

Social Capital and Collective Efficacy: Resource and Operating Tools of Community Social Control

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ABSTRACT

Current popularity of social capital and collective efficacy theories in community research has presented some challenges related to definition, measurement, and ontological issues that need to be addressed to facilitate future research. Although scholars have made efforts to clarify the differences between social capital and collective efficacy, the two concepts have been either used interchangeably or presented as competing ideas. The paper, through the review of relevant literatures, addresses some of these issues and argues that social capital and collective efficacy are partly overlapping and complementary to one another with regards to establishing and sustaining community social control. When social capital is activated in the specific direction to develop social control, collective efficacy plays an important role by providing a connection and activating the resource of social capital for the specific goal of safety. Social capital alone cannot guarantee safety, but collective efficacy cannot exist in absence of social capital.

Key Words: Social Capital, Collective Efficacy, Crime and Disorder, Social Control, Neighborhood

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INTRODUCTION

The concepts of social capital and collective efficacy have recently gained popularity in community research in criminology. Both are in the process of getting shaped and re-shaped. Several problems are being encountered in defining and measuring these concepts. First, there are no accepted working definitions as different scholars define these concepts differently. The issue of definition is more challenging in case of social capital because the concept is interdisciplinary and multidimensional. Second, the relationship between social capital and collective efficacy is somewhat confusing. Scholars have attempted to clarify the similarities and differences between them. Some have conceptualized them as competing and conflicting concepts, while others have used them interchangeably. Third, measurements of these concepts remain issues mainly because of lack of consensus on working definitions. Finally, the relationship between social capital, collective efficacy, and informal social control also needs some clarifications. The purpose of the paper is to address these issues by reviewing relevant literatures.

Social capital may be defined as a community stock of social trust and norms of reciprocity embedded in social networks that facilitates collective actions. This definition integrates the elements of several definitions of social capital provided by scholars. Collective efficacy is defined as a form of social organization that combines social cohesion and shared expectations for social control (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earle, 1997; Sampson, 2006). Currently, the theories of social capital and collective efficacy are used in criminology in community research (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Morenoff, Sampson, & Raudenbush, 2001; Putnam, 2001, 2002; Rose & Clear, 1998; Rosenfeld, Messner, & Baumer, 2001; Sampson et al., 1997; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999). Several studies have reported that either social capital is positively related with crime and disorder or it is insufficient to activate social control at neighborhood level (Sampson, 2006; Cancino, 2005; Pattillo, 1998). This is probably due to the narrow conceptualization of the definition of social capital in social disorganization literature where social capital is equated with social networks and early works in social disorganization assumed that networks alone directly affect the community social control (Bursik, 1988; Kubrin & Weitzer 2003). The recent research in collective efficacy, while accepting the necessity of some networking for activation of neighborhood collective efficacy, reports potential negative externalities of dense ties and argues for dispensability and undesirability of dense ties (Pattillo, 1998; Sampson, 2006). One of the major focuses of this paper is to understand the relationship between social capital and collective efficacy.

In the first part of the paper, an attempt will be made to trace the development of social capital theory to clarify definition and measurement related issues. In the second part, the paper will include a brief review of the development of collective efficacy theory in the writings of Sampson and colleagues. This will be followed by a review of measures of the concept and empirical status of the theory. The final part of the paper will discuss the relationship between social capital and collective efficacy and their effects on crime and disorder in communities.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

The multifaceted concept (Dasgupta & Serageldin, 2002) of social capital is interdisciplinary as it is extensively used by scholars in different disciplines. One of the strengths of the social capital concept is its use in the fields of economics, public health, urban planning, criminology, architecture, and social psychology, other than political science and sociology where it originated (Putnam, 2002). Social capital is different from other sociological concepts because it has quickly crossed the boundaries of sociology and been accepted by other disciplines that is the uniqueness and one of the strengths of the concept (Adam & Roncevic, 2003). However, this has also presented serious challenges and probably the biggest challenge is to resolve the problem of its definition, operationalization, and measurement along with the problem of the ontological status of social capital—its sources, forms, and consequences (Adam & Roncevic, 2003).

What is Social Capital?

As Robert Putnam (2002) describes, the term social capital, which was coined by a young social reformer of West Virginia, L. Judson Hanifan, has been invented and reinvented several times in the 20th century by sociologists and economists. However, the seminal works of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and American sociologist James S. Coleman made it a popular sociological concept, and especially the work of James S. Coleman brought the concept on intellectual agenda (Putnam, 2002). Some authors give Pierre Bourdieu the credit for using the term first (Portes, 1998; Steger, 2002). The review of literature provides evidences that the concept of social capital was first developed and used by James S. Coleman in English language and popularized by Robert Putnam.

Pierre Bourdieu, who is often credited for the first systematic use of the concept, (Portes, 1998) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources, which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationship of mutual acquaintances or recognition” (p. 243). The concept of social capital emerged from the writings of Bourdieu, although he used the concept with cultural and economic capital (Baron, Field, & Schuller, 2000). In his definition, social capital is a mean to achieve or develop network which can be used for economic gains. He maintains the primacy of economic capital, but does not reduce social capital to cultural or economic capital (Baron et al., 2000).

