared sense of trust, cooperation, and obligation towards each other (Bell 1993:170). Differing from communities of memory insofar as they are based strictly on face-to-face interaction at a specific point in time, psychological communities for any single individual tend to be restricted in size to a few hundred people at most. Examples of such communities include the family, church groups, civic associations, and various clubs organized around leisure and sporting activities. In modern industrialized societies, psychological communities tend to be spatially dispersed (Braithwaite 1989:172).

Of these three types of communities, this thesis is primarily concerned with communities of place - examining the relationship between crime and local neighbourhood structures and cultures. This said, it must be recognized that these three different varieties of communities are not mutually exclusive to one another. For example, due to physical proximity, psychological communities can develop within a community of place. Similarly, in a culturally homogeneous area, neighbourhood residents may share a common community of memory. Therefore, it should be remembered that “people can and do belong to multiple communities at the same time, and some are broader and more inclusive than others” (Selznick 1995:35).

The final community-level variable which needs to be addressed is the issue of normative consensus. Local communities cannot adequately
control their residents unless there exists a minimum level of commitment to a shared set of norms and values; consensus over what constitutes appropriate conduct is required for the effective informal sanctioning of deviant behaviour. While this may appear to be a fatal blow for all strategies which seek to enhance the control capabilities of communities, since dissensus is pervasive throughout society, there does appear to be a high degree of consensus in all Western democracies on at least one issue - behaviours labelled criminal are overwhelmingly viewed as undesirable (Braithwaite 1989). This appears to be true not only for the suburban middle class, but for all sectors of society regardless of age, education, ethnic background, or occupation. The notable exception to this finding is the category of crimes which can be classified as victimless such as marijuana use or prostitution. Therefore, "extreme versions of subculturalism which posit wholesale rejection of the criminal law by substantial sections of the community simply do not wash. Pagins are very unusual; the evidence is that even parents who themselves have criminal records try to instill respect for the law in their children" (Braithwaite 1989:39). Young (1992:43), who, in discussing the process by which behaviours are criminalized, summarizes the situation as follows:

What should be stressed is that this is not merely a top-down process, as social constructionist and left idealists would maintain, but involves a high level of grass roots public input. A large proportion of this process is based on public consensus, although there is inevitably, as this is by necessity a political process, argument at the edges of this consensus (for example controversy over cannabis; what is or what is not pornographic; the comparative immunity of crimes of the powerful; definitions of rape, etc). That is, arguments about how the net of social control should be reduced and extended (emphasis in original).
Communitarianism in Practice

Finally, before proceeding into the next chapter, it is imperative to examine in greater detail, and to provide further evidence of, the relationship between communitarianism and crime. Of note, the following discussion of the criminological effects of communitarianism is limited to its moderate forms in which individual rights are respected. The potential criminogenic consequences of extreme communitarianism will be ignored. Thus, all references to communitarian societies will only pertain to its moderate, and not totalitarian, forms.

Earlier, it was stated that communitarian societies experience lower levels of crime because informal pressures to conform are much stronger than in individualistic societies. There is, however, another highly related reason for this truism which has thus far not been discussed. Criminal subcultures, which equip individuals with knowledge on how to offend and provide social support or rationalizations for such activity, are less likely to develop in highly communitarian societies (Braithwaite 1989; Schneider 1992). However, although less prevalent, they do nevertheless exist in such societies. Social fragmentation and the systemic blockage of legitimate opportunities are the two primary driving forces of subculture formation (Braithwaite 1989:99). While integrated societies are less likely to produce stigmatized outgroups and are better able to cope with the negative social effects of market pressures through informal social support mechanisms (Cullen 1994), a certain degree of blockage of legitimate opportunities will inevitably arise thus creating an opportunity for subculture formation.
Evidence to support the link between communitarianism and low crime rates has traditionally been gathered through international comparisons. Japan and Switzerland are generally acknowledged as possessing the lowest levels of crime and victimization among industrialized nations (Schneider 1992; Currie 1997; Clinard 1978; Braithwaite 1989). Studies examining the low volume of crime in Japan have attributed this accomplishment to several specific features of Japanese society. First and foremost, the people of this country are said to live and think primarily as members of groups (Schneider 1992; Adler 1983; Braithwaite 1989). The individual achieves social standing and respect only through the status of the group to which they belong. "Nobody is allowed to try and pursue his individuality at all costs, otherwise he will meet with distinct informal sanctions" (Schneider 1992:314). The end result is a social environment where individuals feel obliged towards their group, and groups feel responsible for the behaviour of their individual members.

Second, unlike in North America and most of Europe, as individual Japanese acquire wealth, they typically do not move into new residential areas reserved for people of similar economic status. Rather, they are more likely to simply renovate and enlarge their existing homes (Schneider 1992). This not only preserves the stability of residential neighbourhoods, but also prevents the development of ghetto areas.

Third, shaming is an extraordinary potent and common informal control mechanism in Japanese culture (Schneider 1992; Braithwaite 1989:63). Of particular significance, shame is not only brought upon the
perpetrators of inappropriate conduct, but also on the groups to which those individual belongs. The result is that social units have a major stake in regulating the behaviour of their members, and the costs of offending are significantly elevated for the individual.

Fourth, the Japanese system of paternalism explicitly demands mutual obligation (Schneider 1992; Katoh 1992). Both subordinates and superordinates have responsibilities towards one another. For example, Japanese employers frequently develop strong feelings of guilt when they fail to provide for their workers - whether for their emotional, financial, or physical security (Schneider 1992). Conversely, employees have traditionally been very committed to their employers, often developing feelings of guilt when they fail to discharge their duties with efficiency and competence.

Finally, crime control and prevention are community responsibilities in Japan (Schneider 1992; Braithwaite 1989). Communities not only direct tremendous amounts of energy at ensuring the integration and control of their members, but they also participate heavily in the daily operations of the formal justice system. For example, while there are only about 700 fulltime paid probation officers in Japan, there are over 50,000 volunteer officers who attend to some 100,000 offenders. Thus, crimes are "defined, detected, accused, sentenced, and sanctioned with the participation of the community" (Schneider 1992:315). Collectively, these five features of Japanese society suggest there is a high level of interdependence within this nation. Of course, this is only one factor
which contributes to its comparatively low crime rate.

Despite having a highly heterogeneous population, Switzerland had an extremely low crime rate throughout the 1970s, a period when crime was rapidly increasing in most Western nations. Predatory street crime during the 1970s was far less prevalent in Switzerland than in other highly urbanized, affluent nations, "and to this extent it may be said to represent an exception to the general pattern of close relationship between crime problems and high degrees of development, urbanization, and affluence" (Clinard 1978:147). This low crime rate has been attributed to three major historical factors prevalent in Swiss society. First, the process of urbanization in Switzerland was very gradual and, thus, far less disruptive and destabilizing than in most other nations. Second, Switzerland is characterized by a strong and lengthy tradition of political decentralization distinguished by high levels of participation in local government (Clinard 1978:152-153). This widespread citizen involvement in a system of localized democratic rule nurtures strong feelings of civic responsibility and community empowerment. Lastly, the Swiss have also maintained a strong tradition of age integration which has minimized the development of youth subcultures (Clinard 1978). These three social factors collectively suggest that Switzerland’s low crime rate, at least into the 1970s, is partially attributable to a highly communitarian social structure.

Comparative research indicates that nations with low rates of crime and victimization share three common features. First, informal social
control exercised by community institutions like families, professional and recreational peer groups, and neighbours is both extremely potent and important in these societies; "the burden of crime control does not rest exclusively on the omnipotent state who keeps its citizens in dependence, but socially related initiative has developed" (Schneider 1992:316). Second, local communities tend to be highly integrated, both socially and politically (Schneider 1992). Both youths and adults tend to be deeply embedded into the structures of mainstream society. Finally, the criminal justice system enjoys a high reputation and works very closely with communities in countries with little crime.

This chapter has examined the relationship between crime and communitarianism. The concept was broadly defined, its political and social implications were compared with those of individualism, and evidence of its mitigating influence on traditional street crime was provided. However, this discussion never moved beyond the abstract to examine the actual social dynamics which enable communities to prevent criminal behaviour. This will be the subject of the next chapter.
The Community Dynamics of Social Control

The previous chapter noted that highly communitarian societies experience lower rates of crime and victimization because the dense networks of interdependencies which characterize these environments assure that a greater majority of the population is socially integrated and is thus vulnerable to the pressures of informal social control. Communitarianism was simply defined as a cultural condition delineated by high levels of interdependency, which, in turn was defined as the extent that individuals participate in social networks distinguished by feelings of mutual trust and obligation, and which are interpreted as a matter of group loyalty rather than mere personal convenience (Braithwaite 1989:86). However, the previous chapter did not move beyond discussing these principles in the abstract. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the specific social conditions and processes which enable communities to evoke conformity from their members. First, the importance of differing levels of community integration and control on local crime rates will be discussed. This will be followed by an examination of the influence of social support in encouraging legal conformity.

Integration and Control

The integrative and control functions of community institutions such as families and peer groups operate along two dimensions. First, there is the horizontal which pertains to the networks of social relationships
that integrate individual residents into local communities. More specifically, "this dimension refers to the often complex expressions of affection, loyalty, reciprocity, or dominance among residents, whether expressed through informal relationships or organized activities (Hope 1995:24). The second, referred to as the vertical dimension, pertains to the relationships which connect local institutions to the sources of power and resources in the wider civil society in which they are embedded. Whereas the principal mechanisms for maintaining order within local communities are expressed primarily through the horizontal dimension, "the strength of this expression - and hence its effectiveness in controlling crime - derives, in large part, from the vertical connections that residents of localities have to extracommunal resources" (Hope 1995:24, emphasis in original). Three levels of relational networks which operate along either of these two dimensions form the basis of community-level social control.

**Private Level Control:**

The private level of control pertains to the intimate informal primary groups of a neighbourhood which transmit information concerning expectations of appropriate conduct (Bursik & Grasmick 1993:16; Bursik & Grasmick 1995). These informal networks, which include those of the family and close friends, socialize and integrate individuals into local communities. Given the high level of intimacy within these networks, "social control is usually achieved through the allocation or threatened withdrawal of sentiment, social support, and mutual esteem" (Bursik & Grasmick 1993:16). Some of the specific control mechanisms that are
employed at this level include direct criticism, ostracism from the group, ridicule, withdrawal of emotional support, and upon occasion, violence.

