

Social Disorganization and Parochial Control: Religious Institutions and Their Communities¹

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Set within the framework of social disorganization theory, this article explores the relationship between social disorganization and parochial control. Specifically, this study investigates whether more disorganized communities support fewer religious institutions than less disorganized areas. It also examines the relationship between religious institutions and another type of community association: multi-issue, neighborhood-based organizations. Data are drawn from 1990 Census data, the 1991 Chicago telephone directory and local community organization directories. Findings support the idea that residential mobility and ethnic heterogeneity are negatively related to the prevalence of religious institutions whereas there is a curvilinear relationship between poverty and religious organizations. Finally, a strong relationship between the prevalence of religious institutions and the prevalence of multi-issue organizations is established.

KEY WORDS: social disorganization; parochial control; social control; community organizations; religious institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Religion has long been thought to be important in the study of social control. Research investigating the relationship between religion and crime

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has focused on the effects of religiosity on criminality (Burkett and Warren, 1987; Burkett and White, 1974; Cochran *et al.*, 1994; Elifson *et al.*, 1983; Evans *et al.*, 1995; Grasmick *et al.*, 1991; Grasmick *et al.*, 1991; Higgins and Albrecht, 1977; Hirschi and Stark, 1969; Peek *et al.*, 1985) and on the association between religious ecology and crime (Bainbridge, 1989; Bock *et al.*, 1987; Pettersson 1991; Stack and Kanavy, 1983; Stark *et al.*, 1980; Stark *et al.*, 1982; Welch *et al.*, 1991). The latter approach examines the community's capacity for local social control, assuming that crime and deviance are less likely in more religious areas. Community-level religiosity (operationalized as membership rates) is thought to be a mechanism of social control because it represents social solidarity (Bainbridge 1989), because concentrations of religious people create a moral climate not conducive to crime (Stark *et al.*, 1980) or through its impact on family structure (Pettersson, 1991).

These studies, however, overlook an important way in which community religious institutions can function as agents of social control: through parochial control. The importance of local institutions and parochial control is highlighted in Bursik and Grasmick's recent (1993) study in which they merge social disorganization and systemic theories to explain neighborhood crime. They identify three levels of control: private, parochial and public. Parochial control, falling between private and public controls, is located in broad, local interpersonal networks including the relationship between local institutions such as stores, schools and churches. This type of control stems from the effectiveness of these institutions and from the capacity of neighbors to supervise each other.

Religious institutions function as mechanisms of parochial control in a number of ways. In addition to ministering to their congregants they provide services to residents (members and nonmembers) of the communities in which they are located. Religious institutions frequently support schools, community centers and offer services such as child care, after-school programs, and food pantries. For instance, the Progressive Community Church in Chicago's South Side houses a community center that provides food, day care, nighttime youth programs and diaper programs (New York Times 1995). The *New York Times* recently reported that an estimated 60% of all food programs in Chicago are housed in churches (Ibid). Churches frequently sponsor social groups for nonmembers and allow non-church groups to use their facilities (Guest and Lee, 1987). Further, religious institutions are instrumental in the development and maintenance of other community organizations (Betten and Austin, 1990). These activities are the foundation of parochial control.

This study focuses on parochial control by exploring one dimension of social disorganization: the organizational structure of neighborhoods.

While social disorganization theorists traditionally have tested the structural covariates of crime, recently Bursik and Grasmick (1993) and others (Elliott *et al.*, 1996; Sampson, 1987; Sampson and Groves, 1989) have begun to investigate the different intervening dimensions of disorganization and components of effective informal social control. A central assumption of the theory is that disorganized communities suffer from an insufficient institutional base. This premise, however, has never been tested. Since religious institutions are an important component of the local organizational base and they often are found in communities devoid of other local institutions, social disorganization theory, then, should be useful in explaining the availability of religious organization in communities across the city.

