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## Legal Cynicism and (Subcultural?) Tolerance of Deviance: The Neighborhood Context of Racial Differences

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We advance here a neighborhood-level perspective on racial differences in legal cynicism, dissatisfaction with police, and the tolerance of various forms of deviance. Our basic premise is that structural characteristics of neighborhoods explain variations in normative orientations about law, criminal justice, and deviance that are often confounded with the demographic characteristics of individuals. Using a multilevel approach that permits the decomposition of variance within and between neighborhoods, we tested hypotheses on a recently completed study of 8,782 residents of 343 neighborhoods in Chicago. Contrary to received wisdom, we find that African Americans and Latinos are *less* tolerant of deviance—including violence—than whites. At the same time, neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage display elevated levels of legal cynicism, dissatisfaction with police, and tolerance of deviance unaccounted for by sociodemographic composition and crime-rate differences. Concentrated disadvantage also helps explain why African Americans are more cynical about law and dissatisfied with the police. Neighborhood context is thus important for resolving the seeming paradox that estrangement from legal norms and agencies of criminal justice, especially by blacks, is compatible with the personal condemnation of deviance.

Over three decades ago, David Matza (1964) argued that “subculture” was the central concept of the prevailing sociological view of delinquency. Indeed, much classic criminological theory takes as a starting point the concept of social conflict over values, beliefs, and norms that govern behavior (e.g., Sutherland 1947; Cohen 1955; Miller 1958; Cloward & Ohlin 1960). This conflict is thought to allow for the emergence of subcultures composed of individuals who, by not sharing in the beliefs of the dominant ideology, are freed from societal constraints. Subcul-

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tures are thus alleged to turn tables on society—delinquency is itself normative and law is viewed with cynicism.

Although the concept of subculture has been the subject of many debates in criminology, attempts to verify directly the existence of subcultural values and beliefs are rare and have yielded inconsistent results. Typically subcultures are inferred from behavioral patterns, and in American criminology this procedure has most often produced the notion of a subculture of violence in the inner city (Wolfgang & Ferracuti 1967; Curtis 1975). Blacks and low-income residents of the so-called underclass, in other words, have been posited to evince a cultural tolerance of violence. Moreover, there has been a tendency to conflate individual attitudes favorable to deviance with a system of what Merton called “normlessness” and Durkheim called “anomie.” Perhaps most important, extant research focuses primarily on individual and demographic attributes rather than situating the study of norms in a larger structural context. As Claude Fischer (1995:547) observed in a recent assessment of 20 years of research on the matter, subcultural theory is, at core, an ecological theory about places, not a theory of persons.

We capitalize here on a recent multilevel study of 8,782 residents of 343 Chicago neighborhoods in order to highlight sociodemographic and neighborhood sources of variation in tolerance of deviance (including violence) and attitudes about the legitimacy of law. We argue that “anomie” about law—what we call “legal cynicism”—is a concept distinct from subcultural tolerance of deviance. Our basic premise is that orientations toward deviance and its control are not subcultural in origin in the sense envisioned by traditional theory, nor are they solely attributable to the aggregated characteristics of individuals (social composition). We hypothesize that an important source of variation lies in the differential social-ecological structure of neighborhoods—notably, in levels of concentrated disadvantage, residential instability, and immigrant concentration that reflect larger inequalities in American society (Sampson & Wilson 1995). In particular, our results show that racial differences in normative orientations are either contrary to subculture of violence expectations or confounded with neighborhood.

## **Subcultural Tolerance of Deviance and Violence**

Although subculture has been defined in terms of social networks and interaction patterns, we focus here on the more cultural component: norms and attitudes about deviance (Fischer 1976:259). Attempting to assess normative differences in survey ratings of the seriousness of crimes, Rossi et al.’s (1974) influential study found widespread agreement among respondents, irrespective of their social-demographic characteristics (e.g., race,

gender, educational attainment). Erlanger (1974:283; Erlanger & Winsborough 1976) reported a similar "absence of major differences by race or class in approval of interpersonal violence" and relationships between fighting and peer respect that were inconsistent with the subculture of violence thesis. Using nationally representative data from the General Social Survey, Cao, Adams, and Jensen (1997) also found no support for a subculture of violence tied to blacks. White males expressed more violent beliefs regarding defensive situations, and whites and blacks did not differ in beliefs about violence in offensive situations. This general pattern was supported by the survey research of Shoemaker and Williams (1987) and Ellison (1991). In addition, a recent study that controlled for random measurement error in attitudinal variables found no differences between whites and nonwhites in attitudes about retribution, courage, and "disputatiousness" (Markowitz & Felson 1998).