The crucial ingredient for this level of control to be effective is the ability of integrative groups to supervise individual behaviour through ongoing social interaction. This enables group norms to be internalized more completely because transmission is more thorough and reinforcement occurs more frequently. Private control is thus affected by such issues as family structure, proximity and emotional attachment to extended family members, and extensiveness of friendship networks (Bursik & Grasmick 1995). When a person develops few relationships of interdependency with the institutions responsible for socialization, that individual is less likely to internalize the full range of community expectations regarding appropriate conduct. Therefore, representing the level at which values and behavioral standards are learned, private control is most important for children and adolescents, though it is not altogether irrelevant for adults since socialization is a life-long process.

Thus far it has been stressed that problems at the private level of control arise because socially integrative groups are sometimes lacking or otherwise ineffective at transmitting and reinforcing behavioral norms. However, problems may also arise due to the actual content of the information acquired from intimate groups. While research indicates that the vast majority of parents attempt to instill respect for the law in
their offspring (Braithwaite 1989:39), families are not the only social network to influence the moral development of children. Peer groups, for example, are of particular significance, especially as children begin to acquire a measure of independence from their parents. For a variety of structural (e.g. the blockage of legitimate opportunities) and cultural (e.g. the traditional presence of youth gangs within a neighbourhood) reasons, peer groups, particularly within certain communities, may provide individuals with support and rationalizations for criminal activity (Braithwaite 1989). Under these circumstances, it would be somewhat misleading to suggest that deviant behaviour such as street crime occurs simply because private control is either too weak or entirely lacking. Although there is definitely an element of under-socialization and lack of control by prosocial sources involved, normative transgressions occur not only because individuals have been alienated from mainstream integrative networks, but also because they have internalized the moral standards of a group which is tolerant or perhaps even supportive of criminal conduct.

To reiterate, private-level control refers to informal social networks which integrate residents into the community. When integrative social institutions like families or schools are stressed, their ability to effectively inculcate behavioral norms in local residents is weakened. By seeking to enhance the institutional infrastructure of communities in order to increase their capacity to socialize and integrate, the Chicago Area Project represents an example of a crime prevention program which focused on this level of control.
Parochial Level Control:

Parochial-level control pertains to a broader set of interpersonal networks which serve to integrate local social institutions such as schools, churches, businesses, and voluntary organizations (Bursik & Grasmick 1993:17; 1995). The difference between private and parochial networks resides in their respective levels of intimacy; "whereas the private order of control refers to relationships among friends, the parochial order refers to relationships among neighbors who do not have the same sentimental attachment" (Bursik & Grasmick 1993:17). Examples of parochial control include when a neighbourhood resident informally monitors the public activities of local children or when they alert fellow residents to the presence of strangers lurking in their community. Therefore, this level of control corresponds both to the supervisory capacity of local communities, and to residential participation in local institutions like schools and neighbourhood associations.

What is of crucial importance for parochial control to be effective is that community institutions be highly integrated with one another. For example, recent evidence indicates that residents of a community "are not likely to intercede in criminal events that involve strangers and are reluctant to assume responsibility for the welfare of property that belongs to people whom they barely know" (Bursik & Grasmick 1995:115). Parochial control is thus undermined by social forces which either impede individual participation in, or the broad integration of, community institutions. To the extent that it creates social divisions or boundaries between residents, heterogeneity - whether ethnic, cultural,
or ideational - undermines the supervisory capacity of communities. Similarly, by destabilizing broad neighbourhood networks, residential mobility also undermines the capacity for parochial control; "local institutions may be difficult to maintain in a community characterized by rapid population changes" (Bursik & Grasmick 1995:116).

By seeking to enlist the active participation of neighbourhood residents in the maintenance of law and order, the community defense model explicitly focuses on strengthening the parochial level of control. For example, community crime prevention, perhaps the most popular variation of this model, attempts to enhance the informal social control capacity of communities by mobilizing local residents into surveillance networks. With the ascendency of the community defense model since its emergence during the 1970s, intervention programs which target neighbourhoods have, and continue, to predominantly focus on this level of control. However, as noted in the introduction, research clearly indicates that it is very difficult to implant parochial control where it does not develop naturally (Skogan 1990; Rosenbaum 1988).

**Public Level Control:**

The private and parochial levels of control collectively form the horizontal dimension of community networks; they integrate individuals and social institutions into the local community. Relative levels of social fragmentation versus cohesion are the product of the horizontal dimension. Thus, the concept of social disorganization proposed by the Chicago school sociologists of the 1920s and 1930s directly pertains to
this dimension. Crime was the presumed consequence of the inability of communities to adequately integrate their individual members and primary institutions. However, ethnographic studies conducted since the 1950s have consistently failed to support the assumption that high crime neighbourhoods are appreciably less horizontally integrated than low crime neighbourhoods (Bursik & Grasmick 1995). Many seemingly "organized" communities experience prolonged periods in which crime and victimization rates are extremely high. While this invariably contradicts the original social disorganization hypothesis, it does not signify that horizontal integration - the combination of private and parochial level control - are criminologically irrelevant. Rather it simply suggests that crime rates are heavily influenced by a third level of control.

Public control refers to the vertical dimension of social embeddedness, that is, the extent to which local communities are integrated into the political, economic, and social structures of the wider civil society in which they are located. Formally, the public level of control "reflects the ability of a neighbourhood to influence political and economic decision making and to acquire externally based goods and services that may increase its ability to control the level of crime in the area" (Bursik & Grasmick 1993:52). In short, it refers to those social networks which link a neighbourhood to broad public and private institutions which transcend its boundaries.

Public-level control pertains primarily to three sets of social
networks. The first, and most obvious, are the ties between neighbourhoods and local police organizations (Bursik & Grasmick 1993:17). Law enforcement agencies play an important role in the ongoing attempt to control crime and disorder. When a local community has a poor relationship with the police - generally characterized by mutual distrust - its ability to effectively control criminal behaviour is substantially undermined. The informal social control processes of communities function most effectively when they are buttressed by formal state control (Hope & Shaw 1988:2). While the relationship between communities and police organizations are obviously affected by past experiences of direct contact, research indicates that the relative political influence of local communities is also of enormous importance (Smith 1986). To this end, it has recently been noted that "even the most rudimentary external relationships between neighbourhood residents and law enforcement agencies - the reporting of crime or calls for service - appears to be at least partially related to relationships that have been developed between the community and the broader political structure" (Bursik & Grasmick 1995:120).

Secondly, public-level control is also affected by the ability of communities to influence local governments and municipal service bureaucracies (Bursik & Grasmick 1995). Beginning at the administrative level, municipal agencies are mandated to provide neighbourhoods with important services like "garbage collection, street and sewer repair, physical maintenance of local public facilities, the funding and staffing of educational institutions, safeguards on environmental quality, and so
on" (Bursik & Grasmick 1995:123). The quality of these services greatly influences the physical ambience of a neighbourhood, providing cues on its desirability as a residential environment, and on the health of its social networks. These have important consequences in terms of attracting or preventing the onset of disorderly conduct (Wilson & Kelling 1982). By contributing to the ongoing maintenance of a neighbourhood, municipal services guard against its physical and social deterioration, both of which are closely associated with rates of crime and victimization (Bursik & Grasmick 1995). However, since municipal services are limited and even shrinking in many jurisdictions, "local communities are engaged in a process of ongoing competition with other neighbourhoods to acquire these resources" (Bursik & Grasmick 1995:118). Unfortunately, communities inhabited by low-income earners have traditionally been unable to secure a level of service comparable to wealthier neighbourhoods, thereby contributing to their deterioration and lower status.

At the political level, the ability of neighbourhoods to influence local governments is important for two major reasons. First, municipal governments fund vital community services like policing, welfare, and garbage collection. Thus, the capacity of a local community to shape public spending priorities can have major consequences in terms of the flow of capital and social investments into the area. For example, the ability of a community to secure funds for the construction and operation of a youth centre can have important criminological consequences. This is especially true in disadvantaged communities where young people have
less access to the leisure and educational opportunities afforded by the private market.

Second, local governments shape the "allocation and use of land within cities through zoning regulations and construction incentives" (Bursik & Grasmick 1995:123). However, the ability of local communities to exercise public control over the use of land within their boundaries is critically important because it affects their long-term stability and, ultimately, crime rates. Given the presence of competing neighbourhood-based land interests, political mobilization for the purpose of influencing such decisions is imperative. For example, the political impotence of certain Chicago neighbourhoods during the early 1970s led to the construction of massive public housing projects within their boundaries, thereby overwhelming and destroying their existing social infrastructures and eventually resulting in greater volumes of street crime (Bursik & Grasmick 1995). Similarly, the relative political powerlessness of Harlem residents has resulted in their neighbourhoods possessing the highest concentration of housing for the homeless, the mentally ill, and drug addicts in all of New York City (Bursik & Grasmick 1993:54).

Finally, public-level control also pertains to the ability of local communities to acquire financial resources from private agencies and commercial establishments (Bursik & Grasmick 1995). As mounting debts have placed tremendous fiscal constraints on local governments, the ability of neighbourhoods to finance programs by obtaining funds from the
private sector has become increasingly significant. Equally important, however, is the ability of local residents to obtain credit from commercial lending establishments. Research indicates that financial institutions redistribute wealth away from already disadvantaged communities (Taggart & Smith 1981); banks and other lending institutions take significantly more resources out of inner city communities through savings deposits than they reinvest by way of mortgages and personal loans.

The inability of local residents to acquire credit can have devastating consequences for a community. First, by depressing levels of home ownership within disadvantaged neighbourhoods, residents thereby have less financial stake in local affairs. This can render other forms of public control much more difficult because, with little or no property interests to defend, community residents may be more reluctant to mobilize to achieve some desired end. Second, without access to loans and mortgages, reinvestment in the existing stock of homes and businesses is reduced, thereby resulting in the physical deterioration of the neighbourhood, which, as noted earlier, can result in greater levels of crime and incivility. Therefore, because of their effects on the internal social dynamics of local communities, the actions of financial institutions can influence crime rates (Bursik & Grasmick 1995).