While the ultimate goal of this vein of research is to examine the role of religious institutions in mediating between ecological factors and crime, the main focus of this paper is to explore the feasibility of parochial control as a dimension of social disorganization. To accomplish this, two questions about the community's organizational structure are examined. First, do more disorganized communities support fewer religious institutions than less disorganized ones? Second, do religious institutions promote the prevalence of other types of local groups? The first question is tested by examining the structural covariates of the prevalence of religious institutions across the city of Chicago. The second question is tested by examining the relationship between religious institutions and another type of local association: multi-issue, neighborhood-based organizations.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION

Social disorganization theory grew out of the ecological tradition of criminological research developed by Shaw and McKay in their 1942 work *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*. It is based upon the premise that some communities are unable to regulate the behavior of their residents due to the effects of deleterious environmental conditions. Shaw and McKay saw that areas characterized by high levels of poverty tended also to be characterized by high rates of population turnover (people leave as soon as they are able) and ethnic heterogeneity (high turnover makes it difficult for residents to fight against the influx of a wide variety of newcomers) (Bursik, 1988). From this perspective, residential mobility and ethnic heterogeneity are believed to increase the likelihood of disorganization because local institutions are hard to maintain when residents anticipate moving—primary relationships that promote informal social control are difficult to develop when networks are continually changing and heterogeneity im-

pedes communication and makes it difficult to reach common goals (Kornhauser, 1978).

Factors that mediate between community characteristics and individual behavior usually have been inferred in tests of social disorganization theory. Recently, Sampson (1987) and Sampson and Groves (1989) have investigated the mediating effects of guardianship, community attachment and informal social control. Elliott *et al.* (1996) have examined the intervening role of informal networks, informal control and social integration. A community that meets the needs of its residents also relies upon a strong and diverse institutional base. Communities that lack this suffer from other social ills as well. Bursik and Grasmick (1993) develop this argument by showing how vital for social control are the networks among residents and local institutions and among representatives of the neighborhood and external actors, institutions and agencies. The local organizational structure, then, is an intervening dimension of disorganization and religious organizations are one component of that dimension.

Although it is assumed that disorganized communities suffer from an insufficient organizational base (Kornhauser, 1978), little is known about the relationship between community structure and local organizations. A few researchers have investigated participation rates in local organizations (Sampson and Groves, 1989; Simcha-Fagan and Schwartz, 1986), or have tabulated local organizations known to respondents (Elliott *et al.*, 1996). None of these studies have obtained data on local organizations from sources independent of survey respondents. Rather, they have relied upon the knowledge and awareness of local residents who report on organizational activity. As a result, these earlier studies really have learned about the relationship between disorganization and social integration, not about the relationship between disorganization and the community's organizational structure.

The strategy of this study to examine the density of religious organizations rather than the density of religious congregants sets it apart from previous work. This approach stresses the idea that religious institutions have a multi-faceted impact on their communities. A study of 176 churches in Chicago's South Side revealed that while most churches offer pastoral counseling to the community (98.9%), 47.2% of the churches offer a food pantry, and 34.1% provide a clothing pantry (Olson *et al.*, 1988). Church members were most likely to be the recipients of pastoral counseling, scouting, and senior citizen housing programs, whereas nonmembers were most likely to be the recipients of food pantries, soup kitchens, head start programs and emergency shelters.

A potential drawback of focusing on the density of organizations rather than the density of congregants is the argument that churches often remain

in communities long after their congregants have moved to other areas. Thus, these churches are thought to be less connected to their geographic area than churches which draw membership from the local community. Olson *et al.* (1988) found, however, that churches with large congregations were most likely to have a large number of social programs but only to the extent that their congregations were drawn from both inside and outside the community. Those churches whose membership was drawn exclusively from *either* inside the community *or* from outside the community were least likely to sponsor programs. In another study, however, Guest and Lee (1987) found that the extent of local attendees was not a significant factor in determining the extent to which churches sponsored programs for nonmembers. Rather, they found length of residence to be the most important factor determining the extent to which churches were community oriented. These studies clearly show that churches respond to their communities' needs, not just to the needs of their congregants. On the other hand, since religious organizations vary both in their mission to provide secular services and in their capacity to do so, their presence in the community does not guarantee that services are being provided. However, assessing the number of religious organizations in the community does give us some idea of the resources (actually or potentially) available to the community.