Colman, who popularized social capital as a sociological concept, used several definitions. For Colman (1990), “social capital is the set of resources that inheres in family relations and in community social organization and that are useful in cognitive and social development of a child” (p. 300). Coleman (1990) also defines social capital as following:

Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common:

They all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. (p. 302)

He forcefully communicated the idea of functional social capital and argued that social capital is more important than human capital in achieving educational attainment (Coleman, 1988). It is not a characteristic of an agent, but social glue that binds people together and develops mutual trust and collective actions. Social capital is also indispensable in developing other forms of capital. In Coleman’s theory, social capital is a public good with functional indefensibility that benefits everyone with disregard to the participation and helps in developing other forms of capital and resources (Coleman, 1988).

The concept of social capital as a functional public good has been advanced by other scholars, most notably by Robert Putnam (Baron et al., 2000) who argues with rich empirical data that social capital is a public good along with private good that benefits people in political, social, and economic development. In a seminal work titled *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Putnam et al. (1993) define social capital as "those features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (p. 167). It is clear from this definition that the social capital has elements of trust, norms, and network. He believes that social capital is a public good and argues with the data that social capital does not only improve communities' economic performances, but also has positive significant impacts on democratic governance (Putnam, 1993).

Putnam, in his first works ignores that negative externalities of social concept, which he addresses in his most famous book titles *Bowling Alone*. He used the metaphor of bowling alone to show that Americans have moved out of bowling leagues and started bowling alone and that not only has weakened the bridging networks, but also bonding networks. Putnam (1995) defined social capital as "features of social life—network, norms, trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursuer shared objectives" (pp. 664-665). In his book, Putnam (2000) argued that civic engagement in America has declined and responsible factors for the decline are increased time pressure, urban sprawl, television watching, impact of 1960s events of Vietnam war, Watergate scandal, and revolt against sexual repression and authority (Putnam, 2000). However, in further analysis, he identified four main perpetrators of killing civic society in America (Steger, 2002): pressure of time and money, commuting and urban sprawl, electronic entertainment (mainly television), and generational change. The most responsible factor, accounting for 50% of decline of social engagements, is the difference between new and earlier generations. The second major culprit is the electronic entertainment, especially television, which is responsible for 25% of the decline (Putnam, 2001). The most important conceptual contribution of *Bowling Alone* is that it provides the concept of bonding and bridging social capital and gives a framework for understanding the potential negative externalities of social capital. In his latest work, *Democracies in Flux*, Putnam (2002) describes social capital as social network and associated norms of reciprocity. He replaces the element of trust with reciprocity in this definition. He contends that the different kinds of network based reciprocity norms or different forms of social capital can be summed up into social capital at the community or country level. Putnam (2002) also warns us that social capital, like other forms of physical capital such as nuclear reactor, may produce socially undesirable outcome.

Lin (2001) defines social capital as "resources embedded in social networks and accessed and used by actors for actions" (p. 25). This definition indicates that social capital is embedded in social network and it provides access to individual actors who use it for gains. Authors have also (Lin, 2008; Son & Lin, 2008) explored the roles and sources of individual and organizational social capital and proposed that organizational social capital may be measured in terms of internal and external social capital. Fukuyama (1996), whose work on trust is seminal, argues that certain norms and values should be regarded as social capital and defines social capital as the following:

Social capital can be defined simply as the existence of a certain set of informal rules or norms shared among members of a group that permits cooperation among them. The sharing of values and norms does not in itself produce social capital, because the values may be the wrong ones... The norms that produce social capital... must

substantively include virtues like truth-telling, the meeting of obligations, and reciprocity (pp. 378-379).

Woolcock and Narayan (2001) emphasize the need of having a working definition of social capital and define social capital as "the norms and networks that facilitate collective action" (p.3). In this definition, the element of trust is missing because he recommends that definition should focus on sources of social capital rather than consequences and trust is more of a consequence of social capital. A review study on social capital by Durlauf and Fafchamps (2004) reports three underlying ideas. First, the social capital produces positive externalities for the members of a group. Second, these positive externalities are generated through shared norms, trust, and values. Finally, shared trust, norms, and values arise from informal forms of organizations based on social networks and association. This observation indicates toward the common elements embedded in different definitions of social capital. The most important element of social capital is social networking and organization. A community is likely to have a higher social capital if people do not bowl alone and they frequently engage in formal and informal network of people. The second element is trust and values of reciprocity. Values of reciprocity can be built upon mutual trust and solidarity and trust and solidarity should go beyond parochial groups and touch people beyond the close networks. Finally, social control has effects on several aspects of individual and community life. These effects could be in forms of positive or negative externalities depending on the quality of social control.

If we analyze the definitions provided by several scholars, we find that different definitions have different focus. A careful view, however, tells us that the common elements of social capital are social network, trust, shared norms and values, and reciprocity. Social capital, therefore, can be defined as a social stock of trust and norms of reciprocity embedded in social network, which facilitates collective actions for mutual and individual benefits.