The ability of communities to acquire goods and services allocated by public and private organizations located outside of their boundaries has important criminological implications. The acquisition of external
resources not only integrates local communities into mainstream society, but also strengthens the horizontal relationships between neighbourhood residents - it facilitates the processes of socialization and informal control (Hope 1995). By seeking to provide disadvantaged communities with social, employment and welfare services, and to organize local residents for political action, the resource-mobilization model of the 1960s represented an attempt to redress the lack of public-level control which characterized such neighbourhoods. Under the direction provided by this model, "action focused primarily along the vertical dimension of power, with little attention paid to building community institutions in the ghetto that might have delivered resources to [area residents]" (Hope 1995:38).

Finally, the capacity of local communities to integrate and control their members is influenced by the relative balance between individualistic and communitarian values. Societies characterized by strong cultural commitments to communitarianism are more likely to be successful at achieving these outcomes than are highly individualistic societies. This holds true for all three levels of social integration and control.

**Conformity and Social Support**

Local communities that are well integrated, both horizontally and vertically, are, invariably, effective agents of social control. When groups are characterized by strong relationships of interdependency, individual members feel more pressure to adhere to behavioral norms;
informal sanctions become both more potent and effective. However, in addition to being powerful control agents, integrated communities also provide their members with high levels of social support (Cullen 1994). This ability of neighbourhoods to support their residents through the provision of material resources, elementary services, cultural knowledge, basic information, and emotional assistance mitigates the consequences of criminogenic forces; there is strong evidence suggesting that "both across nations and across communities, crime rates vary inversely with the level of social support" (Cullen 1994:537). Therefore, the web of conformity involves both social control and support.

Social support counters criminogenic influences in several important ways. First, the provision of support helps foster effective parenting skills and a nurturing family environment (Cullen 1994). The disciplinary techniques employed by parents, their behavioral tendencies, and most importantly, their emotional availability strongly influences the conduct of their children, even as they move into later stages of the life cycle (Currie 1985:190-220; Currie 1997). However, families need to be supported in order to create a supportive environment. Providing a nurturing home requires knowledge, skills, and resources which parents often cannot adequately acquire on their own.

Second, social support minimizes the effects of criminogenic strain, that is, the negative social forces which push individuals towards deviance (Cullen 1994; Duhl 1997). The three most important contemporary sources of strain include the failure to achieve desired goals, the
removal of positively valued stimuli such as employment, and exposure to
noxious stimuli such as child abuse or negative school experiences (Agnew
1992). The provision of social support enables individuals to better
cope with these types of stressors (Agnew 1995).

Third, social support increases the likelihood that offenders will
desist from further criminal activity (Cullen 1994). This partially
corresponds to the fact that it mitigates the influence of criminogenic
strain. Equally as important, however, providing offenders with support
in the form of access to various types of human and social capital
increases their ability to alter what are often destructive life
circumstances. For example, educational and occupational training can
improve the likelihood that offenders will find and maintain legitimate
employment, itself an important source of interdependency.

Fourth, support provided by conformist sources creates an
opportunity for prosocial modelling (Cullen 1994). Without acceding to
a simple deterministic conceptualization of human nature, behaviour
patterns are, to a considerable extent, learned from external sources
(Baron & Byrne 1994:439). The importance of prosocial modelling can be
seen, for example, in the Chicago neighbourhood of Lawndale where the
teen pregnancy rate, "once over 30 percent for high-school girls, has
been reduced by nearly 100 percent in just over a year via a mentoring
initiative of area hospitals, churches, and schools" (Norris 1997:4).
When people are isolated from prosocial role models, they become more
susceptible to socially destructive influences (Gorman & White 1995).
Moreover, by inculcating idealism, fostering a sense of moral purpose, and creating relationships of interdependency, providing social support to others can also lessen criminal involvement (Cullen 1994).

Fifth, the provision of support increases the effectiveness of informal social control (Cullen 1994). Pressure to behave in accordance with community standards is directly proportional to the extent that individuals perceive themselves as members of the larger group (Rosenbaum 1988). When both society and local communities are highly supportive, individuals have more reason to feel integrated into the mainstream and thus yield to informal constraints. Therefore, social support reduces criminal motivation and empowers informal community control.

Lastly, the provision of support also reduces opportunities for criminal victimization (Cullen 1994). For example, by granting safe, temporary accommodations, shelters for battered women can minimize the occurrence of abuse. Not only does this have important implications for the present, but support which helps break the cycle of family violence also helps prevent such crimes from occurring in the future. Moreover, social support can also mitigate the emotional, physical, financial, and secondary injuries suffered as a result of criminal victimization.

Finally, the provision of social support is also influenced by the extent to which a society is communitarian versus individualistic in character. Societies characterized by strong cultural commitments to communitarianism are more likely to be socially supportive than highly
individualistic societies - communitarianism creates inhibitions against denying support to those in need. To this end, Cullen (1994) notes that the long tradition of individualism which has prevailed in the United States has inhibited the creation and maintenance of strong networks of formal and informal social support.

This chapter examined the social dynamics which enable communities to evoke conformity from their members. The importance of differing levels of community integration and control as well as the provision of social support in achieving this outcome were discussed. These social dynamics, it was noted, are influenced by the relative balance between communitarianism and individualism. Not only are communitarian societies better able to integrate and control their members, but they also tend to be more supportive. However, the social dynamics of legal conformity are also influenced by the structural properties of local communities. The relationship between community structures and conventional street crime will be the subject of the next chapter.
Community Properties and Crime Rates

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the structural properties of local communities which directly influence the volume of crime within their boundaries. While some criminogenic neighbourhood properties, such as residential mobility have already been superficially addressed, the following inventory will discuss these variables in a more comprehensive, systematic, and thorough manner. Before commencing this examination, however, it should be noted that all of the community-level variables examined in this chapter - which include residential mobility, the concentration of unemployment, the concentration of poverty, physical decay, and crime - are highly interconnected. For example, the physical condition of a neighbourhood is heavily influenced by the relative absence or presence of poverty which is itself affected by the local unemployment rate. Thus, although each variable will be examined as a separate or distinct entity, in reality, they are mutually reinforcing (e.g. unemployment worsens poverty) and cannot always be wholly separated from one another.

Residential Mobility

Since the issue of residential mobility has already been touched upon, the following discussion will be kept brief in order to avoid needless repetition. Evidence on the relationship between transience and offending indicates that "crime is committed disproportionately by people who have experienced high residential mobility and who live in areas
characterized by high residential mobility" (Braithwaite 1989:47). The horizontal dimension of social integration is most adversely affected by this phenomenon (Bursik & Grasmick 1995). Residential instability, in other words, generates crime by contributing significantly to the problem of social fragmentation.

Beginning at the level of private control, residential mobility fosters anonymity which renders the formation of intimate relationships more difficult - it results in a thinning of networks of interdependency. When individuals are free of such relationships, the internalization of behavioral norms is more precarious. By thinning informal networks which provide parents (among others) with social support, mobility can be particularly harmful for child-rearing. For example, when geographic transience results in the inability of parents working long hours to rely on extended family members or close friends to supervise their children in their absence, this can easily lead "to the kinds of problems that many versions of control theory warn us about" (Currie 1997:160). Parents cannot provide all of the support and attention which children require without the assistance of others; "local social networks can provide the child with norms and sanctions that could not be brought about by a single adult alone, or even married-couple families in isolation" (Sampson 1995:200). However, the development of extensive private systemic networks is frustrated in neighbourhoods characterized by high levels of residential instability (Bursik & Grasmick 1995).

At the parochial level, residential mobility hinders the processes
of informal social control. Whereas people are reluctant to either share criminologically relevant information (e.g. the presence of a stranger in the immediate area) with, or intervene on the behalf of, individuals they barely know, research indicates that mobility fosters anonymity. Moreover, because it hinders participation in community institutions, neighbourhoods characterised by high levels of residential instability are less able to organize themselves in order to effectively exercise public-level control.

**Unemployment**

Employment is a powerful source of interdependency which links people to mainstream society (Braithwaite 1989:90). Consequently, when individuals are unemployed, they are more susceptible to criminogenic influences. Empirical evidence confirms this relationship, indicating "there is a general positive relation between joblessness and crime, which appears most strongly in comparisons of unemployment rates and crime rates across areas" (Freeman 1995:191). Unemployment, in other words, not only increases individual criminal propensities, but also diminishes the capacity of neighbourhoods to control and support their members. The individual- and community-level effects of this problem are mutually reinforcing and thus both warrant further consideration.

Before proceeding into this discussion, however, two points should be noted. First, the criminogenic consequences of unemployment are not universal; not all types of crime are positively correlated with joblessness. The notable exception to this otherwise strong relationship
are those offenses which require incumbency in high status occupational roles — that is, white collar crimes (Braithwaite 1989:138). Second, not all forms of unemployment breed criminal conduct. Short-term joblessness by people who are otherwise steadily employed does not produce meaningful criminogenic strain. Rather, offending is most closely associated with experiences of long-term exclusion from stable and rewarding forms of work (Currie 1998:142). Similarly, the mere availability of short-term, low-wage employment with little opportunity for advancement does not inhibit criminal behaviour.

The connection between unemployment and individual behaviour is important to revisit. When individuals are unemployed, they are less integrated into mainstream society, and, consequently, are less vulnerable to the pressures of informal social control; "the long-term absence of opportunities for stable and rewarding work, especially for the young, breeds alienation, undercuts the sense of having a 'stake' in legitimate society, and exerts powerful pressures toward participation in illicit enterprises" (Currie 1997:155). Of course, the influence of unemployment at the level of individual criminal motivation varies among different social groups, as its effects interact with those of numerous other background and foreground variables. This interaction of multiple levels of variables will be discussed at greater length in the pages to follow.