Religious institutions are a unique type of community organization. First, they are present in all communities. Poor neighborhoods are rich in religious institutions even as they suffer from a scarcity of other types of local organizations. Second, they often are more stable than other institutions because they have stronger affiliations with organizations outside the neighborhood (other churches within their denomination and the religious community at-large) and because they have a more enduring membership base. Third, unlike other types of voluntary organizations, religious institutions bring together individuals from a cross-section of the community reflecting a wide variety of civic interests and skills. Fourth, to the extent that religious institutions promote activism and help communities address problems, they strengthen community social control. Fifth, churches foster ties between individuals in the neighborhood through both religious and secular activities and they create linkages between residents and individuals outside the community through association with the broader religious community. This would be true especially for communities where neighborhood churches continue to attract residents who have moved outside the community. These connections are particularly important since areas with well-developed networks are able to acquire externally based goods and services that enhance their ability to fight crime locally (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993:52). Finally, churches

are instrumental in the development and maintenance of other organizations in the community that often need assistance with resources and assistance in organizing (Betten and Austin, 1990).

Community religious groups presumably increase the prevalence of a variety of other organizations. As a preliminary examination of the theory, however, this study focuses on the relationship between churches and one other local institution: multi-issue, neighborhood-based organizations. Multi-issue, neighborhood-based organizations are a good organizational form to study because they reflect local efforts at social control, the main focus of social disorganization theory.

Multi-issue, neighborhood-based organizations sponsor programs as diverse as crime watch groups, property identification programs, and recreational activities for youths. These types of programs work to enhance community development comprehensively through targeting housing, job opportunities, youth programs and physical signs of deterioration such as graffiti and abandoned buildings and lots. While this type of neighborhood-based organization is more frequently found in moderately disadvantaged communities, previous research (Rose 1995) shows that both the least and most advantaged communities support this type of organization as well.

Multi-issue organizations represent an effort by neighborhoods to address their local problems. In doing so, they combat crime and disorder on many fronts simultaneously. These organizations also bring resources into the community thereby linking it to the larger society from which residents often feel isolated. They combat crime indirectly by increasing interaction among residents. This can boost attachment to the community and promote greater levels of neighborly. In sum, neighborhood-based organizations try to combat some of the social problems that lead to disorder, they attempt to decrease the level of disorganization within the community and they are a conduit through which resources for the community are mobilized.

DATA AND METHODS

Chicago has 77 officially recognized community areas with widely known and identifiable boundaries. The dependent variable in the first stage of analysis is the number of religious institutions (RELIGIOUS ORGS.) in each community. This variable was collected from the Chicago telephone directory for 1991, thus measuring religious organizations in 1990 (The Reuben H. Donnelley Corporation, 1990). These organizations were placed in community areas by locating street addresses using MapInfo, a computerized mapping program. There are a total of 2,404 religious organizations across Chicago. The range is three to 158 organizations and the mean is 31.

The dependent variable in the second stage of the analysis is the number of multi-issue, neighborhood-based organizations (NBO ORGS.) in each neighborhood in 1992. These data were obtained from two sources: the *Directory of Community Organizations in Chicago* (1992) published annually by the Institute of Urban Life at Loyola University; and the *Chicago Community Organization Directory* (1992) published periodically by The Community Renewal Society. To be included in either directory, organizations must be neighborhood-based (i.e., recognize neighborhood boundaries defining their area of operation), multi purpose with a membership, office and staff. Host community areas were identified for each organization in the manner described for religious organizations. The directories listed a combined total of 196 organizations. Eight organizations were dropped from the data set: five because they serviced as many as six community areas (one organization's boundaries were city-wide); one because it provided only legal aid; two because they were located physically outside the city limits. The final dataset includes 187 organizations. Most neighborhoods (80.5%) have at least one such organization within its borders. The range is 0 to 12 and the mean is two organizations.

The measures for the independent variables were drawn from 1990 census data and aggregated to the neighborhood-level (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990). Descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix for all the variables are presented in Table I.

Social disorganization theory predicts a positive relationship between poverty and disorganization. Since disorganized communities are thought to support fewer local institutions, this theory would predict a negative relationship between disorganization and the prevalence of local organizations. Research on the relationship between poverty and other community organizations, however, shows the association to be curvilinear (Podolefsky and DuBow, 1980; Rose, 1995; Skogan, 1990). This is because the prevalence of organizations results from a combination of need for services and the availability of resources necessary to sustain organizational life. For instance, the need for religious institutions increases with poverty. This may reflect the benefits individuals receive from church participation or the comfort participation provides the poor in the face of deprivations (Stark and Bainbridge, 1985). It also may reflect the role of religious institutions in filling the void created by the absence of other local associations. At the same time, increases in poverty reflect diminishing resources. Communities characterized by severe poverty support fewer organizations of all types than their less poor counterparts. While religious institutions may be different from other local organizational forms because of their relative prevalence in low-income communities, their distribution across the city should follow the same overall pattern. In this study, the percentage of the popula-