SOURCES, TYPES, NATURE, AND EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Sources of Social Capital

Social capital is a sociological construct and its sources are embedded in communities, which can be defined as neighborhood, city, state, or country. It is clear in Coleman's (1990) theoretical conceptualization that social capital is lodged in the structure of social organization rather than individuals (Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999). Social capital lies in the social structures where agents live (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Adler and Kwon (2002) make distinction among market, hierarchical, and social relations and argue that it is the social relationship that constitutes the dimensions of social structure underlying social capital. They further argue that all other types of relationship have mutual influence therefore market and hierarchical relationship give rise to the social relationship. Explaining the source of capital in writings of Bourdieu and Coleman, Porters (1998) finds that social capital inheres in the structure of peoples' relationship, whereas economic capital may reside in the bank accounts of people and human capital may reside in their heads. The first source of social capital, according to Porters (1998), is accumulation of obligation from others according to the norms of reciprocity. Solidarity emerging among people from common fate is another source of social capital (Porters, 1998) and this resembles the bonding social capital of Putnam (1995, 2000, 2001). Finally, social integration of Durkheimian sociology is also a source of social capital which has sanctioning capacity to enforce group rituals and norms (Durkheim, 1893/1984).

Types of Social Capital

As Putnam (2002) suggests, the different and distinct uses of social capital by scholars in different disciplines brings potential confusion. Since the concept is multidimensional, it is important to recognize qualitatively different social capital when using for different purposes. Putnam (2002) describes four distinctive dimensions of social capital—informal and formal, thick and thin, inward and outward, and bridging and bonding—reflected in the literature. The most important distinction proposed by Putnam (2002) is the axis of bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital brings people together on the basis of similarities and unity of interests, whereas bridging social capital brings different types of people together. Although bonding social capital is more likely to have negative externalities, people are more likely to get social support from bonding than bridging social capital. Putnam (2000), by providing the examples of ethnic conflict in Bosnia and Hindu-Muslim conflicts in India, argues that strong bonding ties, in absence of bridging network, may produce sinister outcomes. The description of four distinctive types of social capital makes it clear that the concept is multidimensional and an appropriate and meaningful assessment of social capital has to include both qualitative and quantitative measures.

Adler and Kwon (2002) classify social capital into internal and external categories. On the basis of the focus of definitions on sources and effects of social capital, Adler and Kwon (2002) argue that the definitions, which focus on the relationship between an actor and other actors reflect internal social capital, the definitions, which focus on relations among actors reflect external social capital, and the definitions, which focus on both types of linkage reflect internal as well as external social capital. They equate their internal and external social capital conceptualization with bonding and bridging social capital of Putnam (1995).

Some other scholars have divided social capital into structural and cognitive (Uphoff, 2000; Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002). Structural social capital is external that includes network, ties, and institutions. Cognitive social capital is intangible that includes norms, values, trust, and reciprocity. Grootaert and Van Bastelaer (2002) also divide social capital between macro and micro. On basis of this dual typology, the authors (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002) provide a matrix with four types of social capital. Institutions of the state and laws represent macro structural social capital, while local institutions and network represent micro structural social capital. Similarly, governance is depicted as macro cognitive social capital, while trust, local norms, and values are micro cognitive social capital. This typology is generic in nature and provides superficial understanding of the scope and forms of social capital.

Is Social Capital a Capital?

Is social capital really a capital? Several economists may respond negatively as the term social capital is coined by the scholars from other fields and it also does not fulfill the condition of being capital in economic theory (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002). This question can be addressed by understanding the similarity and dissimilarity between social capital and traditional forms of capital. Social capital, like physical capital, requires initial and recurring investments, accumulates as a stock, and can be used by actors for an array of benefits (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002). Social capital, unlike human and physical capital, cannot be built or maintained individually and does not deplete if used. Social capital, contrary to the

human and physical capital, increases when used and decreases when disused (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002; Ostrom, 2000).

On the basis of some of the above listed differences between social capital and traditional forms of capital in economics such as human and physical capital, some economists have raised their concerns and argued that difficulty in measuring the social capital in terms of accumulated investment invalidates the concept (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002). However, the concept of social capital has given a unique opportunity and opened the possibilities of interdisciplinary research.

Effects of Social Capital on Social Control

The social capital, apart from a source of familial and extra familial supports and benefits, works as a source of social control (Porters, 1998). The focus here is on the effects of social capital on social control as it is directly relevant to the criminological research.

Describing the effect of social capital on social control, Porters (1998) gives following explanation:

The social capital created by tight community networks is useful to parents, teachers, and police authorities as they seek to maintain discipline and promote compliance among those under their charge. Sources of this type of social capital are commonly found in bounded solidarity and enforceable trust, and its main result is to render formal or overt controls unnecessary. (p. 10)

The topics pertinent to social capital listed on the World Bank website (World Bank, 2009) include crime and violence with several other topics. Adler and Kown (2002) provide detail discussion on benefits and risks of social capital. Information, influence, and solidarity are the main benefits, which actors use for different community and individual gains and objectives. Social capital may also generate some risk for members of group as well as other groups. The risk for group is related with the cost of the investment and the risk for other groups may be understood by understanding the consequences of bonding and bridging social capital.

Connecting social capital with crime, Putnam (2001) has forcefully argued that crime has strong negative correlation with social capital at a state and community level. He presented the correlation between social capital and homicide data and concluded that low level of social capital is the strongest predictor of murder. This conclusion of Putnam (2001) is empirically supported by another study (Rosenfeld et al., 2001), which reported a significant correlation between social capital and homicide, while controlling other possible predictors at the national level. The study reported that where levels of generalized social trust are high and civic engagement is widespread, homicide rates are low, regardless of the level of deprivation, the density of the population, and other socio-demographic influences. Skrabski and Kawachi (2004) tested the theory of social capital and reported social capital as a significant predictor of mortality rates in both men and women. Social capital, in this study, is measured by combining three elements—social trust, perception of reciprocity, and membership in civic organizations—as suggested by Putnam (2001, 2002).