Chronic unemployment also influences individual behaviour in ways that impact heavily upon the family. First, long-term joblessness
hinders the formation of stable family structures, resulting in greater numbers of single-parent households (Wilson 1987:83). Unfortunately, this can severely limit the nurturing, support, and supervision that children receive, all of which have important behavioral implications for when they reach adolescence. Furthermore, due to its psychological effects, chronic unemployment also undermines the functioning of families. For instance, joblessness has been found to render parents "angry, tense, and explosive, and therefore punitive and arbitrary in disciplining their children" (Currie 1998:144). This in turn fosters negativism, lowered social aspirations, and feelings of inadequacy - all of which are associated with offending - among their offspring. Research also indicates that unemployment can be associated with more serious forms of family violence. Widespread exclusion "from steady, well-paying work interacts with traditional gender norms to produce a broad stratum of men for whom violent means of asserting 'manhood' flourishes in the absence of conventional ones" (Currie 1997:155). Female partners and children very often become the targets of such violent behaviour (Currie 1998:145; 1997). Equally as important, however, by denying them resources with which to escape, the inability to secure employment can trap women in abusive relationships.

Mass unemployment also "profoundly shapes the local culture and the structure of rewards and incentives in entire communities - changing, in complex and devastating ways, the environment in which children and adolescents grow up" (Currie 1998:145). When local communities are plagued by high levels of chronic joblessness, particularly if they are
located within larger urban settings in which the overall unemployment rate is comparatively low, the formation of, and participation in, illegitimate enterprises increases. This in turn generates other types of crimes, many of them violent (Currie 1998). Moreover, by lowering social aspirations, and fuelling sentiments of fatalism and alienation, mass unemployment also leads to the development of criminal subcultures whose behaviours are generally expressive rather than instrumental (Katz 1988). Lastly, joblessness also hinders the ability of local communities to integrate themselves and act as effective agents of social control. For example, there is evidence which indicates that unemployment results in decreased attachment to and identification with local neighbourhoods, fewer social ties with other area residents, and less participation in community institutions (Wacquant & Wilson 1989).

The Concentration of Poverty

Perhaps the neighbourhood characteristic that is most closely associated with street crime is the concentration of poverty (Wilson 1987; 1995; Currie 1998; Hope 1995; Sampson 1995). However, before examining the nature of this relationship, the concept of poverty must first be defined. Referring to economic deprivation, poverty is experienced by individuals and communities as both an absolute and relative social condition. Absolute deprivation refers to living at or near the level of sustenance, characterized by the relative absence of disposable income. Relative deprivation, by contrast, refers to material inequality which is subjectively perceived as unjust. Research suggests that relative rather than absolute deprivation forms the cornerstone of
the relationship between street crime and poverty (Lea & Young 1984:81; Young 1992).

Relative deprivation is an important source of criminality due to its negative impact on both individuals and communities (Currie 1997). Beginning at the individual level, relative deprivation is a powerful criminogenic strain; inequality can create discontent, which, in the absence of clear political solutions, fosters criminal behaviour (Lea & Young 1984:88). Moreover, there is also evidence which indicates that economic deprivation indirectly breeds street crime by inhibiting the intellectual development of children, facilitating their abuse and neglect, and undermining the ability of parents to adequately supervise them (Currie 1998:135).

When poverty is highly concentrated, its effects on individuals and families are magnified because the pool of available resources, both formal and informal, to help them cope with the strain of economic deprivation diminishes. In terms of formal support, impoverished communities by definition have weak tax bases and are subsequently unable to provide their residents with the quality or range of goods and services which they often desperately require. Similarly, such communities are also often unable to acquire resources allocated by public and private agencies located outside of their boundaries (Bursik & Grasmick 1995). In terms of the informal, the concentration of poverty hampers the provision of support in two important ways. First, by virtue of being resource deprived themselves, the poor are often unable to
provide high levels of support, particularly financial, to others. Thus, when a high percentage of the population is living in relative poverty, informal networks of support can become strained. Second, by increasing the percentage of renter-occupied residences (since the poor often cannot secure mortgages to purchase their own homes), the concentration of poverty generally increases residential instability which impedes the formation of relationships of interdependence in the first place (Bursik & Grasmick 1995).

The greater availability of formal and informal social supports largely explains why poor people living in wealthier neighbourhoods are more likely to succeed in school, adopt prosocial attitudes, and avoid engaging in illegal behaviour than low-income earners living in impoverished communities (Wilson 1987:58). Whereas poverty (along with many other factors) places enormous stress on individuals and families, their ability to cope is significantly improved when they reside in a community that is highly integrated, both horizontally and vertically. The concentration of poverty not only inhibits such integration, but can actually contribute to the development of a social environment in which certain forms of criminal behaviour - both acquisitive and expressive - are tolerated, or even supported. Direct evidence of the influence of neighbourhood economic status on the volume of street crime is provided by studies which indicate that when local land values decrease, incidence of street crime tend escalate (Schuerman & Kobrin 1986; Skogan 1990), and conversely, when poverty is deconcentrated, rates of predatory offending tend to diminish (Sampson 1995; McDonald 1986).
The strength of the relationship between the concentration of poverty (relative deprivation) and street crime is not entirely uncontroversial; many scholars argue that there is no causal association between material deprivation and criminal behaviour (Wilson 1991; Katz 1988:316). For example, in his ethnographic study of the phenomenological foreground of crime, Katz (1988:316) argues that material circumstances can only explain the form, and not the quantity, of deviance in society. Criminal conduct, he argues, is not limited to the economically disadvantaged, but occurs at all levels of the social structure. Whereas individuals of lower socio-economic status commit a disproportionate amount of street crime, people from the middle- and upper-classes monopolize such offence types as tax evasion, consumer fraud, insider trading, and political corruption (Katz 1988:318). Thus, if the total volume of crime is distributed relatively evenly between the different social classes, varying only in form, then poverty cannot be a source of criminal behaviour. Therefore, according to Katz (1988:163):

the longstanding association in the United States of [criminal subcultures] with urban, ethnic-minority, adolescent poverty groups is causally spurious. None of these social conditions, alone or in combination, is necessary for the social construction of the phenomenon. What is essential is the existence, in the generational background, of a culture humbled at the prospect of entering modern, rationalized society. In the United States, this culture has been constituted recurrently by masses of recently arrived, previously rural, and initially deferential poor people and continuously by the caste-segregation of blacks.

While there are numerous potential avenues by which to respond to this argument, only two need to be examined here. First, by virtue of representing subjective interpretations of inequality, the concept of relative deprivation utilized throughout this discussion can account for
the occurrence of criminal behaviour "anywhere in the social structure and at any period, affluent or otherwise" (Young 1992:33). Thus, the critique of materialist explanations of crime outlined by Katz (1988:313-324) poses more of a challenge for those which employ an absolute rather than relative conceptualization of poverty. Second, when discussing the nature of the relationship between materialism and crime, Katz focuses on the level of individual criminal motivation. However, this chapter has largely concentrated on the influence of poverty as a community-level variable which hinders the ability of neighbourhoods to evoke conformity from their members by undermining both informal control and the provision of social support. Therefore, there is somewhat of a disparity between the levels of analysis, and as such, it is questionable to what extent his critique of materialism applies here. This, however, is not to deny the importance of background cultural variables or the phenomenological foreground in precipitating incidence of street crime. The influence of such non-structural variables will be discussed at greater length in the pages to follow.

**Physical Deterioration and Disorder**

The ability of a community to control and support its members is also heavily influenced by the physical condition of its infrastructure and building stock (Wilson & Kelling 1982; Skogan 1990). The physical state of a neighbourhood is inextricably linked to the health of its social networks. Dilapidated and abandoned buildings, street litter, and graffiti are symbols of disorder which render socially disruptive behaviours such as vandalism more likely because they "connote the
message that 'no one cares'" (Bursik & Grasmick 1993:47). This in turn may encourage local residents to withdraw, both physically and psychologically, from the community—certain areas begin to be avoided, participation in voluntary activities declines, and those with sufficient resources at their disposal actually begin to leave the neighbourhood. When such withdrawal occurs, the ability of local communities to deliver effective parochial control is diminished; "the consequence of such withdrawal is to greatly reduce the reservoir of informal control which community members exercise among themselves" (Hope & Shaw 1988:16). Therefore, the physical deterioration of a neighbourhood can result in a growth in disorderly behaviour, and ultimately, even crime (Wilson & Kelling 1982).

Several highly related factors contribute to the physical and social decay of a neighbourhood. The flight of the middle classes into the suburbs and the concomitant concentration of poverty within specific areas can precipitate the deterioration of housing stocks (McDonald 1986:164). This, combined with the flight of people and jobs from area business districts, erodes the local tax base which can adversely affect the quality of municipal services like street repair, maintenance of public buildings, and garbage collection, all of which negatively influence perceptions about the residential desirability and control capacity of a neighbourhood. The net result is that physically deteriorating communities come to be inhabited primarily by individuals with the fewest personal resources to participate in, and contribute to, communal life (Hope & Shaw 1988). While neighbourhoods can withstand
some physical and social deterioration without witnessing meaningful increases in rates of crime and victimization, there are nevertheless real limits to this resiliency (Schuerman & Kobrin 1986).

**Crime**

Finally, there is also strong evidence suggesting that crime can actually reproduce and intensify itself; that is, crime can be its own cause (Schuerman & Kobrin 1986). Criminal conduct causes area residents to physically and psychologically withdraw from community life, weakens the bonds of informal social control, deteriorates business conditions, and undermines the ability of neighbourhoods to organize and mobilize themselves for political and social action. Lawbreaking, in short, generates the very social conditions that are favourable or conducive for its occurrence (Skogan 1986a). For example, through the use of cross-sectional and time-series analyses, Schuerman & Kobrin (1986) found that, whereas the onset of neighbourhood deterioration precedes rising levels of street crime, once crime rates attain a certain threshold, additional increases actually precede further neighbourhood deterioration. Therefore, since law breaking and physical and social decay seem to mutually reinforce one another, once this process begins, communities risk falling into a spiral of decline.

The preceding examination of criminogenic neighbourhood properties does not imply simple mechanistic causation inherent in sociological positivism. For example, the concentration of poverty within specific geographic boundaries does not unavoidably result in high levels of
crime. Quite to the contrary, many communities characterized by significant levels of impoverishment undoubtedly have lower crime rates than measurably wealthier neighbourhoods. Newfoundland, with levels of poverty which rank amongst the highest in Canada and rates of crime and victimization that are among the lowest, is such an example. Similarly, the same can be said about communities distinguished by high levels of transience, physical dilapidation, and elevated rates of unemployment.