Against a backdrop of consensus, however, even Rossi et al. (1974:231) noted a "hint of subcultural differences," evidenced by the fact that black males with less than a high school education ranked crimes against persons somewhat differently than did the rest of the sample. In another major study, Blumenthal (1972) and colleagues (Blumenthal et al. 1972) found that black males were considerably more likely than white males to favor violence for the purpose of social change. Hartnagel (1980) also found that blacks were significantly more likely than whites to approve of the use of serious violence ("knifing" another person), although this pattern did not hold for a less serious form of violence (punching). A more recent body of research, drawn largely from Sutherland's (1947) differential association theory, argues that attitudes toward delinquency and law violation account for the effects of sociodemographic characteristics on delinquent behavior (Matsueda 1982; Matsueda & Heimer 1987; Heimer & Matsueda 1994; Heimer 1996, 1997). Definitions specifically favorable to violence have been shown to vary by class position, with those in the lower socioeconomic class more likely to maintain such definitions than the middle or the upper class (Heimer 1997). For males, attitudes favoring deviance more generally vary by race and age, with blacks and older respondents more likely to hold such attitudes (Heimer 1996).

Examining the use of "techniques of neutralization," Hindelang (1974) provided further evidence that attitudes favorable to delinquency are highly variable across individuals. Testing hypotheses derived from the work of Matza (1964) and Sykes and Matza (1957), Hindelang found that those reporting no involvement in illegal acts were more disapproving of the same acts than those reporting illegal involvement. Casting doubt on the necessity of neutralizing techniques, Hindelang concluded:

In all groups, for virtually all acts, Matza and Sykes' premise of subscription to a common value system, regardless of illegal involvement, does not find support in these data. . . . The data here suggest a more generalized and more enduring release from moral constraint, which derives from a value system permitting involvement in certain illegal behaviors *independent of extenuating circumstances*. (Hindelang 1974:383–84; emphasis in original)

On the other hand, a more recent study by Agnew (1994) found that techniques of neutralization were substantially associated with delinquency, especially among those who disapproved of violence and who associated with delinquent peers.

### **Contextualizing Subculture**

As is clear from the preceding review, survey research on subcultures and attitudes toward deviance has focused on individual-level variations, and with varying results. Remarkably little research in this area takes a contextual perspective. One exception is a study by Felson et al. (1994) that provides an aggregate-level analysis of subcultural values and violence between schools, along with analysis of the effect of school context on individual variations in violence. Felson et al. found significant associations of a school-level culture of violence with individual-level measures of interpersonal violence, theft/vandalism, and school delinquency, controlling for individual-level measures of subcultural orientations to violence. Cao et al. (1997:375–76) support the Felson et al. strategy by calling for more contextualization in research on subcultures: "It is possible that a subculture of violence may involve belief systems that characterize a particular urban community. . . . Inclusion of this ecological element, thus, would shift focus from subcultural beliefs in violence, which could transcend place, to a more complicated interaction between community and value system."

Although ethnographic studies are very different in research design, the rich tradition of such studies provides support for this notion. Suttles's (1968) account of the social order of a Chicago neighborhood characterized by poverty and heterogeneity emphasized age, sex, ethnicity, and territory as markers for the ordered segmentation of slum culture. Suttles found that single-sex, age-graded primary groups of the same ethnicity and territory emerged in response to threats of conflict and community-wide disorder and mistrust. Also in Chicago, Anderson's (1978) ethnography of a South Side ghetto bar suggested that primary values coexisted alongside residual values associated with deviant subcultures such as "toughness," "getting big money," and "going for bad" (pp. 129–30, 152–58). According to Anderson, lower-class black residents did not value violence as a primary goal, but it was nonetheless expected as a fact of life in that context. An-

derson's (1990, 1997) recent research elaborates this idea further by suggesting that a "code of violence" is more likely to emerge in the inner city. Because aggression at the hands of others is a central concern of public life in the inner city, he argues that solutions for dealing with such situations have evolved into shared informal understandings—a set of prescriptions of engagement for those who would effectively manage themselves in their everyday relations with others. Much like Suttles (1968) and Horowitz (1987), Anderson suggests that in certain contexts the wider cultural values are simply not relevant—they become "unviable."

Extant research is thus decidedly mixed and paints a complex picture of subcultural orientations that is not reducible to simplistic accounts of either "consensus" or "conflict" (Hagan, Silva, & Simpson 1977). Perhaps Shaw and McKay (1942) had it right when they argued long ago that traditions of delinquency and crime were powerful forces in certain communities, yet remained only a part of the community's system of values. They wrote, "the dominant tradition in every community is conventional, even in those having the highest rate of delinquents" (p. 180). Indeed, the very notion of subculture implies a larger dominant culture. In the social disorganization tradition of Shaw and McKay, Kornhauser (1978:75) argued a similar point; namely, that poverty, ethnic heterogeneity, mobility, and the accompanying structural features of social disorganization (e.g., anonymity, mutual distrust) impede communication and obstruct the quest for what are still common values. From her viewpoint, the attenuation of societal values fostered by structural disorganization leads to a state of cultural disorganization. In such disorganized communities, conventionality clashes with a "street culture" where crime, disorder, and drug use are expected and serve as a symbolic embodiment of the precariousness of everyday life (Anderson 1997). This interpretation may help to explain the inconsistent support shown for subcultural values in surveys. Survey research designs, particularly national samples, are often insensitive to ecological and situational variations (see also Sullivan 1989).