COLLECTIVE EFFICACY: CONCEPT, EMPIRICAL STATUS, AND MEASUREMENT

Collective Efficacy

Social control is a key variable in social disorganization theory, which provides a link between neighborhood characteristics and crime and disorder. The neighborhood characteristics – low socioeconomic status, residential instability, and population heterogeneity – deplete informal social control or crime preventing/controlling capacity of neighborhood resulting into high rates of crime and disorder (Shaw & McKay, 1921). Informal social control in disorganization model is thought to be activated through relational network (Bellair, 1997; Bursik & Grasmick, 2003) or collective efficacy (Sampson & Grove, 1989; Sampson et al., 1997; Sampson, 2006). The conceptualization of neighborhood ties and networks as activating factors for informal social control gives an incomplete picture as it does not tell us how ties and networks activate informal social control (Sampson, 2006), and also fails to recognize that ties and networks have the capacity to produce negative externalities (Pattillo, 1998). These limitations and concerns have been addressed by the theory of collective efficacy, which has been developed to capture the processes involved between structural characteristic of communities and their success and failure in controlling crime and disorder.

Collective efficacy is defined as a form of social organization that unites social cohesion and trust with shared expectations for social control (Sampson et al., 1997; Sampson, 2006). The cohesion element of collective efficacy captures social structure of working trust and mutual support and shared expectations capture the norms and values with regards to the well-being of neighborhood. The former is structural, embedded in the network of people, whereas the latter is cognitive, embedded in the reciprocity and collective actions. The roots of collective efficacy theory in criminology, as an extension of social disorganization theory, can be traced in the influential work of Sampson and Groves (1989), in which three intervening variables—the ability of a community to supervise and control teenage peer group, density of local friendship networks, and local participation in formal and voluntary organization—were incorporated into the model. All three variables construct informal social control at neighborhood level in relation with a goal of safety and conformity. However, an article by Sampson et al. (1997) formally introduced the theory of collective efficacy that is linked to reducing violence. They (Sampson et al., 1997) defined collective efficacy as “social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good.” The fundamental argument is that variation in crime rates among different neighborhoods is based on the differential levels of informal social control and this largely depends on the level of collective efficacy. Collective efficacy at the neighborhood level, in its simplest term, is the willingness of its residents to intervene for the common good. Collective efficacy is positively influenced by high socio economic status, home ownership, and participation in local organizations and negatively influenced by concentrated disadvantage and immigrant concentration. Collective efficacy is found to be negatively associated with violence and victimization and tends to play mediating roles between neighborhood composition and violence.

The essence of collective efficacy is that residents will have willingness to intervene for the common good if they share mutual trust and solidarity. It means if residents, living in one neighborhood, trust one another and are ready to help and reciprocate, they will be willing to intervene in case of a danger or any unpleasant and emergency situation. The existence of trust and reciprocity assumes the existence of some network as people cannot develop trust and reciprocity if they do not interact. In this definition, the element of willingness to intervene is the key and

the element of trust and solidarity are functional as they are likely to increase the willingness to intervene. The willingness of residents to intervene on behalf of community for the common good is a form of informal social control. Collective efficacy is target oriented and focuses on producing social control. Sampson et al. (1997) draw an analogy between personal and collective efficacy as both are referred to as the capacity of producing intended effects. If self-efficacy of Albert Bandura is a person's belief in his ability to succeed in a particular situation, collective efficacy of Sampson et al. (1997) is the capacity or belief of a community to succeed in producing social control and reducing crime and disorder.

Sampson and Raudenbush, (1999) defined collective efficacy as the linkage of cohesion and mutual trust with shared expectations for intervening in support of neighborhood social control. This definition slightly modifies the earlier definition. Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) used the term shared expectations of social control instead of shared willingness to intervene. This change is seemed to be made to overcome a methodological issue. As we know that Sampson et al. (1997) measured shared willingness to intervene by asking questions to respondents if they think that neighbors will intervene in five different situations. This measurement truly reflects the expectations rather than willingness to intervene. Probably due to this reason, Sampson and colleague used shared expectations instead of shared willingness in the second definition. The definition of collective efficacy provided in the subsequent writings (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001; Sampson, 2006) remains unchanged.

In his recent essay, Sampson (2006) provides details of collective efficacy theory and clarifies some of the issues that arise with the networks view of social capital prevalent in social disorganization literature. Networks view of social capital, as it is seen by the author, equates social capital with networks of citizens. Some of the social disorganization models that overemphasize the value of relational network or dense ties (Grasmick & Bursik, 2003) also consider networks synonymous with social capital. However, networks alone are not sufficient to control crime and evidences indicate that some of the networks may impede or weaken the social control and produce negative externalities (Pattillo, 1998). Sampson (2006) questions the role of social ties in producing low crime rate on mainly three grounds. First in some neighborhoods, strong ties may work to impede efforts to establish social control. Second, network connects do-gooders as well as drug dealers. Third, shared expectations for social control and strategic connections that yield social action are fostered in the absence of thick ties among neighbors. Cohesion and shared expectations produce the possibility of repeat interaction and this in turn brings the element of future expectations. There has to be some amount of ties or networking to facilitate the interactions and repeat interactions. However, the network itself is not sufficient because it has to be activated to produce shared expectations and collective actions. Networks also do not have to be very strong because sparse networks may provide the opportunity of networking with people outside of friends and kin.