Table I. Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations for All Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Mean	SD
1. Religious orgs.	1.00										31.21	31.24
2. NBO orgs.	0.450	1.00									2.43	2.48
3. Poverty	0.343	0.322	1.00								21.51	17.19
4. Poverty squared	-0.014	-0.057	0.720	1.00							291.63	471.88
5. Mobility	0.045	0.436	0.254	-0.003	1.00						46.29	10.96
6. Heterogeneity ^a	-0.234	0.249	-0.222	-0.404	0.564	1.00					29.89	22.21
7. Poverty $\times$ heterogeneity	-0.156	0.087	-0.644	-0.659	-0.162	0.267	1.00				-83.81	383.24
8. Poverty $\times$ mobility	-0.224	-0.078	-0.008	0.295	-0.562	-0.245	0.285	1.00			47.22	125.31
9. Mobility $\times$ heterogeneity	0.015	0.289	-0.179	-0.291	0.275	0.255	0.362	-0.049	1.00		135.63	221.16
10. Population size	0.572	0.512	-0.053	-0.342	0.389	0.315	0.179	-0.252	0.213	1.00	10.26	0.74

^aHeterogeneity was multiplied by 100 to make it consistent in magnitude with the other variables

tion in each community area living below the poverty level is used as the measure of poverty. This variable ranges from 1.31–72.34%. The mean is 21.51% living below the poverty line. In addition, a quadratic of poverty is included to account for the hypothesized curvilinear relationship between poverty and organizational prevalence.

To measure racial heterogeneity I use the Herfindahl index identified in previous research (Sampson, 1991; Warner and Pierce, 1993) and more recently used to measure religious heterogeneity (Ellison *et al.*, 1997). This index accounts for the number of people in each racial group and the number of groups represented in each neighborhood. The measure is calculated by subtracting from 1 the sum of the squared proportion of persons in each group in each neighborhood ($1 - \sum p_i^2$). The Census identifies five racial categories (White; Black; American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut; Asian or Pacific Islander; other) for two categories of respondents (those of Hispanic origin and those not of Hispanic origin.) Therefore, this scale comprises six categories: White, Black, Hispanic; American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut; Asian or Pacific Islander; other. Maximum heterogeneity would be represented by a score of .83 (if each of the six ethnic groups was represented equally). Therefore, the higher score indicates greater heterogeneity. This variable ranges from 0.0167 to 0.7199. The mean is 0.2989.

One problem with the Herfindahl index is that it masks possible differences in neighborhood effects when neighborhoods are primarily Black or primarily White. Recent studies stemming from Wilson's (1987) work on the urban underclass suggests that poor Black and/or Hispanic communities are significantly more disadvantaged than poor White communities. Social disorganization theory, however, argues that any type of ethnic homogeneity reduces disorganization. This article tests that assumption with regard to organizational prevalence.

Residential mobility is the third key variable of interest. This variable is operationalized as the percentage of the population 5 years and older who have not lived in the same house for the past 5 years (since 1985). Ideally, a measure of mobility would distinguish within- from between-neighborhood mobility. This would provide a meaningful basis for testing Shaw and McKay's observation that disorganized areas were less integrated (and therefore less able to self-regulate) because residents were moving in and out. However, it may be that in areas where residents predominantly rent their homes (such as in many poorer areas), there is a great deal of residential movement which does not represent out-mobility. The mobility measure used in this analysis is the only one provided by the Census. This variable ranges from 26.99 to 71.27% not living in the same house since 1985. The mean is 46.29%.

Finally, population size (number of residents in each community) is

included because it has long been considered an important influence on the quality-of-life in urban areas. Wirth (1938) and others attributed many of the negative changes in community life to the sheer scale of the urban environment. While not explicitly included in the work done by Shaw and McKay, population size is implicitly incorporated in the framework on which they developed their theory. To tap this dimension of urban life, researchers working within this theoretical tradition have included a measure for population density into their studies. Population size was chosen for this analysis over population density since the former measures both a level of urbanization and the level of potential religious consumers whereas population density taps only the degree of urbanization.