We suggest, then, that both streams of research evidence—ethnographic and survey based—may be reconciled so long as we emphasize the situational and contextual basis of value attenuation, rather than an autonomous culture that positively values violence at all times and places. Although conventional norms are pervasive in any community, it may be that tolerance of deviance, a cultural emphasis on "toughness" and "bravado" in the face of danger, and an overt readiness to use violence varies across structural and situational contexts. In this regard, community contexts may shape "cognitive landscapes" (Sampson 1997) of appropriate standards and expectations of conduct. The purpose of

this article is to measure directly the contextual variations by neighborhood in such subculture-related orientations.

### **“Anomie” and Legal Cynicism**

The research reviewed to this point concerns subcultural tolerance of violence or deviance more generally. Yet, as we suggested early on, there has been a tendency in the literature to confuse tolerance of deviance with “normlessness” or “anomie.” Distinguishing these constructs, we suggest that support for what one personally views as “appropriate” (or normative) forms of conduct does not necessarily imply support for the regulations of the larger society or the mechanisms used to enforce such conduct (i.e., laws, policing). In the classic Durkheimian sense, anomie refers to a state of normlessness in which the rules of the dominant society (and hence the legal system) are no longer binding in a community or for a population subgroup (Kapsis 1978:1139). Anomie in this sense is conceived as part of a social system and not merely a property of the individual. Normlessness and powerlessness tend also to go hand in hand, breeding cynicism about the rules of the society and their application, regardless of individual values. We thus maintain that tolerance of deviance and anomie—especially the component related to what we call “legal cynicism”—are distinct normative structures that do not necessarily operate in concert.

There is a long literature on the psychometric measurement of individual differences in anomie. The Srole (1956) anomie scale, for example, has generated an entire body of validation research (see, e.g., Kapsis 1978). By contrast, we are concerned here with neighborhood differences in perceptions of normlessness and legal cynicism. In one of the major studies looking at neighborhood-level differences, Wilson (1971) challenged the assertion common in prior research (e.g., Bullough 1967) that residents of black “ghettos” can be characterized by high levels of anomie. Examining three neighborhoods of varying levels of racial heterogeneity, Wilson found that, for blacks, anomie was lowest in the “ghetto” neighborhood that was most racially homogeneous (96% black) and highest in the most racially diverse neighborhood. Wilson’s explanation conformed to a subcultural perspective, especially the idea that blacks in ghetto neighborhoods learn to redefine success “in ways in keeping with the shared symbols of a black, lower-class reference group” (Wilson 1971:86).

As an alternative interpretation, Kapsis (1978) relied on Suttles’s (1972) concept of “defended” versus “defeated” communities to offer a more structural or “sociopolitical” perspective that attributes low levels of anomie to effective linkages between the neighborhood and the larger society or, more specifically, be-

tween the neighborhood and the political clout of the city. Kapsis studied a neighborhood similar in many respects to Wilson's black "ghetto," but which could be divided into an incorporated portion under the jurisdiction of the city and an unincorporated portion under the jurisdiction of the county and characterized by inadequate services and facilities. Kapsis found support for his hypotheses that anomie or "perceived normlessness" was higher in the "ghetto" neighborhood than in the more racially heterogeneous neighborhood he studied and that anomie was higher in the "defeated" county portion of the ghetto neighborhood than in the "defended" city portion, where links to political structures were stronger. The implication of Kapsis's (1978) work is that members of economically and racially isolated communities, that is, those who were least able to exercise political influence to obtain community services, were more likely than others to report high normlessness.

We would further suggest that inner-city contexts of racial segregation and concentrated disadvantage, where inability to influence the structures of power that constrain lives is greatest, also breed cynicism and perceptions of legal injustice. As Hagan and Albonetti (1982:330) wrote, "conceptions and perceptions of justice are determined in large part by the times, places, and positions in the social structure from which they are derived." They examined perceptions of "criminal injustice" with questions concerning law enforcement and the judicial system: for example, "police who do not treat poor suspects the same as well-to-do suspects," "judges who are biased and unfair," "courts that do not treat blacks and other minorities the same as whites" (p. 340). They found that blacks and members of the lowest social class were more likely to perceive criminal injustice than whites and the upper class, respectively. Hagan and Albonetti also found that while race was significantly related to all measures of criminal injustice, the relationship between race and perceptions of injustice was particularly strong for items involving the police. Blacks, they found, were substantially more likely than whites to report that police treat poor and "well-to-do" suspects differently, and to view the police as unrepresentative of the communities in which they work. Numerous other studies support the finding that blacks are less favorable than whites in their judgments about police (see, e.g., Block 1971; Hahn 1971; Smith & Hawkins 1973). Dunham and Alpert (1988), for example, relying on a sample of five neighborhoods in Miami, found that blacks were more likely to report negative perceptions of police demeanor and to disapprove of police use of discretion than were Cuban American and white respondents in the sample.