Collective Efficacy, Neighborhood Ecology, and Rational Choice

The key variable in neighborhood criminology is informal social control. Informal social control, in its broadest term, is the capacity of a community to realize shared goals of its members and regulate their behavior in accordance with the desired and established norms as well as protect the general well-being of the community. In this context, one central goal of community residents is to live in safe and orderly environments that are free of predatory crime, especially interpersonal violence (Sampson, et al. 1997). In other words, it is the capacity of residents to

maintain peace and order and prevent crime through collective actions. This conceptualization of informal social control includes the willingness and actions of residents to intervene on behalf of their community, protect their community from predatory elements, and mobilize resources and seek external and institutional interventions to achieve the goal of safety and order. Informal social control therefore is embedded in collective actions, although it benefits everyone regardless of participation. However, the strength of informal social control is reduced if fewer members are willing to intervene and participate. In the definitions of collective efficacy provided by Sampson et al. (2007) and Sampson and Raudenbush (1999), the element of willingness to intervene is the key and the element of trust and solidarity are functional as they contribute to the element of willingness to intervene. In this view, collective efficacy is nothing but willingness of residents to intervene. The important question here is not to explore the relationship between collective efficacy and social control as both the concepts are overlapping, but to understand the processes, which influence the willingness of residents to intervene. The ecology and rational choice literature may illuminate some of the dark corners and help us understand the decision of intervention for public good.

Several studies have integrated the elements of routine activity theory into disorganization model (Jean & Robert, 2007; Kennedy & Ford, 1990; Rountree, Land, & Miethe, 1994; Smith & Jarjoura, 1989). A study conducted in Chicago (Jean & Robert, 2007) has reported that offenders choose the area for crime on the basis of the availability of targets that is shaped by the local ecology. The presence of grocery stores, liquor shops, ATMs, and pubs in a neighborhood is more likely to provide criminogenic commodities and suitable targets. These areas will be attractive for predatory criminals regardless of the level of collective efficacy of its citizens. The areas with low levels of collective efficacy may be less attractive targets for predatory criminals if they have significantly less number of people moving with cash and commodities.

Decision making model of rational choice may help us in understanding the decisions of residents to intervene for public good. Citizens in the areas of high collective efficacy are more likely to intervene on behalf of the communities. However, the decision to intervene may involve real as well as perceived risks. Decision-making can be a complex process involving several factors including expected utility. Citizens are likely to calculate the perceived cost and benefits of their decisions of intervening and their cost benefit calculation would be largely affected by the perceived risk and benefits of the act of intervention. Individuals' perception that the lack of intervention may further escalate the problem will motivate them to intervene. However, trust among neighbors and also trust in the capacity of formal social control mechanism in providing support are other important factors that play a role in the decision making. If a member of a neighborhood is confident that he or she will get the support of the community members in case of a danger following an intervention, then he or she would be more confident in intervening. Similarly, a trust in the capacity and presence of formal social control in the community would also affect the decision of intervening in positive manner.

Empirical Status of Collective Efficacy

The first empirical test of collective efficacy theory was done in 1995 by Sampson et al. (1997) with a community survey data collected by interviewing 8782 Chicago residents representing 343 neighborhood clusters. Collective efficacy was measured by combining "shared expectations for social control" and "social cohesion and trust." "Shared expectations" was measured by using a five item Likert-type scale. Residents were asked about the likelihood that their neighbors could be

counted on to intervene in various ways if (i) children were skipping school and hanging out on a street corner, (ii) children were spray-painting graffiti on a local building, (iii) children were showing disrespect to an adult, (iv) a fight broke out in front of their house, and (v) the fire station closest to their home was threatened with budget cuts. Social cohesion and trust measured the community relationship by asking the level of agreement on following statements: (a) "people around here are willing to help their neighbors," (b) "this is a close-knit neighborhood," (c) "people in this neighborhood can be trusted," (d) "people in this neighborhood generally do not get along with each other," and (e) "people in this neighborhood do not share the same values." Findings of the research reported a negative one way relationship between concentrated disadvantage (poverty and residential instability) and collective efficacy and positive one sided relationship between collective efficacy and density of social ties and organizational infrastructure. Reciprocal relationship was found between collective efficacy and violence, disorder, and poor health. Neighborhoods with low levels of collective efficacy reported higher rates of violence, disorder, and poor health. However, this relationship was found reciprocal because neighborhoods with an earlier history of violence and disorder reported low levels of collective efficacy. The reciprocal relationship between collective efficacy and violence and disorder was also reported to be mediated or affected by spatial proximity. Violence and disorder in a neighborhood affect the collective efficacy as well as violence and disorder in other adjacent neighborhoods (Sampson et al., 1997).

The results of this study were supported by the subsequent studies conducted by Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) and Morenoff, Sampson, and Raudenbush (2001). Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) reported a significant negative effect of collective efficacy on violent crime while controlling structural and other factors. The study by Morenoff et al. (2001) reported that collective efficacy and structural disadvantage, other than spatial proximity with homicide, have significant effect on homicide rates. The study (Morenoff et al., 2001) also reported that local organizations, voluntary associations, and friend/kinship networks affect homicide, but the effect is mediated by collective efficacy. All three studies, which are based on one data collected in Chicago in 1995, provided strong support to the basic model of collective efficacy theory. These studies have also provided support to the collective efficacy theory against broken windows theory, which suggests that social and physical disorder lead to serious crime in neighborhood. They argue that crime and disorder are qualitatively the same having a difference of degree and the claimed relationship between disorder and crime is mediated by collective efficacy.