Also, size has been an important variable in the study of organizations because it affects demand for services and constrains and influences organizational structure (Scott, 1987:241). The community area's population size should be related to its need for formalized social control just as an organization's size is related to its need for formalized control. The larger the area population, the more likely it is that the community will rely upon more formal mechanisms of social control. Community Area population size ranges from 3,445 to 114,079 persons. This variable, logged to correct for skewness, ranges from 8.14 to 11.64 and the mean is 10.26.

Theorists often include other variables thought to impact social disorganization such as: percentage of the population that is African-American, the extent of rental and multi-unit housing, family structure. These have not been included in this analysis for a variety of reasons. First, the small sample size required extreme care in selecting the number of independent variables to be included in the model. To maximize parsimony, the key social disorganization variables were the focus of attention. Second, methodological problems prevented the inclusion of additional important variables. Perhaps the most important independent variable missing from the analysis is race, particularly because of the high rate of religious participation among African Americans. This variable is omitted from this analysis, however, because intercorrelations between this variable and high poverty and heterogeneity were each higher than the correlations between any of the independent variables and the dependent variables. This makes it impossible to assess the separate contribution of poverty, heterogeneity, or race. Tapping the race effect by using a variable measuring the percentage of the population that is white worked slightly better because it is not as highly correlated with heterogeneity, but its correlation with poverty still posed problems—thus, it too was excluded. Other methodological issues included the high correlation between family structure and poverty (.90) making it's effects independent of poverty impossible to assess. Finally, the extent of rental and multi-unit housing was not a significant predictor.

Interaction Terms

Interaction terms were calculated by centering the source variables before forming the multiplicative term to reduce the extent of multicollinearity. Subtracting a constant prior to multiplying yields lower correlations between the product term and its components without affecting its substantive interpretations (Jaccard *et al.*, 1990). Three interactions were calculated: poverty with mobility and with heterogeneity and mobility with heterogeneity.

Poisson Regression

Poisson regression often is used to analyze event count data when events are occurring in a fixed domain, either in time or in space. Also, because Poisson regression incorporates raw counts into the model, a meaningful distinction can be made between observations with different numbers of events (King, 1988). As King (1988) indicates, this specification incorporates the idea that it would take a proportionally greater change in a regressor, x , to move the dependent count variable, y_i , from 0 to 1 than it would take to move y_i from 6 to 7. Examination of the distribution of the dependent variable reveals that it is consistent with a Poisson distribution. The Poisson process has the following specification:

$$\text{Prob}(Y_i = y_i) = \frac{e^{-\lambda_i} \lambda_i^{y_i}}{y_i!}, y_i = 0, 1, 2, \dots \quad (1)$$

where Y_i is a discrete random variable with y_i observed value (0,1,2,...) and λ_i is the expected (mean) number of organizations in each neighborhood ($i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, N$). A nonnegative event count is assured by specifying λ_i as a log-linear function of a set of explanatory variables:

$$\ln \lambda_i = \beta' x_i \quad (2)$$

where the number of organizations, λ_i , is a function of a vector of exogenous covariates, X_i , and their coefficients, β .

An important assumption of the Poisson regression model is that the mean of y_i equals its variance. Since violation of this assumption leads to overstated significance levels (King, 1988; Liao, 1994), the fit between the Poisson regression model and a negative binomial regression model that corrects for overdispersion was tested.

Negative Binomial Regression

Negative binomial regression, an extension of Poisson regression, relaxes the assumption that the variance equals its mean. As a result, it has

greater flexibility in representing the frequency patterns of observed event data. This technique introduces a parameter into the model that estimates the extent of overdispersion explicitly. Thus, the negative binomial assumes a Poisson process for each observation but it does not assume all observations have the same mean rate. The individual observation rates are gamma distributed and the negative binomial model includes this added source of variation into the model (McCullagh and Nelder, 1989).

This study has two sets of analyses: models examining the prevalence of religious institutions and models examining the prevalence of multi-issue, neighborhood-based organizations. In the first set, the likelihood ratio test against the Poisson model showed the data were overdispersed and that negative binomial regression was the appropriate modeling technique. In the second set, results from the likelihood ratio test showed the data were not overdispersed and that Poisson regression was the appropriate modeling technique.