Although sparse, extant research thus suggests that members of low-income and minority-group populations are most likely to perceive injustice in the application of legal norms and to ex-



press cynicism about the legitimacy of laws and the ability of police to do their job in an effective and nondiscriminatory manner. From our perspective, moreover, the important point is that these patterns may be contextual in origin and not reducible to differences in crime rates. In particular, differential ecological distributions of social resources by race mean that *at all levels of socioeconomic status* (SES), observed relationships involving race are likely to reflect unmeasured advantages in the ecological niches that whites occupy (see Wilson 1987:58–60; Sampson & Wilson 1995). Subcultural interpretations often overlook these racial differences in the structural context of disadvantage and resource exploitation across neighborhoods.

### Research Strategy

Extending Fischer's (1995) insight that subcultural theory is largely a theory about places, we propose that subcultural norms and legal cynicism are not necessarily (or only) about individual-level variations, especially those by race/ethnicity. Rather, we argue for the importance of neighborhood-level variations by correlated dimensions of concentrated disadvantage and social stability. Individual-level variations still matter, of course, a point Fischer (1995:548–49) carefully acknowledges in a call also for contextually based research on subcultural orientations among individuals. We therefore integrate these analytical perspectives by systematically examining individual-level variations in tolerance of deviance and beliefs about the legitimacy of law *in conjunction with* an analysis of whether structural characteristics explain neighborhood-level variance in subcultural orientations—above and beyond the sociodemographic characteristics of the people residing in those neighborhoods. In this way we partition the variance in tolerance of deviance and legal cynicism into between-individual and between-neighborhood components; our main theoretical interest resides in the latter.

We have also proposed a distinction between the tolerance of deviance and cynicism about the applicability of law. One can be highly intolerant of crime, but live in a disadvantaged context bereft of legal sanctions and perceived justice. In fact, we suggest that this is exactly the sort of context found in many ghetto-poverty areas of our large cities where lower-income minorities are disproportionately concentrated. Crime there is usually high, but that does not imply, nor is there consistent evidence, that African American residents are tolerant of crime (Shoemaker & Williams 1987; Ellison 1991). In terms of rational self-interest, intolerance of crime makes more sense than a culturally sanctioned endorsement of life-threatening behavior. Yet cynicism about the police may still be high, along with perceptions of criminal injustice (Hagan & Albonetti 1982) and a sense that legal norms are not

binding or are too weak to warrant social trust (Kapsis 1978). We attempt to resolve this seeming paradox of criminal intolerance and legal cynicism by considering, simultaneously, individual position in the social structure (especially race) and neighborhood structural differentiation.

## Data and Methodology

The data for our article are drawn from a recent study explicitly designed to examine social context—the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN). “Neighborhood” is conceptualized as an ecological subsection of a larger community—a collection of both people and institutions occupying a spatially defined area that is conditioned by a set of ecological, sociodemographic, and often political forces (cf. Park 1916:147–54). In addition to its long history of neighborhood differentiation, the extensive social-class, racial, and ethnic diversity of the population was a major reason Chicago was selected for the study. At present, whites, blacks, and Latinos each represent about a third of the population.

To operationalize neighborhood, Chicago’s 847 populated census tracts were combined to create 343 “Neighborhood Clusters” (NCs). The overriding consideration in forming NCs was that they should be ecologically meaningful units composed of geographically contiguous census tracts and internally homogeneous with regard to distributions on a variety of census indicators. The study settled on an ecological unit smaller than the established 77 community areas in Chicago (average size = 40,000) but large enough to approximate local neighborhoods—on average, around 8,000 people. Major geographic boundaries (e.g., railroad tracks, parks, freeways), knowledge of Chicago’s local neighborhoods, and cluster analyses of census data were used to guide the construction of relatively homogeneous NCs with respect to distributions of racial-ethnic mix, socioeconomic status, housing density, and family organization.