The clear and succinct description of the theory of collective efficacy and strong empirical supports provided by Sampson and colleagues generated a great deal of interests. Studies testing the theory of collective efficacy can be classified into different groups. First group of studies tested the basic model of collective efficacy. A study by Duncan, Duncan, Okut, Strycker, and Hix-Small (2003) included structural, neighborhood collective efficacy, family, and individual variables in the model and reported that age at the individual level, marital status at the family level, and poverty and perceived gang activity at the neighborhood level predicted the neighborhood level of collective efficacy. Ohmer and Beck (2006) used the Sampson et al. (1997) collective efficacy scale and reported that the participation in organizations is not significantly related with the neighborhood level of collective efficacy, but is related with organizational collective efficacy. However, a study by Xu, Fiedler, and Flaming (2005) that tested the competing models of collective efficacy and broken windows, provided support in favor of broken windows perspective. They reported that disorder directly and indirectly affects crime even when collective efficacy is controlled. They also reported that community policing

plays a more important role in controlling crime, disorder, and fear of crime than collective efficacy.

Second group of studies tested the collective efficacy theory in cross cultural settings. A study by Cancino (2005) tested collective efficacy and social capital theory in a non-metropolitan setting and reported that resources of the social capital can help facilitate collective efficacy for the purpose of social control and improvement of citizens' quality of life. Another study by Skrabski and Kawachi (2004) tested the effects of collective efficacy on mortality rate in Hungary and reported that collective efficacy is significantly and negatively correlated with mortality rates in both men and women.

Third group of studies tested the effects of collective efficacy on intimate partner violence. Collective efficacy is a community variable and testing its effect on intimate partner violence provides unique insights. A study by DeKeseredy, Schwartz, Shahid Alvi, and Tomaszewski (2003) reported that the effect of collective efficacy on intimate partner violence is not as strong as it is on street crime and violence. This finding is in support with an earlier Chicago based study (Block & Skogan, 2001), which reported that community anti-violence programs may have little, if any, effects on violence against women in intimate relationships. However, a study by Browning (2002), using the data collected and used by Sampson et al. (1997) tested the collective efficacy theory and reported that collective efficacy is negatively and significantly related with intimate partner violence.

The studies in the fourth category are those which tested the effects of collective efficacy on problems other than crime such as fear of crime, incivility, and physical health. The study by Gibson, Zhao, Lovrich, and Gaffney (2002) reported that social integration into networks helps reducing fear of crime, but the effect of social integration is mediated by collective efficacy. Reisig, Michael, and Cancino (2004) reported a negative effect of collective efficacy on incivility and Browning and Cagney (2002) reported a significant effect of collective efficacy on physical health among neighbors.

A study by Simons, Simons, Burt, Brody, and Cutrona (2005) reported that collective efficacy and parenting both deter children from associating with delinquent peers and delinquency. The study also reported that the capacity of authoritative parenting in deterring children from deviant peers and deviance increases with an increase in collective efficacy. A study by Wells, Schafer, Varano, and Bynum (2006) attempted to know the factors that motivate residents of a neighborhood to intervene in the face of a problem and participate in community policing. The study reported that residents of geographic areas characterized with a lower level of collective efficacy are no more or less likely to intervene in the face of local problems than those from other areas. This finding seems to be self-contradictory. The construct of collective efficacy is a combination of social cohesion and trust and shared expectations. Shared expectations are measured by directly measuring the perception of intervention by neighbors. Therefore, the level of collective efficacy has to have positive correlation with the willingness to intervene.

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

The concept of social capital, as described by Sampson (2006), focuses on social network, but network is only one element of social capital. Social capital can be defined as a social stock or resource, embedded in social networks based on trust and shared norms of reciprocity, which facilitate collective actions for mutual and individual benefits. The definition shows that social capital is not synonymous with networking, but networking is the structural element of social capital in which the

values of trust and shared norms of reciprocity are embedded. According to Sampson (2006), Bursik (1999) has articulated a connection between social capital and social disorganization by arguing that the neighborhoods bereft of social capital, indicated primarily by depleted social networks, are less able to realize common values and maintain social control. Although Bursik (1999) and Bursik and Grasmick (2003) have defined social capital as common values embedded in social network or dense ties, their analyses and systemic model of disorganization theory mainly focused on relational networks. Trust, shared norms, and reciprocity, which are required for collective action, have never been given much importance. Before entering into a discussion about the relationship between social capital, collective efficacy, and crime and disorder, it would be important to see how the two concepts—social capital and collective efficacy—are defined and measured.

A comprehensive definition of social capital, which has been accepted in this paper, has four major elements. They include social networking, trust, value of reciprocity, and collective actions. A community will have high level of social capital if people are connected through networks, trust one another, and share a value of doing things for each other. The networking and mutual trust and reciprocity lead to collective actions that are generally achieved by participating in several organizations and groups. Social capital measures include instruments of measuring breadth and width of networks, intra-group and inter-group trust, civic participations, and involvement with formal and informal community organizations (Social Capital Benchmark Survey, 2006).