The reason why neighbourhood structural properties like the concentration of poverty do not automatically result in high levels of street crime is that criminal behaviour is the outcome of a multiplicity of interacting variables of which those reviewed in this chapter are only one set; the independent effects of these community-level structural properties are tempered not only as they interact with each other, but with other categories of variables as well. First and foremost, their collective influence is affected by the relative balance between commitment to individualistic and communitarian values. Thus, the traditionally low rates of crime and victimization in Newfoundland, for example, which continue to persist despite high levels of poverty and unemployment, can partially be explained by the communitarian character of the local culture; high levels of communitarianism have tempered the criminogenic consequences of these structural features of Newfoundland society.

Second, the influence of community-level structural properties on street crime is also affected by many other cultural values, including,
those pertaining to gender norms (e.g. patriarchy), social stratification (e.g. hierarchical relationships), the importance of kinship networks, and material acquisition (Currie 1997; Bourgois 1996). Of course, all dominant cultural values are subject to subcultural variations which themselves influence the crime rates of various social groups. Third, the influence of the structural variables reviewed in this chapter is also affected by their interaction with the historical and contemporary experiences of the different ethnic groups living within a particular community (Silberman 1978). Black crime, for example, "is rooted in the nature of the black experience - an experience that differs from that of any other ethnic group. To be poor and black is different from being poor and Puerto Rican, or poor and Chicano, or poor and member of any other ethnic group" (Silberman 1978:119). The different experiences of particular ethnic groups accounts for why their crime rates may differ despite possessing similar material backgrounds. Finally, numerous individual-level background (e.g. neurogenic) and foreground factors (e.g. available opportunities, sensual perceptions) also exert pressure over the volume of street crime. Therefore, criminal behaviour is the outcome of a constellation of interacting forces of which community-level structural variables are only one set. Consequently, the structural variables reviewed in this chapter merely predispose local communities to experiencing higher rates of criminal conduct, as their effects are simultaneously tempered and exacerbated through a process of constant interaction with the myriad of other background and foreground variables associated with criminal conduct.
This chapter examined the structural properties of local communities which are known to directly influence the volume of conventional street crime within their boundaries. These included residential mobility, unemployment, the concentration of poverty, physical deterioration, and crime itself. The next chapter will examine how these structural variables, along with the social dynamics of conformity and the cultural condition of communitarianism, have been influenced by the emergence of the welfare state.
Communities and the Welfare State

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the development of the American welfare state impacted on the ability of local communities to integrate and regulate their members. First, the general evolution of the American welfare state will be broadly discussed in terms of its comparative size and generosity. Next, the specific factors which have shaped its development will be examined. Finally, the impact of its evolution on the community-level variables, which, through their effects on the social dynamics of conformity, influence the volume of conventional street crime, will be addressed.

Before commencing this discussion on the relationship between the evolution of the American welfare state and the ability of communities to evoke conformity from their members, however, the concept must first be defined. The welfare state refers to government intervention in the form of "social policies, programs, standards, and regulations in order to mitigate class conflict and provide for, answer, or accommodate certain social needs for which the capitalist mode of production in itself has no solution or makes no provision" (Teeple 1995:15, emphasis in original). These interventions typically occur in four major, overlapping spheres.

The first such arena, and probably the most commonly associated with the welfare state, is that of the physical propagation of citizens and
their preparation for the labour market. State initiatives falling under this rubric include the health and educational systems, as well as a wide range of social benefits schemes like subsidized child care, family allowances, food stamps, and cash transfers to the unemployed (Teeple 1995:15; Wilson & Wilson 1982:1). Second, state intervention also occurs in the sphere of the labour market in the form of regulations governing the minimum wage, working hours, child labour, retirement age, injury insurance, and so on (Teeple 1995:15; Sleeman 1973:5). The third sphere of intervention is the point of production - the site of contact between workers and management - where state activities involve the development of an institutional framework for the struggle over control of the productive process by defining, among other things, collective bargaining rights (Teeple 1995:15). The fourth and final sphere of state intervention involves the provision of income insurance to the economically "unproductive" or "burdensome". This includes "old age pensions and other pensions and social assistance of all kinds paid out to those who for whatever reason are unable to work in the system" (Teeple 1995:16).

For the practical purposes of this thesis, there is no minimum threshold of state intervention into each of these four spheres that is required in order for a capitalist society to qualify as possessing a welfare state. That is, there is no precise level of intervention which distinguish welfare states from market societies. To the contrary, welfare states exist along a continuum, ranging in terms of the breadth of their interventions as they perpetually rise and subside. Therefore,
even in a democratic, capitalist society in which there exists only one state policy or program which seeks to either mitigate class conflict through redistributive means, or provide some form of social support to the disadvantaged, then that nation, for the purposes of this thesis, can be described as having a welfare state. The advantages of such a conceptualization is that it recognizes that welfare states may develop along different lines (e.g. whereas some may stress social programs, others may favour regulating economic activity), and it removes the rather cumbersome and subjective problem of attempting to establish a set of criteria which distinguish them from market societies.

The Evolution of the American Welfare State

Although the history of formal welfare provision in America can be traced as far back as the colonial period (Axinn & Levin 1992; Trattner 1994), the contemporary welfare state did not really begin to take root until approximately the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prior to this formative era, the principal advancements in the state provision of welfare included the creation of municipal health agencies in the early decades of the nineteenth century, and the development of both limited public education and government administered asylums in the middle and latter decades of the eighteen hundreds (Midgley 1992:xii). However, as the United States was foremost a rural society characterized by an abundance of available natural resources during this pre-civil war period, there was no major push to institutionalize welfare provision while these conditions prevailed.
Following the civil war, American society underwent tremendous social, political, and economic transformation. The United States, along with other Western nations, evolved from an agricultural to an industrial society, characterized by large-scale corporate capitalism (Noble 1997:36). As industrialization and urbanization intensified, social problems like poverty and crime attained unprecedented levels. Reform movements demanding that governments introduce measures aimed at curbing the worst excesses of capitalist production and at cushioning its most harmful social consequences emerged throughout the United States and, indeed, the entire West (Noble 1997).

By the late 1910s and early 1920s, generally regarded as the end of the formative welfare period (Noble 1997:51), most Western European nations had succumbed to the pressure of these populist movements and had adopted a number of limited social insurance programs which provided subsidized health-care and monetary support to unemployed and retired male workers (Pierson 1991:108). These countries were institutionalizing the services that would eventually form the cornerstone of the modern welfare state. With the notable exception of providing pensions to Northern veterans of the civil war (Berkowitz & McQuaid 1988:6), American governments, by contrast, did not become heavily involved in the delivery of social services during this period. Public pensions were reserved for victims of industrial accidents and for widowed mothers, both of which were narrowly defined (Noble 1997:36). Rather, American governments restricted themselves to adopting legislation which protected women and children from abusive working conditions by regulating wages and working
hours - policies governing the labour market (Berkowitz & McQuaid 1988:51). Therefore, the American progressives "had failed to establish what was, from a European perspective, the first principle of the modern welfare state: that male workers should be protected by social insurance" (Noble 1997:50).

Despite the advances of the progressive period, welfare in the United States primarily remained a matter of private charity. This, however, would change dramatically by the late 1930s as two events precipitated the mass institutionalization of welfare provision. The first, and less important of the two, was the monopolization of industrial production (Colvin 1986). Prior to the First World War, American business leaders repeatedly expressed their vehement opposition to even the most basic forms of state and corporate-sponsored welfarism. This fierce resistance combined with growing disenchantment amongst those most adversely affected by American industrialism resulted in numerous protests and violent confrontations between labour and management during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Berkowitz & McQuaid 1988:56). Following the First World War, however, the United States, like many other Western capitalist societies, underwent a process of industrial consolidation and centralization. As this monopolization unfolded, new management styles and philosophies began to emerge, the most influential of which stressed the economic virtues of achieving and maintaining long-term labour and social stability (Colvin 1986). The desire of this new generation of industrial managers to secure labour and social peace ultimately resulted in the creation and growth of corporate
welfare schemes, and in a general softening of the traditional business
stance against state welfare provision.

Whereas the monopolization of industrial production changed the
relationship between management and labour, the Great Depression, the
second major event of this interwar period, transformed the relationship
between government and the economy. The magnitude of this global
economic collapse was unparalleled. Between 1929 and 1933, American
industrial production and national income declined by a half, the real
gross national product fell by a third, the unemployment rate approached
twenty-five percent, a third of all financial institutions went bankrupt,
and wholesale prices dropped by an average of thirty-two percent (Keylor
1991:102). "Workers without work; banks without deposits; investors
wiped out; home mortgages foreclosed; farmers and small business people
unable to sell their wares and therefore unable to pay off their
commercial debts - such was the domestic economic condition of the
nation" (Keylor 1991:102). Not surprisingly, these dire economic
circumstances resulted in tremendous social and political unrest as both
the urban and rural poor demanded assistance from the federal and state
governments; "working-class movements, many quite militant, spread
quickly as dissatisfaction with the pace of change mounted" (Noble

Seeking to end this social and economic instability, President
Franklin Delano Roosevelt introduced a series of measures which rapidly
expanded the scope of the American welfare state (Stoesz & Karger 1992).
These included the establishment of federal cash and work relief programs in 1933, the creation of social insurance and the National Labor Relations Board in 1935, and the passage of new regulations governing working conditions in 1938 (Noble 1997:54; Findley & Rothney 1990). Of particular importance was the Social Security Act of 1935 which introduced "the major social insurance programs of Social Security and Unemployment Compensation as well as the means-tested programs now known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Supplemental Security Income" (Stoessel & Karger 1992:10). Once again, however, these provisions were far less generous and much more restrictive than almost anywhere in Western Europe. For example, in contrast to the United States, by 1935, every country in Western Europe, with the exception of Finland, offered some form of subsidized health insurance (Pierson 1991:108).