The Community Survey (CS) of the PHDCN is a multidimensional assessment by residents of the structural and cultural properties of their neighborhoods. To gain a complete picture of the city’s neighborhoods, 8,782 Chicago residents representing all 343 NCs were personally interviewed in their homes in 1995. The basic design for the CS had three stages: at stage 1, city blocks were sampled within each NC; at stage 2, dwelling units were sampled within blocks, and at stage 3, one adult resident (18 or older) was sampled within each selected dwelling unit. Abt Associates carried out the screening and data collection in cooperation with the research staff of PHDCN, achieving a final response rate of 75%. The sampling plan yielded a representative probability sample of Chicago residents and a large enough

within-cluster sample to create reliable between-neighborhood measures. The samples within clusters were designed to be approximately self-weighting, and thus the between-neighborhood analysis is based on unweighted data (see Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls 1997:924). All descriptive statistics designed to reflect the city population (e.g., means, proportions) are based on weighted data.

### Individual Measures

*Tolerance of deviance* is measured by four questions that asked respondents about “how wrong” they thought various acts were if committed by 13-year-olds and 19-year-olds. Rather than ask about crimes such as robbery or rape that are near universally condemned, the study probed attitudes about “minor” deviance along with a more common manifestation of violence. Respondents were asked, “How wrong is it for teenagers around thirteen years of age to (a) smoke cigarettes, (b) use marijuana, (c) drink alcohol, and (d) get into fist fights.” These items were measured on a five-point Likert scale: “not wrong at all” (1), “a little wrong” (2), “wrong” (3), “very wrong” (4), and “extremely wrong” (5). Four corresponding questions asked how wrong the same acts were for “teenagers around nineteen years of age.” To assess attitudes specific to violence, we report the replication of analyses with just the fighting item (d).

We drew on and modified Srole’s (1956) anomie scale. Under our modification, *legal cynicism* is measured by five items assessing general beliefs about the legitimacy of law and social norms. Respondents reported their level of agreement with five statements: “Laws were made to be broken,” “It’s okay to do anything you want as long as you don’t hurt anyone,” “To make money, there are no right and wrong ways anymore, only easy ways and hard ways,” “Fighting between friends or within families is nobody else’s business,” and “Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself” (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). The common idea is the sense in which laws or rules are not considered binding in the existential, present lives of respondents. Taken as a whole, that is, the items tap variation in respondents’ ratification of acting in ways that are “outside” of law and social norms.

*Satisfaction with police* is measured by five variables concerning the ability of police to respond effectively and fairly to neighborhood crime concerns. On a five-point Likert scale similar to that used for legal cynicism, respondents were asked to report their level of agreement with five statements: “The police in this neighborhood are responsive to local issues,” “The police are doing a good job in dealing with problems that really concern people in

this neighborhood,” “The police are not doing a good job in preventing crime in this neighborhood” (reverse coded), “The police do a good job in responding to people in the neighborhood after they have been victims of crime,” and “The police are not able to maintain order on the streets and sidewalks in the neighborhood” (reverse coded).

### Measurement Models

Each observed indicator of attitudes toward deviance, legal cynicism, and satisfaction with police was specified as a linear combination of a latent factor plus random measurement error. This strategy enabled us to estimate and control for the biasing effects of random response error, which one might expect to be relatively large for attitudinal variables. We used Jöreskog and Sörbom's (1993b) PRELIS 2 program to generate polychoric correlation and asymptotic covariance matrices, accounting for the ordinal nature of measures. These matrices were then analyzed using the weighted least-squares method of estimation in LISREL 8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom 1993a).

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of all indicators and parameter estimates of the measurement models. Because the same four items were used to assess attitudes toward deviance at both ages, we included four measurement-error correlations among like items across age (e.g., cigarette smoking at age 13 and age 19). We also included two measurement-error correlations within each age between smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol. The fit of this model to the data was acceptable:  $\chi^2 = 224.29$ ,  $df = 13$  (goodness of fit index = .997, adjusted goodness of fit index = .991). The correlation between the two latent factors in this model was .72. More important, validity coefficients (standardized loadings) for the empirical indicators of both factors were relatively high, ranging from .73 to .96 at age 13 and from .76 to .93 at age 19.

We estimated single-factor measurement models for both legal cynicism and police satisfaction. We included three measurement-error correlations in the legal cynicism model, which fit the data well:  $\chi^2 = 9.68$ ,  $df = 2$  (goodness of fit index = 1.00, adjusted goodness of fit index = 0.997). Validity coefficients ranged from .44 to .69. We also included three measurement-error correlations in the police satisfaction model, which fit the data extremely well:  $\chi^2 = 0.10$ ,  $df = 2$  (goodness of fit index = 1.00, adjusted goodness of fit index = 1.00). Validity coefficients ranged from .44 to .95.