The concept of collective efficacy unites trust and mutual support based cohesion with shared expectations for social control (Sampson, 2006). Trust and mutual support based expectations for social control are the two dimensions of collective efficacy. Some amount of networking is also an essential part of collective efficacy, as mutual support and willingness to intervene or expectations for social control cannot exist in absence of networking although dense ties are neither required nor desirable (Sampson, 2006). Proxy measures of social cohesion and trust include the measures of networking, helpfulness, trust, and shared values among neighbors (Sampson, et al., 1997). Measurement of shared expectations for social control measures if neighbors are likely to intervene when presented with an unwanted situation and a threat of resource cuts.

The definitions and dimensions of social capital and collective efficacy and their measures have certain similarities and dissimilarities. The definitions of social capital and collective efficacy both include the dimensions of trust, reciprocity or solidarity, and cohesion. However, the definitions of the two are different on two accounts. One, the definition of social capital includes the dimension of social network, while the definition of collective efficacy does not include social network that indicates the differential importance given to social networking by the two theories. Social networking is given importance in social capital because the resources of trust and reciprocity are embedded in social networks. The definition of collective efficacy definition does not mention network although it is recognized that collective efficacy cannot exist in absence of network (Sampson, 2006). Collective efficacy theory, however, does not believe in indispensability and desirability of dense ties. Probably for this reason, the definition of collective efficacy does not include the dimension of social networking. Two, the second part of the definition of collective efficacy is shared expectations for social control that measures willingness of intervention for public good. This is a direct measure of social control, which is a unique part of collective efficacy in comparison with social capita and most likely for this reason, researches have shown significant negative correlation between collective efficacy and crime and disorder.

Measuring instruments of social cohesion and trust in collective efficacy include trust, reciprocity, helpfulness, and shared values among neighbors. In social capital theory, measurement of trust is more comprehensive as it measures vertical, horizontal, inter-group, and intra-group trust. Social cohesion and solidarity are also measured by different scales. Social capital measurement emphasizes the values of civic participations and engagements in community organizations. Although organizational participation is an important part of social disorganization theory and one of the intervening variables between structural antecedents and informal social control (Sampson & Grove, 1989), the definition of collective efficacy and its measures (Sampson, et al., 1997) do not include it. However, several studies have included the elements of civic participation and organizational membership, while measuring the cohesion and trust dimensions of collective efficacy (DeKeseredy, et al., 2003; Wells, et al., 2006). It is important to note that social capital, in comparison to collective efficacy, gives greater impotence to civic participation and organizational membership. The discussion focusing on the nature, source, and consequences of social capital and collective efficacy can be presented in following points.

Collective efficacy has only positive externalities in terms of social control needed for safety and order (Sampson, 2006), whereas social capital and social networking may have positive as well as negative externalities (Putnam, 2002).

Collective efficacy is a collective good that produces positive benefits to the members of neighborhood. Social capital is conceptualized as a public as well as a private good because it produces collective and individual benefits. People who do not contribute to the stock of social capital also benefit from it.

Collective efficacy results into collective actions for reducing crime. Similarly, the focus of social capital is also collective action, which is facilitated by trust and norms of reciprocity embedded in networks of people.

Collective efficacy has social cohesion and shared expectations, but some amount of networking is required to support helping interactions and repeat interactions. It means collective efficacy requires some networking in which element of cohesion and shared expectations are embedded. Social capital is defined as a stock of trust and shared norms of reciprocity embedded in networks. Both concepts have strong similarity in this regard, although social capital has significant emphasis on network and collective efficacy clearly deemphasizes the importance of dense network.

Sampson (2006) argues that some strong ties may impede the efforts of establishing social control, although some sparse networking is required to develop collective efficacy. This paradoxical relationship between network and social control motivated some researchers to conceptualize social capital and collective efficacy as competing or opposing concepts with regards to their crime controlling effects. Browning, Feinberg, and Dietz (2004) argue that networks that may support the development of collective efficacy diminish the regulatory effectiveness of collective efficacy and provide a source of social capital for offenders. They also report that the regulatory effects of collective efficacy on violence are substantially reduced in neighborhoods characterized by high levels of network interaction and reciprocated exchange. There are serious problems with this argument. First, this argument is self-contradictory. It says that networks facilitate collective efficacy and some networking is needed for collective efficacy (Sampson, 2006), but it also says that network diminishes collective efficacy (Browning et al., 2004). Second, it does not tell us the level of density of network appropriate for developing collective efficacy. Finally, this line of thinking also equates networking with social capital and implicitly argues that social capital is detrimental to social control. I argue that the concept of social capital, which is defined as a stock of trust and norms of reciprocity embedded

in social networks that facilitate collective actions for mutual benefits, provides better theoretical framework to understand the role and consequences of network and community level of collective actions for the purpose of establishing social control and controlling crime and disorder.

Collective efficacy theory argues that the appeal of collective efficacy is also embedded in its capacity of developing meaningful network with people outside the close group as it does not require strong ties or networks. Conceptualization of social capital into bonding and bridging social capital provide a more attractive model to explain the nature and consequences of intra and inter group networking and positive and negative externalities. The issue of negative externalities associated with networking was highlighted by Sampson (2006) and it was proposed that the theory of collective efficacy solves the problem of paradoxical relationship between ties and social control.