Following the Second World War until approximately the mid-1970s, and especially during the 1960s, American governments became more aggressive in their attempts to redress the social problems created by capitalist production. Not only did this involve expanding the size and scope of redistributive social programs, but also meaningful efforts at regulating or managing the economy through a broad range of legislative rules, guidelines, and taxation systems (Pierson 1991). With the publication of John Maynard Keynes' *General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* in 1936, the idea of direct government involvement in the management of the economy had become widely accepted by the 1950s and 1960s (Teeple 1995:17).
Contrary to most nations of Western Europe, however, the United States adopted a largely conservative interpretation of Keynesian economic principles. Whereas nations like the Netherlands employed this theory as a justification to significantly increase government spending and thus expand the range and comprehensiveness of government services, the United States moved in a somewhat different direction, adopting a mixed approach of moderate spending initiatives combined with tax cuts (Noble 1997:90). Thus, although cash benefits and services for the poor and unemployed did rise in America, they failed to keep pace with the measures taken in most of Western Europe. Even the Johnson administration's self-declared War on Poverty was modest by European standards, predominantly limiting new funding to the areas of public housing, education, manpower training, and various "other social services that were supposed to enhance the productive ability of the needy and facilitate their transition from welfare to work" (Trattner 1994:324); the American welfare state was primarily oriented towards supply-side economics. However, by focusing heavily on job training while almost completely ignoring job creation, these programs failed to address the structural basis of inner-city unemployment (Noble 1997:100). That is, the relative decline of the automobile, rubber, steel, and other "smoke stack" industries which served as the main employers in many urban centres, and over which local residents had little control, was being neglected (Wilson 1987:30).

Therefore, relative to most of Western Europe and even Canada, state-sponsored welfarism in America remained comparatively
underdeveloped even at its apex during the mid- to late-1960s. For example, among the seven major countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United States ranked second to last in social spending as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) between 1960 and 1975, trailing only Japan (Pierson 1991:128). Moreover, not only have American governments been more restrictive and less generous in their provision of services, but they have imposed fewer obligations on employers to provide social benefits for their workers (Noble 1997:8).

Since the mid- to late-1970s, however, the American and Western European welfare states have been progressively receding (Noble 1997; Teeple 1995; Trattner 1994; Taylor 1994). National governments have been steadily "rolling back the state's direct involvement in the kind of economic or social planning which was demanded in the earlier post-war period, and rationalizing significantly the state's involvement in the provision of public goods in areas like health and welfare, transport, housing, and urban planning" (Taylor 1994:491). While weakening economies combined with the onset of economic globalization have placed enormous pressure on all Western governments to reduce welfare services (Taylor 1994; Teeple 1995), the decline of the welfare state has been especially acute in the United States. Since 1980, state intervention has come under heavy ideological attack by successive Republican Presidents and, more recently, by a Republican-controlled Congress (Noble 1997:119-128; Trattner 1994:362-385). Therefore, throughout this continuing period of contraction, the American welfare state has
continued to remain modest by Western European standards. For instance, statistics collected by the OECD during the early-1990s reveal that combined federal, state, and local government spending on social programs in the United States represent "two-thirds the average GDP share spent on similar purposes by members of the European Community and [are currently] the lowest of any Western industrial society" (Noble 1997:7).

**Understanding the Limited American Welfare State**

While the American welfare state has always failed to keep pace with Western European standards, recent evidence suggests that this pattern may have even intensified (Noble 1997:7). Thus, before examining how the welfare state has impacted on the ability of American communities to integrate and regulate their members, it is important to briefly examine the factors which have hindered the institutionalization of social provision in this nation.

Numerous highly interrelated factors account for the relative weakness of the American welfare state. First, the relative balance of power between business and labour is a major determinant of the institutionalization of social provision. Countries characterized by well-organized working classes have generally developed the strongest welfare states (Noble 1997:21). Historically, the American labour force has been one of the least unionized in the entire Western world (Noble 1997:23). This situation is largely attributable to racial and ethnic conflicts within its working classes. Despite sharing similar class interests, high levels of racial antagonism have traditionally divided
American workers, particularly during the important formative period following the civil war:

Having failed to encourage abolition in the antebellum period and having failed subsequently to champion the cause of freed slaves, the trade-union movement found it difficult to build a southern labor movement at the height of industrialization. Even after they had been absorbed into the industrial economy, blacks remained divided from white workers and were often pitted against them by employers (Noble 1997:24).

Although most important, it should be noted that American workers were not only divided along this particular racial dimension, but according to other ethnic and religious differences as well.

The second major set of factors which have impeded the development of the American welfare state are the decentralized and fragmented nature of its political system (Noble 1997). With multiple centres of political power, the transaction costs for any group attempting to influence government decision-making, such as labour, are enormous. By creating "multiple veto points, fragmentation forced reformers to fight and refight their battles in a multiplicity of legislative, executive, and judicial venues - often at both the state and national level - while devoting scarce political resources to coordination" (Noble 1997:32). This fragmentation of power has generally provided an advantage to the opponents of welfare since they have needed only to gain the support of one branch of government in order to defeat or weaken proposed legislation, whereas promoters have needed to win support from all three. Similarly, the federalist political structure which prevails in America has hindered the institutionalization of welfare by fostering regional economic competition. State and local governments have been reluctant
to impose higher costs on mobile corporations, not wanting to discourage
continued and future economic investment in their jurisdictions.
Consequently, large tax increases to fund welfare programs and meaningful
regulation of the economy have been avoided at both political levels.

The third factor which has hindered the development of the American
welfare state is the nature of its electoral system. Traditionally, the
institutionalization of welfare has flourished in systems characterized
by multiple parties and proportional representation (Noble 1997:27).
This type of arrangement facilitates the political mobilization and
coordination of farmers, wage earners, and other groups who might demand
more extensive public benefits. For example, in Canada, disenchantment
with the absence of a clear left-wing political alternative led to the
formation of what is presently known as the New Democratic Party.
American politics, by contrast, is distinguished by a two-party, single-
member district, winner-take-all system (Noble 1997:28). This encourages
the competition for power to occur at the centre of the political
spectrum, thereby frustrating the ability of social reformers to push
their agenda.

To summarize, the extent to which the state assumes responsibility
for welfare provision is affected by numerous interrelated institutional
and structural variables. History indicates that "where wage earners
have been unified and well organized; where labor, social-democratic, or
socialist political parties have emerged to represent working-class
voters; and where the state and party systems have been centralized -
under these conditions welfare-state building has proceeded apace" (Noble 1997:19). Therefore, by virtue of having a deeply divided working class, a highly decentralized and fragmented political system, and a rigid two-party electoral system, the American welfare state has traditionally remained underdeveloped by Western European standards.

The Consequences of Welfarism on Community Control

This section broadly examines the impact of the institutionalization of welfare provision on the ability of communities to integrate and regulate their members. Since this impact has been both negative and positive, both sets of consequences will be examined separately. Before commencing this discussion, however, it must be noted that in order not to confound the influence of welfarism with that of economic globalization - an increasingly important political economic theme since the mid-1970s - the affects of the current contraction of the welfare state transpiring throughout the West will not be discussed here. Therefore, references to the present will pertain to the continued impact of state welfare provision and not those of its decline.

The Negative Effects of the Welfare State - Communitarianism

The unabated rise of the American welfare state until the mid-1970s has undermined the cultural condition of communitarianism. First and foremost, by institutionalizing the provision of social support, community networks grounded in relationships of interdependency have been thinned. The defined purpose of the welfare state is to mitigate class conflict and cushion the most socially disruptive consequences of
capitalist production by providing economic, political, and social resources to individuals, families, and communities (Leonard 1997). Problems arose, and indeed, continue to persist not because of the actual provision of social support, but because services were, and still are, administered by highly centralized bureaucratic agencies.

When support is provided by informal sources, or, if state funded, is delivered by non-bureaucratic community institutions, recipients are more prone to developing feelings of reciprocity and belonging; the horizontal dimension of social integration - private and parochial systemic networks - is strengthened. However, rather than reinforcing such delivery mechanisms, the welfare state removed ownership and control of social services from local communities and placed them into the hands of professionalised bureaucracies. This has undermined the integrative and control capacities of neighbourhoods because, as social services were progressively institutionalized, individuals became increasingly reliant on professional agents of the bureaucratic state rather than family, friends, and neighbours for support (Osborne & Gaebler 1992:51).

The gradual increase in size of the welfare state hindered the establishment of networks of interdependency not only by encouraging reliance on the benevolent state for support, but also by discouraging community involvement and mobilization. The powerlessness of local communities in the control and distribution of resources targeted for social services continues to deter participation in civic affairs. Similarly, the rapid appropriation of social problems as the domain of
expert professionals, both a contributing factor to and a result of the expansion of the welfare state, has also discouraged community involvement (Gusfield 1982; Walsh 1997). This professionalization of social problems has symbolically transferred the responsibility of either assisting those in need, or of intervening in problematic situations, away from local citizens and into the hands of professional actors (McKnight 1995:51). For example, the professionalization of police services which transpired during the 1950s and 1960s transformed the historical relationship between law enforcement agencies and communities from one of active participation, to the latter simply becoming a passive recipient of expert-driven service (O’Malley & Palmer 1996). However, it should be noted that this situation may once again be changing as police agencies are generally becoming more decentralized and are increasingly relying on the active participation of local citizens to effectuate their duties (O’Malley & Palmer 1996). Nevertheless, to the extent they shifted power over the development and delivery of social programs and services away from local communities, centralization and professionalization also undermined public-level control.

Not only has the institutionalization of welfare services weakened the horizontal integration of communities, but there is also reason to believe that social programs designed and delivered by centralized bureaucracies are less effective at addressing the needs of individuals, families, and neighbourhoods than programs developed and implemented with the active participation of local community residents. This appears to be true for numerous reasons. First, communities are generally more
committed to their members than service delivery systems are to their clients (Osborne & Gaebler 1992:66). Second, area residents have a better understanding of the nature and seriousness of the problems in their communities than do service professionals. For instance, "no bureaucrat could know more about problems in a public housing development than the people who live there" (Osborne & Gaebler 1992:66). Further, communities tend to be more creative and flexible in the development and delivery of social services than large centralized bureaucratic agencies. Finally, local communities can often provide services more efficiently than large bureaucratic organizations. For example, a study of government expenditures on the poor in Cook County, Illinois, revealed that federal, state, and local governments were collectively spending an average of $6,290.00 on each person living below the poverty line. However, only 47.4 percent of this total was actually reaching the poor in the form of cash transfers, food stamps, and rent vouchers as the remaining 52.6 percent of these funds were being consumed by service bureaucracies for administrative purposes (Osborne & Gaebler 1992:69). For all of these reasons, social programs developed and implemented with the active participation of local community residents would seem to be more effective than programs exclusively designed and administered by professionals working in bureaucratic agencies that are isolated by centralization.