RESULTS

The analysis begins by examining the effects of the primary social disorganization variables (poverty, racial heterogeneity and residential mobility) on the prevalence of religious institutions in the neighborhood. Outliers can be a serious problem, especially in small samples such as this ($N = 77$) where one case can heavily influence the results. Using OLS regression for the baseline model, three diagnostic measures (studentized residuals, DFFITS and DFBETAS) were examined to determine if any community areas were exerting a dominant influence. One community area, the Downtown Loop, was an outlying case. This area is also qualitatively different from the others and was subsequently dropped from the analysis.⁵

The results from the basic social disorganization model for the remaining 76 neighborhoods appear in Table II, Model 1. As anticipated, there is strong evidence of a curvilinear relationship between poverty and the prevalence of religious organizations. Specifically, increased poverty is associated with increased numbers of religious institutions up to the point at which approximately 20% of the residents are living below the poverty line. After this, there is a decreased likelihood of a neighborhood supporting

⁵Dropping this case resulted in only small changes. The Chi-square statistic was increased for each model and the coefficient for residential mobility was strengthened to the point of significance. The large number of religious institutions in the highly mobile Downtown Loop probably is a combination of this area's historical role in the development of Chicago and its current role as a business center. This combination is not reflected in the pattern of residential mobility and the prevalence of religious institutions found in other community areas in the city.

Table II. Negative Binomial Regression Models of the Relationship Between Prevalence of Religious Organizations in 76 Chicago Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Characteristics

Independent Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Poverty _{/100}	3.393*** ^a (0.443)	3.312*** (0.430)	3.234*** (0.435)	3.397*** (0.443)
Poverty squared _{/100}	-0.065*** (0.017)	-0.046** (0.018)	-0.074*** (0.017)	-0.064*** (0.017)
Mobility	-0.015* (0.007)	-0.025*** (0.008)	-0.019** (0.007)	-0.016* (0.007)
Heterogeneity	-1.071*** (0.296)	-0.796** (0.304)	-0.907** (0.296)	-1.069*** (0.295)
Population size	1.034*** (0.082)	1.047*** (0.079)	1.058** (0.081)	1.034*** (0.082)
Poverty X mobility _{/100}		-0.118* (0.048)		
Poverty X heterogeneity _{/100}			-0.035* (0.016)	
Mobility X heterogeneity _{/100}				0.006 (0.023)
Constant	-7.047*** (0.785)	-6.172*** (0.769)	-7.156*** (0.772)	-7.039*** (0.785)
Overdispersion parameter	-2.202*** (0.236)	-2.316*** (0.246)	-2.283*** (0.240)	-2.205*** (0.237)
N	76	76	76	76
Model X ²	130.97	136.61	135.71	131.03
df	5 ^b	6	6	6
Pseudo R ²	0.19	0.20	0.20	0.19

^aCoefficient (standard error).
^bCompared to model with intercept only.
*Coefficient is significant at .05 level.
**Coefficient is significant at .01 level.
***Coefficient is significant at .001 level.

these organizations. Residential mobility is negative and significant. Also, as predicted, ethnic heterogeneity is significantly and negatively related to the prevalence of religious organizations. Finally, Model 1 also shows population size is significantly and positively related to the prevalence of religious institutions in the neighborhood. Indeed, increased population size leads to an increase in religious organizations supported by the neighborhood.

Model 2 includes a term for the interaction of poverty and residential mobility. This interaction is significant and negative showing that increases in poverty increase the negative effect of mobility on organizational prevalence. Conversely, increases in mobility decrease the positive effect of poverty on organizational prevalence. The overall negative effect of mobil-

ity is strongest in poor neighborhoods. A likelihood ratio test indicates that adding this interaction term also improves the overall fit of the model.⁶

Model 3 includes a term for the interaction of poverty and heterogeneity. It is significant and negative and shows that poverty increase the negative affect of heterogeneity on organizational prevalence. Conversely, increases in heterogeneity decrease the positive affect of poverty on the number of religious institutions. As predicted, heterogeneity has a negative affect on organizational prevalence and this negative affect is strengthened with increases in poverty. A likelihood ratio test also indicates that adding this term improves the overall fit of the model.⁷

Finally, Model 4 includes a term for the interaction between mobility and heterogeneity. This term is not significant nor does its inclusion improve the overall fit of the model.⁸