The concept of bonding and bridging social capital also provides appealing explanation. Networks within a group are likely to produce negative externalities and networks between groups are likely to produce positive externalities. Social capital is a capital and all forms of capitals such as physical and human may have positive as well as negative consequences. Therefore, social capital, by the virtue of being conceptualized as capital, provides a good explanation of positive and negative consequences of networks.

Collective efficacy is conceptualized as a form of social organization that mediates the relationship between structural antecedents and social control. It is conceptualized as a public good that produces social control thus reduces crime and disorder in neighborhood. Social capital is a multidimensional concept and its effect is also multidimensional. It affects social control, human capital, and physical capital. Therefore, social capital has effects on crime and disorder prevention, environment protection, economic development, income increase, education attainment, poverty alleviation, health and nutrition, water supply and sanitation, urban planning and city management.

Social capital is unique and more useful in terms of its universal and diverse appeal. Social capital framework is being employed by researchers from different disciplines to study various issues in cross cultural settings and diverse political and economic systems. The framework is also useful for policy and research in rural as well as urban areas. The use of collective efficacy framework has been limited to the urban neighborhoods in the United States.

Social capital and collective efficacy are complementing concepts that provide useful theoretical explanations to understand the community level processes needed for controlling crime and disorder. Both concepts have common dimensions of trust, solidarity, and cohesion, although social capital emphasizes the values of social networking and civic and organizational participation and collective efficacy directly includes the elements of community social control. I argue that collective efficacy is neither in conflict with social capital nor is social capital insufficient in developing social control and providing safety. Social capital is a resource that can be built and maintained through initial and continuous investment. When social capital is activated in a specific direction to achieve social control, collective efficacy comes into picture. In other words, collective efficacy is a chain between social capital and crime preventing and order maintenance capacity of a community. A combined model of social control and collective efficacy may provide better theoretical framework in neighborhood criminology. Appendix A provides an outline of the model that depicts the relationship between social capital, collective efficacy, and crime and disorder. I also argue that social capital has a greater policy appeal. Social capital can be built and maintained as capital or stock for the community and institutions

can play important roles in building this resource by creating networking and reciprocal norms among members. I argue that building of social capital will naturally lead to higher level of collective efficacy.

CONCLUSION

The use of social capital model generally and collective efficacy model especially has become popular in understanding crime and disorder at community and neighborhood level. The issues of definitions, measurements, and ontology of the concepts are being addressed by scholars in the field. However, we are still far away from developing any consensus on these issues. The purpose of the paper through the review of literature on social capital and collective efficacy was intended to see how these issues have been addressed in literature. The review also intended to see how the concepts of social capital and collective efficacy are related in terms of establishing and sustaining community social control.

Social capital and collective efficacy have been conceptualized as collective goods that are achieved through collective actions of people and are beneficial to community and neighborhood. Social capital is defined as a stock of trust and norms of reciprocity embedded in social network (Putnam, 2002) and collective efficacy is defined as a form of social organization that unites social cohesion and trust with expectations for social control (Sampson, 2006). Social capital is multidimensional, whereas collective efficacy is focused on creating social control at the neighborhood level. Social capital may have several positive consequences in the field of safety, health, sanitation, education attainment, and in the development of other forms of capital. Collective efficacy on the other hand always has a positive consequence that enables a community or neighborhood to fight against crime and disorder. Social network and participation are emphasized dimensions, along with trust and reciprocity, in social capital and expectations for social control or willingness of intervention for public good is overemphasized dimension of collective efficacy.

I argue that both concepts are partly overlapping and complimentary to each other. Social capital is a multidimensional resource that facilitates collective efficacy when it is activated for achieving social control for controlling crime and disorder. Therefore, community collective efficacy cannot remain effective if social capital is weak or absent. Collective efficacy provides a chain between social capital and social control. Trust and norms of reciprocity embedded in social networks facilitate all kinds of collective action including intervening for public good. However, the density of network and the level of intervention may not have a positive and straight relationship because some networks may impede the development of social control. A combination of bonding and bridging social capital is ideal to help fostering collective efficacy.

It is claimed that collective efficacy is a public good that always has positive effects in controlling crime and disorder, whereas social capital impedes the development of social control (Sampson, 2006; Cancino, 2005; Pattillo, 1998). Probably, this claim emanates from a narrow conceptualization of social capital as networks. Network is essential, but trust and norms of reciprocity for collective actions are integral parts of social capital. The conceptualization of bridging and bonding social capital answers the concern of collective efficacy scholars who argue that social capital is more likely to impede social control (Browning et al., 2004). Putnam (2002) has forcefully argued that social capital, like any other capital, may have negative externalities and knowing the potential of negativity is always good for policy making. He has argued that bonding social capital, which is embedded in close

kinship/friendship networks, may have negative externalities and therefore, it is good to develop bridging social capital that extends to other groups.

I also argue that social capital is interdisciplinary and has more universal appeal than collective efficacy as it is being used in different cultural settings with different economic and political systems and demographic compositions. Moreover, social capital provides a better framework from the aspect of policy intervention. Institutional efforts may directly affect the social capital and the local governments and institutions can facilitate communities in developing social capital with intended consequences. Establishment of social capital in neighborhood will motivate people to intervene. Efforts of police and other local agencies in developing crime prevention and order maintenance related norms among citizens along with providing organizational and institutional platform to develop networking and opportunities of collective actions will help communities in developing the kind of social capital and collective efficacy needed to prevent crime and disorder.

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Appendix A: Social Capital, Collective Efficacy, and Crime and Disorder