To suggest that social services are more effective when they are designed and implemented with the participation of the community is not, however, to argue that either consulting professional experts to assist
in developing such services or employing salaried workers to administer and coordinate their delivery is somehow a wasteful use of resources. To the contrary, communities often simply do not possess the necessary technical knowledge and skills to effectively address their problems without outside assistance. Professional experts can make valuable contributions towards understanding the causes of and potential solutions to neighbourhood problems. Similarly, without the continuity, stability, and skills provided by salaried workers, many community programs would quickly fall into disarray (Lavarakas & Bennett 1988). Moreover, without some independent bureaucratic controls in place, social services may be more susceptible to corruption, abuse, and discriminatory practices. The recent experiences of many Canadian aboriginal communities where increased local control over federal grants and subsidies have spawned accusations of embezzlement and misappropriate use of funds suggests this can be a significant problem (Lowey 1998; Martin 1998). In fact, one of the primary reasons why the state began to institutionalize the provision of welfare in the first place was that private charities often deemed certain ethnic, cultural, and behavioral groups more or less unworthy of support (Osborne & Gaebler 1992:52). However, rather than reinforce informal support mechanisms with formal guidelines and resources, the highly centralized and bureaucratic welfare state has, to a considerable extent, replaced the informal with the formal and thereby eroded the ability of local communities to evoke conformity from their individual members.

Evidence supporting the argument that the institutionalization of
social services by highly bureaucratized and professionalised state agencies somewhat undermined the ability of communities to integrate and control their members is provided through a comparison of crime rates in communitarian and statist societies. To this end, Clinard's (1978) analysis of crime patterns in Sweden and Switzerland is particularly useful. He found that, between 1960 and 1972, homicide and robbery rates were significantly lower in Switzerland than in Sweden. This pattern held true for all offense categories, with the notable exception of fraud (Clinard 1978:37-45). With both nations similar in population size and per capita affluence, Clinard argued this difference could partially be explained by the relative degrees of statism in both nations. Whereas the Swedish developed a large centralized and highly bureaucratic welfare state, the Swiss proceeded in a different direction, encouraging private savings and the development of informal support networks, limiting the state to a role of secondary social provider (Clinard 1978:153). Clinard concluded that the use of the state to buttress rather than replace private and informal support mechanisms combined with a lengthy tradition of local democratic control contributed to the development of stronger horizontal social integration in Switzerland than in Sweden.

The Negative Effects of the Welfare State - Structural Variables:

Whereas the development of the welfare state has generally weakened the ability of communities to integrate and control their members by undermining relationships of interdependency, specific American welfare policies have also impacted negatively on some of the community-level structural variables directly associated with crime and victimization.
Housing and cash benefits are the two principal areas which have yielded such outcomes.

The availability of affordable housing has traditionally been one of the central concerns of American welfare policy. At the federal and state levels, this concern has largely been addressed through the construction of public housing projects. For example, in 1968, President Johnson received Congressional approval for a project which involved the construction of six million subsidized housing units over a period of ten years (Noble 1997:93). While this approach to addressing the problem of affordable housing was not problematic in itself, its application was. First, public housing units were often clustered together in a series of high-rise apartment complexes located within the boundaries of impoverished communities (which had often unsuccessfully lobbied against their construction), thus further concentrating poverty within inner-city areas (Bursik & Grasmick 1995). Furthermore, by providing highly subsidized rent for individuals and families on welfare while disqualifying the working poor from receiving virtually any subsidy whatsoever, these massive public housing projects also contributed to the concentration of unemployment (Osborne & Gaebler 1992:52). Similarly, by encouraging tenants who find employment to move to different lodgings, public housing also fuelled the problem of residential mobility. Finally, at the local level, concern over the availability of affordable housing resulted in the introduction of strict rent control policies in numerous cities, including New York (Mansfield 1997:29). Although initially successful in transferring income from landlords to tenants,
over the long term, rent control has precipitated the physical deterioration of the affected housing stock as landlords have curtailed maintenance of, and in some instances actually abandoned, their properties (Mansfield 1997:29; Parkin & Bade 1994:130).

By imposing tight eligibility restrictions on, and limiting the value of, cash transfers, the United States has always remained concerned with preventing welfare dependency; the leanness of income benefits provided by the American welfare state reflects its traditional preference for supply-side economic policies. However, this attempt to prevent welfare dependency by only providing minimal benefits has, in many respects, yielded socially harmful outcomes. First, by denying welfare to most families with present fathers, a powerful incentive was created for mothers to remain single (Osborne & Gaebler 1992:59). Not only does this type of family structure render child-rearing more difficult, but it also increases the likelihood of child poverty (Wilson 1987). Further, by minimizing the value of income transfers, America has not been as successful at alleviating the problems of poverty and inequality as the more generous welfare states of Western Europe (Currie 1997). Thus, for example, "poor children in the United States... are not only more numerous but also poorer than their European (or Canadian or Australian) counterparts, while the most affluent children in America are considerably richer than their counterparts in other advanced countries" (Currie 1997:158, emphasis in original).
The Positive Effects of the Welfare State - Social Support:

Despite its effects on the cultural and structural variables which undermine the ability of local communities to horizontally integrate and control their members, the impact of the institutionalization of welfare provision has by no means been entirely negative. Prior to the wide-scale emergence of the welfare state in the 1930s, individuals and families were much more vulnerable to the cyclical forces of capitalist production, resulting in extraordinarily high levels of poverty and income inequality. For example, in 1929, the richest one percent of the American population collected almost twenty percent of all income (Findley & Rothney 1990:112). As the welfare state grew in size, these problems subsided somewhat. For instance, research indicates that the War on Poverty contributed to a decline in child poverty rates from 16.3 percent in 1967, to 14.4 percent in 1973 (Noble 1997:99). Also, prior to the institutionalization of welfare, when social support was provided exclusively through informal community networks and private charities, discrimination based on sex, race, religion, and lifestyle often impeded persons in need from receiving assistance (Osborne & Gaebler 1992:59). Finally, even if administered by highly bureaucratized and professionalized state agencies which undermine horizontal integration and deprive neighbourhoods of public level control, the resources distributed by the welfare state nevertheless continue to provide individuals and families with a measure of social support, which, as discussed in the chapter on the social dynamics of conformity, encourages legal compliance (Cullen 1994). Therefore, the criminogenic implications of the weakening of community networks resulting from the institutionalization of welfare
provision have been somewhat offset by the increased availability of social support.

Evidence to support this position can be obtained by comparing murder rates in various welfare states. The homicide rate among males aged fifteen to twenty-four during the early 1990s was about 38 per 100,000 in the United States. This compares to "a little over 3 per 100,000 in Canada, between 2 and 3 per 100,000 in Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Australia and the Czech Republic; [and] between 1 and 2 per 100,000 in Sweden, Norway, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, and Austria" (Currie 1997:149). Similar differences exist when comparing the overall homicide rates of these countries, as well as other forms of violent behaviour. Thus, whereas the United States boasts the highest murder rate among Western industrialized nations, it also possesses the least generous welfare system. The comparatively high rates of lethal homicide in Canada and Australia reflect the present nature of their welfare states, which, although more encompassing than in the United States, are nevertheless underdeveloped by Western European standards (Currie 1997). Conversely, nations with the lowest homicide rates, including Sweden, Germany, Norway, and Austria are generally recognized as possessing the most comprehensive welfare systems in the world.

To summarize, it has been argued in this chapter that the institutionalization of welfare in America weakened the integrative and control capacity of its local communities. Moreover, whereas the provision of high levels of social support throughout most of Western
Europe did, to a considerable extent, offset the criminogenic strain caused by the cultural and structural implications of state welfarism, this has occurred to a much lesser extent in America mostly due to the relative underdevelopment of its welfare state. Nonetheless, even in this country, the impact of weaker horizontal integration - private and parochial systemic networks - was somewhat countervailed by the provision of state support. The next chapter, the final of this thesis, will have a fourfold purpose. First, a summary of the major arguments put forth throughout this investigation will be presented. Second, the inherent limitations of the ability of local communities to evoke legal conformity from their members will be examined. Next, some of the implications for public policy stemming from the nature of the relationship between street crime and community culture and structure will be presented. Finally, some potentially fruitful avenues for future research on this complex relationship will be discussed.
Conclusion

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the community-level variables associated with conventional street crime, and to assess how they have been affected by the wide-scale emergence of the modern welfare state. To this end, the influence of the cultural variable of communitarianism on the frequency of this type of crime was first to be examined. The concept of communitarianism was defined as a condition of societies pertaining to the presence of high levels of interdependency, which, in itself was defined as individual participation in social networks distinguished by feelings of mutual trust and obligation, and which are interpreted as a matter of group loyalty rather than mere personal convenience (Braithwaite 1989:86). Moderately communitarian societies, it was argued, experience lower rates of conventional street crime than individualistic societies because the dense networks of interdependencies which characterize them ensure that a greater percentage of the population is socially integrated and thus more susceptible to the pressures of informal social control. Evidence of the tempering influence of communitarianism on predatory street crime was provided through a discussion of its centrality in both Japanese and Swiss culture, two nations with comparatively low crime rates.

Second to be examined were the actual social dynamics which enable communities to prevent unlawful behaviour by evoking conformity from
their members. First, local crime rates were shown to be influenced by three different levels of relational networks—private, parochial and public—each of which serves both as a source of social integration and informal control. When these relationships are strong, communities are both horizontally and vertically integrated which strengthens their ability to deliver informal social control. Second, these dynamics also include the provision of social support to individuals and families in the form of material resources, elementary services, cultural knowledge, basic information, and emotional assistance (Cullen 1994). The provision of support, it was argued, encourages legal conformity by minimizing the consequences of criminogenic strain.