It may well be that the relationship between poverty and the prevalence of religious institutions is really a function of race. In many areas, particularly in Chicago, there is a high overlap between high rates of poverty and the presence of African Americans (a community well-known for its associations with churches). Indeed, none of the communities in the sample which had high concentrations of White residents also had high concentrations of residents living in poverty. Conversely, 21 of the thirty-three primarily Black communities exceeded the mean value of residents living in poverty. To assess the relative importance of race and poverty, mean values for the number of religious institutions were compared for ecological configurations derived from dividing the sample into low, medium and high levels for both the percentage of the population living in poverty and the percentage of the population which was Black. Categories were based upon the natural distribution of the variables. Low levels represented the bottom 25% of the cases and high levels represented the top 25% of the cases. Within each category of race (low, medium, high) changes in the level of poverty had no significant impact on the prevalence of religious institutions. Conversely, increases in the proportion of the Black population had a significant impact on the number of religious institutions for poor communi-

⁶Comparing the Model Chi-Square values of Model 1 and Model 2 produces a chi-square statistic of 5.64 with 1 degree of freedom—equal to the difference in dimension of the two models. The chi-square of 5.64 with 1 degree of freedom is significant at the 0.025 level indicating Model 2 is an improvement over Model 1.

⁷Comparing the Model Chi-Square values of Model 1 and Model 3 produces a chi-square statistic of 4.74 with 1 degree of freedom—equal to the difference in dimension of the two models. The chi-square of 4.74 with 1 degree of freedom is significant at the 0.05 level indicating Model 3 is an improvement over Model 1.

⁸To minimize the number of independent variables and because of collinearity problems between the interaction terms, it was inappropriate to add both significant interactions into the model simultaneously. In fact, adding both terms resulted in nonsignificant effects for both.

Table III. Poisson Regression Model of the Relationship Between the Prevalence of Neighborhood-Based Organizations in 76 Chicago Neighborhoods, Neighborhood Characteristics, Religious Institutions, 1992

Independent Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error
Poverty _{/100}	3.398***	.921
Poverty squared _{/100}	-.091**	.031
Mobility	.027**	.010
Heterogeneity	.533	.477
Religious orgs	3.240*	1.331
Constant	-2.191***	.565
N	76	
Model X^2	80.453	
df	5 ^a	
Pseudo R^2	0.231	

^aCompared to model with intercept only.

*Coefficient significant at .05 level.

**Coefficient significant at .01 level.

***Coefficient significant at .001 level.

ties, but only for those with medium and high levels of Black residents. This seems to indicate race is more important than poverty in predicting the prevalence of religious institutions. However, since the poorest areas in Chicago are predominantly Black and the least poor areas are predominantly White, it is still difficult to disentangle the effects.

The final stage of analysis examines the relationship between the number of religious organizations in the community and neighborhood-based, multi-issue organizations. In this model, the prevalence of religious institutions was standardized by population size for two reasons. First, it makes this variable consistent with the other independent variables that also have been standardized. Second, it is the only way to include religious institutions and population size in the model at the same time since they are highly correlated (.729).⁹

Table III shows religious institutions are strongly and positively related to the prevalence of this other type of community institution. In addition, there is a curvilinear relationship between poverty and the number of multi-issue organizations in the neighborhood. Heterogeneity is not significantly related to these organizations. Residential mobility has a significant, but positive effect on multi-issue organizations. This is puzzling since social disorganization theory predicts a negative, not positive relationship.

⁹This high correlation is not a problem in the previous sets of models because religious institutions was the dependent variable, and as such, population size was introduced as a control variable for models in Table II.

DISCUSSION

One reason disorganized communities are disorganized, it is assumed, is that they suffer from low levels of parochial control. One factor leading to this is an ineffective or insufficient institutional base. The purpose of this study was to determine if disorganized communities do support fewer organizations and to begin to understand the relationship between different organizational forms. This study found that with regard to poverty, social disorganization theory is only partially useful in explaining organizational prevalence. There is a diminishing capacity to support both religious organizations and neighborhood-based, multi-issue organizations with increases in poverty, but only for the poorest areas. Replicating earlier studies on the relationship between poverty and organizational prevalence, this study found a curvilinear relationship between poverty and both types of organizations.