Taking into account these patterns of measurement error, we obtained factor scores representing OLS coefficients of the regression of latent variables on all observed indicators (Bollen 1989:305). We used these factor scores to estimate tolerance of

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics and Parameter Estimates of the Individual-Level Measurement Models, PHDCN Survey, 1995

	Observed Mean	Observed Variance	Error Variance	Metric Slope	Validity Coefficient
<b>Tolerance of deviance, age 13<sup>a</sup></b>					
Smoke cigarettes	4.46	0.65	0.23	1.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.88
Use marijuana	4.66	0.46	0.07	1.10	0.96
Drink alcohol	4.63	0.48	0.09	1.09	0.96
Fist fights	4.25	0.97	0.46	0.83	0.73
<b>Tolerance of deviance, age 19<sup>a</sup></b>					
Smoke cigarettes	3.35	1.94	0.42	1.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.76
Use marijuana	4.11	1.27	0.14	1.21	0.93
Drink alcohol	3.79	1.60	0.22	1.16	0.89
Fist fights	3.92	1.29	0.43	0.99	0.76
<b>Legal cynicism<sup>c</sup></b>					
Laws to be broken	2.03	0.89	0.57	1.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.65
Okay to do anything you want	2.42	1.17	0.53	1.05	0.68
No right/wrong ways to make money	2.20	1.06	0.53	1.05	0.69
Fighting is nobody else's business	2.67	1.22	0.80	0.68	0.44
Person has to live for today	2.52	1.32	0.72	0.81	0.53
<b>Satisfaction with police<sup>d</sup></b>					
Responsive to local issues	3.46	0.96	0.35	1.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.80
Good job dealing with problems	3.31	1.03	0.10	1.18	0.95
Not doing good job preventing crime <sup>e</sup>	3.21	1.09	0.72	0.66	0.53
Good job responding to victims	3.41	0.88	0.70	0.68	0.55
Not able to maintain order <sup>e</sup>	3.36	1.07	0.81	0.55	0.44

<sup>a</sup>  $N = 7,841$ ; range 1 (not wrong) to 5 (extremely wrong).

<sup>b</sup> Fixed coefficient.

<sup>c</sup>  $N = 7,925$ ; range 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

<sup>d</sup>  $N = 7,918$ ; range 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

<sup>e</sup> Reverse coded.

deviance at ages 13 and 19, legal cynicism, and satisfaction with police for each respondent. To accomplish this, we weighted the observed indicators by the factor scores and then summed the weighted components for each factor. The ranges for the tolerance of deviance factor are 0.91 to 4.56 (age 13) and 0.79 to 3.93 (age 19); for the legal cynicism scale, 0.80 to 4.01; and for police satisfaction, 0.85 to 4.24. The resulting factor-score estimates are best viewed as summary "indicators" of true latent constructs that account for measurement-error correlations; these factor scores served as the basic input to the multivariate hierarchical linear models. Suggesting the robustness of results, however, our factor-analytic approach produced scales similar to those obtained by calculating an unweighted average of the relevant items for each scale.

### Neighborhood Structure

Three indexes of neighborhood structural differentiation are examined based on prior theory (Wilson 1987; Sampson & Wilson 1995) and analysis of census data in Chicago over three decades (Morenoff & Sampson 1997; Sampson et al. 1997). We fo-

cus here on 1990 census data because they were measured independently from the PHDCN community survey and were collected five years earlier, permitting temporal sequencing. Ten census variables were selected to reflect structural differences in poverty (percentage below the poverty line and percentage receiving public assistance), race/ethnicity (percentage black, percentage Latino American, percentage foreign born), the labor market (percentage unemployed), age composition (percentage under age 18), family structure (percentage female-headed families with children), housing (percentage home ownership), and residential stability (percentage living in the same house as in 1985). To simplify the dimensionality of the regressor space and account for the extensive multicollinearity among these 10 census variables, we used alpha-scoring factor analysis with an oblique factor rotation to create three summary indexes (see Sampson et al. 1997:920).

*Concentrated disadvantage* represents an economic disadvantage factor in racially segregated urban neighborhoods that was dominated by high loadings ( $> .8$ ) for poverty, public assistance, unemployment, female-headed families with children, and percentage under age 18, followed by, to a lesser extent, percentage black. This factor reflects the neighborhood concentration of resource disadvantage, to which African Americans and single-parent families with children are disproportionately exposed (Wilson 1987; Land, McCall, & Cohen 1990). The second factor captures areas of *concentrated immigration*. The variables that define this dimension are percentage Latino (approximately 70% of Latinos are Mexican American in Chicago) and percentage foreign born. The third factor is dominated by just two variables with very high ( $> .8$ ) loadings—percentage living in the same house as five years earlier and percentage owner-occupied homes. The emergence of a *residential stability* factor is consistent with much past research. Using factor loadings as weights, summary scales were created to reflect the three dimensions.<sup>1</sup>

## Hierarchical Linear Models

The nested structure of the PHDCN data is addressed by adapting appropriate hierarchical linear models (HLM) that account for the nonindependence of observations within neighborhood contexts. The HLM procedures of Bryk and Raudenbush (1992) were used to estimate two equations simultaneously: within neighborhood and between neighborhood. The major ad-