Next to be examined were the structural properties of local communities which are known to directly influence the volume of crime within their boundaries. Residential mobility, unemployment, poverty, physical deterioration, and crime itself were all found to stimulate criminal behaviour. They do so by undermining the ability of local communities to integrate and control their individual members.

Finally, the development of the American welfare state and its influence on the community-level cultural and structural variables associated with conventional street crime were discussed. Relative to Western Europe and even Canada, the American welfare state has remained relatively underdeveloped throughout its entire history. This situation can be attributed to the deep divisions within its working class, to the highly decentralized and fragmented nature of its political system, and
to its rigid two-party electoral system.

The influence of the rise of the American welfare state on the ability of local communities to integrate and regulate their members has been both negative and positive. Beginning at the level of culture, the institutionalization of welfare provision has undermined the formation and sustenance of relationships of interdependency, the foundation of communitarianism. By encouraging reliance on the benevolent state for support and discouraging participation in community mobilization efforts, private and parochial systemic networks have been weakened. Moreover, by shifting much of the control over the development and implementation of social programs and services away from local communities and into the hands of highly centralized professional bureaucrats, the welfare state has and continues to also deprive neighbourhoods of public-level control.

The American welfare state was also found to have negatively influenced the community-level structural variables associated with conventional street crime. Specifically, the institutionalization of welfare in America has encouraged residential mobility, the concentration of poverty, the concentration of unemployment, and to a lesser extent, the physical deterioration of neighbourhoods. These structural properties, impact negatively on the volume of street crime because they too weaken private, parochial, and public-level systemic networks.

Finally, the negative consequences resulting from the institutionalization of welfare provision have been somewhat offset by the greater
availability of state support. That is, the resources distributed by the welfare state provide individuals and families with a measure of social support which both mitigates the influence of criminogenic strain and encourages conformity to the law. This was found to be especially true in the more generous welfare states of Western Europe.

Limitations

While the relationship between conventional street crime and community culture and structure is strong, there are nevertheless important limitations on the ability of neighbourhoods to evoke legal conformity from their members. First, the capacity of local communities to adequately integrate and regulate their citizens is contingent upon the presence of a minimum level of commitment to a shared set of norms and values; there must be some degree of consensus over what constitutes appropriate conduct for informal social control to be effective. Unfortunately, this can be problematic in pluralistic, multicultural societies like the United States and Canada. While there is evidence that disapproval of predatory street crime is universal regardless of age, class, ethnic background, education, or occupation (Braithwaite 1989:39), such differences can, however, undermine the ability of communities to express this solidarity by creating social barriers between area residents. Heterogeneity, in other words, whether economic, racial, ethnic, religious, or ideological, can potentially hinder the supervisory capacity of a neighbourhood to the extent that it functions as a divisive force. While certainly not impossible, overcoming the potential barriers created by such differences can nevertheless be
extremely difficult.

Second, as evinced by their lower rates of predatory street crime, communitarian societies like Japan and Switzerland seem better able to integrate and regulate their members than predominantly individualistic societies like the United States. However, there are important obstacles in American society that would need to be overcome in order to strengthen its cultural commitment to communitarianism. First, the United States possesses a strong and lengthy tradition of individualism (Lipset 1990). Consequently, any attempt to modify this heritage would likely encounter significant resistance. Second, the United States is characterized by a highly mobile, heterogeneous, and urban population (Cullen 1994). Unfortunately, these structural properties hinder the formation and sustenance of relationships of interdependency, the foundation of a communitarian society (Braithwaite 1985). Finally, the highly centralized and bureaucratic American welfare state has also proven to undermine communitarianism by encouraging reliance on the government rather than informal networks for social support, and by discouraging participation in community mobilization efforts (McKnight 1995:155). Moreover, there is no reason to believe that simply contracting the size of the welfare state (withdrawing formal supports to individuals and families) will somehow automatically result in higher levels of communitarianism. Therefore, there are important cultural and structural barriers to strengthening the level of commitment to communitarianism in nations like the United States.
Third, the structural variables which affect the ability of local communities to evoke conformity from their members are, to a considerable extent, influenced by factors over which neighbourhood residents have little control. The history of the American welfare state illustrates how residential mobility, the concentration of poverty, the concentration of unemployment, and urban physical decline have been, and continue to be, influenced by broad political economic forces. This reality has often rendered local communities relatively powerless to meaningfully influence these structural variables by themselves. Of course, the welfare state is not the only political economic force to affect the ability of communities to evoke conformity from their members. For example, global economic transformations have resulted in a steady shifting of low-skill industrial employment away from long-established industrial centres and into more attractive production markets where labour costs are lower and government regulations are less restrictive (Taylor 1994). This process of deindustrialization has resulted in higher levels of unemployment and underemployment in many of the inner-city communities where industrial production once thrived (Bluestone & Harrison 1982:81; Bourgois 1996). Therefore, unilateral efforts by local communities to redress structural problems like unemployment and thereby strengthen their integrative and control capacities are considerably limited.

Finally, it should be recognized that community culture and structure is but one influence on the volume of conventional street crime within a particular neighbourhood. Crime is a social relationship whose
frequency is shaped by the number of motivated offenders, the quantity of vulnerable victims, the potency of informal social control, and the level of state repression within a specific geographic area (Young 1987). Among these four variables, only informal social control is the exclusive domain of local communities; whereas neighbourhoods can moderately influence offender motivation and victim vulnerability through the provision of social support, they cannot, for all practical purposes, control the administration and delivery of formal social control. Therefore, by virtue of their restricted influence over three of the four variables which shape crime rates, communities are limited in their ability to independently reduce the volume of conventional street crime within their boundaries by simply strengthening their integrative and control capacities.

**Policy Implications**

Despite the limitations outlined above, the relationship between conventional street crime and community cultures and structures remains strong; when neighbourhoods are no longer able to effectively integrate or regulate their members, rates of conventional street crime escalate (Rosenbaum 1988). There are numerous policy implications which can be drawn from this complex relationship.

First, governments should strive to create a climate that is favourable for community involvement; which encourages the establishment and maintenance of networks of interdependency. Tax incentives are one possible means of encouraging participation in communal activities. For
example, if a portion of expenses incurred through community oriented volunteerism (e.g. coaching youth sports) could be deductible for income tax purposes, then perhaps more individuals would be willing to donate their time.

Second, all levels of government should actively solicit community input into the design, delivery, and management of social services. This would increase local ownership over social programs, thereby encouraging greater levels of community involvement. Moreover, there is also evidence which suggests that social programs designed and implemented with the participation of communities tend to be both more effective and cost efficient than services developed and administered exclusively by professional bureaucrats (Osborne & Gaebler 1992:66).

Third, the ability of communities to control and support their individual members is influenced heavily by the physical condition of their infrastructure and building stock (Wilson & Kelling 1982). Consequently, it is imperative for governments to properly maintain public buildings and infrastructure, adopt and enforce strict building codes, and allocate sufficient resources for services like garbage collection, street cleaning, and graffiti removal. High standards in these areas can help insulate communities from entering a spiral of decline (Sampson 1995).

Fourth, in order to promote continued reinvestment in housing stocks, greater residential stability, and increased civic involvement,
governments should encourage home ownership, particularly in areas where poverty is concentrated. This can be achieved through a combination of tax incentives and tenant buy-out programs (Sampson 1995).

Finally, the concentration of poverty adversely affects the ability of communities to deliver informal control and provide social support. Therefore, governments should seek to disperse the concentration of poverty in order to promote the greater social integration of the economically disadvantaged. This can be achieved through building codes which require that all new developments include a mixture of housing intended for individuals and families of different social classes, and that low-income housing be scattered in low-density projects throughout the urban environment.

**Future Research**

Throughout this thesis, it has been argued that there is a strong relationship between rates of street crime and community cultures and structures; when local neighbourhoods are unable to effectively integrate and regulate their members, the volume of predatory crime is high. However, there are several issues which require additional examination in order to further clarify the nature and idiosyncrasies of this complex relationship. The following is a brief discussion of some of these important issues.

First, since the mid-1970s, the American and Western European welfare states have begun to recede in the wake of economic globalization
(Taylor 1994; 1995; Marchak 1993; Wallace 1990; Teeple 1995). With the onset of globalization, a new era of international economic competition is emerging. This has created enormous pressure on individual nation states to increase their competitiveness by reducing public spending and deregulating economic activity - in other words, shrinking the size of the welfare state (Teeple 1995). The purpose of this social disinvestment has been to create an economic climate that is more favourable for attracting foreign investment. Examining the impact of economic globalization on the ability of local communities to integrate and regulate their members would be a particularly fruitful topic for future research. Of special interest would be the affects of globalization on the provision of both formal and informal social support.

Second, this thesis restricted its analysis to the relationship between conventional street crime and community cultures and structures. State and white-collar crimes, it was suggested, occur independently of the extent to which communities are able to integrate and regulate their members. However, the culture and structure of local communities may in fact exert an influence over the volume of both these types of crime. For example, Braithwaite (1989:139-140) suggests that cultural commitments to communitarianism might influence the probability of white-collar offenses. Similarly, the disproportionate rate at which police abuses of power involve residents from neighbourhoods characterized by high concentrations of poverty and racial and ethnic minorities indicates that some community structures may affect this specific type of state crime (Currie et al. 1992). However, further research is required to
systematically examine these possibilities in greater detail.

Third, further research needs to be conducted on the relationship between crime and social support. Specifically, the tension between formal and informal provision needs to be examined in greater detail. For example, how can formal support be delivered so that it complements rather than competes with support provided by informal sources? When overlap exists, is support provided by informal sources always preferable to that which is provided by the state? These are only two of the questions which must be addressed in order to gain a better understanding of this relationship.

Finally, the association between conventional street crime and community cultures and structures needs to be examined in the Canadian context. Of particular importance is how federal, provincial, and municipal fiscal and social policies have and continue to affect the ability of local communities to integrate and control their members. Moreover, the experiences of aboriginal communities as they have acquired greater control over federal grants and subsidies is also worthy of further examination, especially in terms of the conditions under which this transfer has been successfully and unsuccessfully implemented. These analyses could provide important insights for crime prevention purposes.
Bibliography