This finding is intuitively appealing when examining the prevalence of multi-issue organizations because it is thought they arise in response to community need and are organized by the communities in which they are located. We expect to see the most organizations at the point where both need and resources are sufficient to sustain them. This finding is less intuitively appealing for understanding the prevalence of religious institutions since they are less dependent upon local organizing and support for survival. Also, because the prevalence of religious institutions should be related to religiosity, not poverty, to the extent that poverty increases people's need for formal religion, we would expect a consistent, positive relationship between poverty and religious organizations. We also expect this relationship because poor communities, particularly poor, black communities, have traditionally relied upon churches in the absence of other social institutions. The curvilinear relationship between poverty and the prevalence of religious institutions alerts us to the fact that the poorest communities have insufficient resources to sustain a proliferation of all types of organizations even as they have the most need for them.

There were mixed findings for the effects of residential mobility and ethnic heterogeneity on organizational prevalence. Consistent with social disorganization theory, both were found to have a negative effect on the prevalence of religious institutions, even when controlling for population size. In fact, the negative effects of both residential mobility and ethnic heterogeneity were strongest in combination with high poverty. Alternatively, residential mobility had a positive impact on the prevalence of multi-issue organizations. Either these organizational forms represent different dimensions of the local community structure or the need for different types of services overcomes the disorganizing effect of mobility. Thus, social

disorganization theory was only partially useful for explaining the prevalence of these two organizational forms. Since this study examined only the primary social disorganization variables, it is conceivable that had important omitted variables been included, the analysis would have yielded more consistent results.

Organizations function in both the local and the city-wide environments. The prevalence of any organizational form cannot be fully understood without examining the political and economic context in which it exists. Moreover, the relationship between organizational forms plays a role in the prevalence of any one of them. Accordingly, a central tenet of parochial control was supported. This study found that religious groups are instrumental in the development of other community resources. The relationship between religious organizations and multi-issue, neighborhood-based organizations was strong and positive. Religious groups represent potential for the development of social capital and areas in which there are large reserves of social capital, relative to other neighborhoods, will be more likely to have neighborhood-based organizations. Religious institutions are a resource on which residents draw to organize and protect their communities. Thus, they are important to community life above and beyond their role as institutions which develop religiosity and provide moral guidance.

Healthy civic associations are important to community life. Within the community they promote the integration and activism thought to be necessary to counter social disorganization. Outside the community they promote a clear expression of the community's collective needs and demonstrate the needs are so widespread as to warrant a response from society-at-large. In addition, a dense network of secondary associations both embodies and contributes to effective social collaboration, leading not only to effective democratic governance (Putnam, 1993:90), but to lower levels of disorganization.

The present study leads to a number of important questions for future investigation. This paper analyzes the prevalence of religious institutions without regard to affiliation or denomination. Clearly disaggregating the dependent variable into its components would reveal how different religions and/or denominations connect to ethnicity, social class and potentially to social control, social disorganization and ultimately to crime. This would help determine whether the structural covariates of social disorganization vary by denomination and whether certain religious groups survive more ably in disorganized areas. It also would be useful in assessing how the process of ethnic and racial succession and invasion, where churches are left in locations inhabited primarily by members of another denomination, impacts the types and delivery of resources to the communities. Also, the

debate regarding the relationship between religious diversity and religious mobilization (see Finke *et al.*, 1996 for review) raises questions with regard to the effect of diversity on the prevalence of other community groups. Preliminary analysis, in fact, reveals that religious diversity is positively related to the prevalence of neighborhood-based organizations. Most importantly, the relationship between the community's organizational structure and its level of crime needs to be analyzed in order to assess parochial control as an intervening dimension of social disorganization.

The analysis in this paper has important implications for the development of community action geared toward enhancing parochial control, and fighting social disorganization. Religious organizations promote community action in a number of ways. First, they are an institution that brings residents together and helps integrate people into the community. In this capacity, they generate attachment to community and neighbors and help reduce disorganization. Second, religious organizations are instrumental in developing social capital, a vital resource for communities in their fight against crime. By promoting positive social relations, religious organizations identify local problems as shared problems and help to organize congregants around important issues. Finally, religious organizations provide very tangible assistance to their communities in the types of services illustrated by Chicago's food pantries. In the fight against disorganization, religious organizations are an important source of local social control.

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