<sup>1</sup> We also examined several other procedures, including weighted scales based on principal components analysis and unit-weighted scales based on standardized z-scores. An analysis of three decades worth of census data in Chicago, from 1970 to 1990, yielded a similar factor structure (Morenoff & Sampson 1997). Overall the substantive results were not sensitive to these alternative estimation and scoring procedures.

vantage of HLM for present purposes is that it unifies levels of analysis rather than forcing a choice of one against the other; that is, both individual-level and neighborhood-level relationships are simultaneously modeled and estimated.<sup>2</sup> As Garner and Raudenbush (1991:253) argue, such partitioning allows the appropriate interpretation of the explanatory power of hierarchical models.

Our analysis strategy accounts for a rich array of individual-level and group-level covariates. Specifically, the within-neighborhood model regresses the three key measures—legal cynicism, tolerance of deviance, and satisfaction with police—on 11 characteristics: race/ethnicity (composed of indicators for Latino American and non-Latino African American; non-Latino Caucasian is the reference category), a composite measure of socioeconomic status (first principal component of education, income, and occupational prestige), sex (1 = female, 0 = male), marital status (composed of separate indicators for married, separated or divorced, and single), home ownership, mobility (number of moves in the past five years), years in the neighborhood, and age. With tolerance of deviance as the example, the within-neighborhood model can be written as:

$$(\text{Tolerance})_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \sum_{(q=1-11)} \beta_q X_{qij} + e_{ij},$$

where  $\beta_{0j}$  is the intercept;  $X_{qij}$  is the value of covariate  $q$  associated with respondent  $i$  in neighborhood  $j$ ; and  $\beta_q$  is the partial effect of that covariate on tolerance of deviance. The error term,  $e_{ij}$ , is the unique contribution of each individual, which is assumed to be independently, normally distributed with constant variance  $\sigma^2$ . Importantly, because the person-level covariates are centered about the sample means,  $\beta_{0j}$  is the mean tolerance of deviance in a neighborhood after the effects of the 11 covariates have been adjusted.

The between-neighborhood model can be written as

$$\beta_{0j} = \theta_{00} + \theta_{01} (\text{con. disad.}) + \theta_{02} (\text{con. immig.}) + \theta_{03} (\text{res. stability}) + U_{0j},$$

where  $\theta_{00}$  is the average tolerance score, and  $\theta_{01}$ ,  $\theta_{02}$ , and  $\theta_{03}$  are the regression coefficients of the effects of concentrated disadvantage, immigrant concentration, and residential stability, respectively, on the adjusted neighborhood level of tolerance.  $U_{0j}$  is the neighborhood-level error term, or the unique contribution of each neighborhood, assumed to be normally distributed with variance  $\tau$ . Based on preliminary analysis, we constrain all within-neighborhood slopes to be constant across neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup> Our interest is main effects on parameter variance across neighbor-

<sup>2</sup> All models were estimated with HLM 4.0, which provides robust standard errors. For statistical details on the empirical Bayes and maximum-likelihood estimation, see Bryk & Raudenbush (1992:ch. 3) and Sampson et al. (1997:924).

<sup>3</sup> We explored random slope models but generally found that there were no multilevel interactions in the data for the key variables. In particular, variance in the slope

hoods in tolerance of deviance, legal cynicism, and satisfaction with policing, adjusting for measurement error and individual-level differences in sociodemographic composition.<sup>4</sup>

### Sociodemographic Patterns

To aid in identifying descriptive patterns, we began our analysis by dividing the tolerance of deviance, legal cynicism, and satisfaction with police scales into equal thirds. Table 2 presents the crosstabulation, weighted to reflect the Chicago population, of the three scales by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and age. Because of the large sample, significance tests are less informative than percentage differentials.

The measures of tolerance of deviance at ages 13 and 19 reveal similar patterns that contradict common stereotypes regarding the magnitude of tolerance and its connection to sociodemographic differences. Overall, respondents are rather intolerant of deviance among youth (see also Table 1, descriptive statistics), with mean values above 4 ("very wrong") for all items among 13-year-olds. Even for 19-year olds, respondents are highly intolerant except for smoking items. More interesting, African Americans and Latino respondents are much less tolerant of deviance than are white respondents. Whereas 42% of blacks and 47% of Latinos score low on the tolerance of deviance scale at age 13, only 31% of whites do so. The pattern is similar for tolerance of deviance at age 19. These rather substantial differences in magnitude are all highly significant. Perhaps most striking, when we limited the analysis to the fighting item, the race/ethnic differences actually increased: for example, the percentage of whites who responded that fighting among 13-year-olds was extremely wrong was 42% compared with 54% for blacks and 63% for Latinos (table not shown). Even for violence, then, racial and ethnic minorities are apparently less tolerant than European Americans.

Table 2 also shows that respondents of low socioeconomic status are less tolerant of deviance than are those of high SES, again contrary to common perceptions. Some 45% of low-SES respondents score low on the tolerance of deviance at age 13

estimate for race/ethnicity across neighborhoods was not reliably predicted by the measured characteristics of concentrated poverty, immigrant concentration, or stability.

<sup>4</sup> There is another adjustment of potential importance that we addressed as well—spatial autocorrelation. As a check on the sensitivity of results to the spatial dependence of dependent variables across neighborhood clusters, we replicated the main results introducing spatial lags (see Morenoff & Sampson 1997:42–43). Essentially, these models controlled for the cumulative effect on each neighborhood of the levels of the dependent variable of *all other* neighborhoods in the city, weighted by geographical proximity to the reference neighborhood. OLS regressions of these "spatial diffusion" models yielded identical substantive patterns for the main explanatory variables, suggesting the robustness of results to potential diffusion processes. In future work, we hope to integrate the simultaneous estimation of HLM and spatial diffusion models.



**Table 2.** Tolerance of Deviance, Legal Cynicism, and Satisfaction with Police by Key Sociodemographic Characteristics, PHDCN Survey, 1995

	Race/Ethnicity			SES			Sex		Age		
	White	Black	Latino	Low	Medium	High	Male	Female	18-32	33-47	48-100
<b>Tolerance of deviance, age 13</b>											
Low	31%	42%	47%	45%	39%	34%	32%	43%	34%	39%	44%
Medium	32	25	26	23	27	31	27	28	29	29	25
High	37	33	27	33	34	35	40	29	38	32	31
<b>Tolerance of deviance, age 19</b>											
Low	27%	32%	43%	37%	33%	29%	28%	35%	25%	32%	40%
Medium	42	32	34	34	38	38	35	38	38	35	37
High	32	36	23	29	29	34	37	27	37	33	23
<b>Legal cynicism</b>											
Low	46%	38%	35%	29%	37%	49%	36%	43%	33%	42%	46%
Medium	35	32	34	35	34	33	36	33	37	32	32
High	19	29	31	36	29	18	28	25	30	26	22
<b>Satisfaction with police</b>											
Low	14%	38%	36%	40%	31%	18%	28%	28%	33%	27%	23%
Medium	38	36	37	36	39	37	35	39	36	39	37
High	49	26	27	24	30	45	37	34	31	34	41

NOTE: Percentage estimates are weighted to reflect sampling design.

scale, compared with 34% of high SES respondents. A similar pattern exists for tolerance of deviance at age 19. More in line with common belief, Table 2 shows that males are more tolerant of deviance among 13- and 19-year-olds than are females and that younger respondents are more tolerant of deviance at both ages than are older respondents.

For the legal cynicism scale, Table 2 reveals substantial differences in beliefs about the legitimacy of law by race/ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status. Twenty-nine percent of black respondents and 31% of Latino respondents score in the highest one-third of the legal cynicism scale, compared with only 19% of white respondents. Older respondents score lower on the legal cynicism scale than do those who are younger. The most significant variation in legal cynicism is by socioeconomic status. Respondents of low SES are significantly less likely than those of high SES to view legal norms as legitimate; 36% of low-SES respondents score in the highest one-third of the legal cynicism scale, compared with only 18% of high-SES respondents. To the extent that SES and race are confounded, Table 2 suggests that we need to consider them simultaneously in later models.

The findings for the satisfaction with police scale are similar to those for the legal cynicism scale. Black and Latino respondents report much lower levels of satisfaction with policing in their neighborhoods than do white respondents. Not surprisingly, persons of low SES report less satisfaction with the police than do those of high SES. Sex differences are immaterial, but younger respondents are less satisfied with policing in their neighborhoods than are older respondents.

At the descriptive level, the data suggest that minority respondents are less tolerant of deviance than whites, even as they are more cynical about the police and legal norms. Hence it appears that the data do not support a simplistic black subculture of deviance or violence thesis, but they do support research on perceptions of injustice and alienation from police (e.g., Hagan & Albonetti 1982). We now turn to simultaneous sources of variation in these scales at the person and neighborhood levels.

## Multilevel Results

Table 3 presents the HLM decomposition of variance components for attitudes toward deviance.<sup>5</sup> We analyzed both the age 13 and age 19 scales separately, a summary measure that averaged the two, and the individual fighting item. The HLM results were substantively identical for deviance at ages 13 and 19. To

<sup>5</sup> All multivariate HLM models are based on listwise deletion of missing data. On average, the models with complete data on all items captured about 85% of the original sample. Further analysis of missing data patterns revealed nothing systematic that would appear to bias the conclusions derived from the substantive results.

simplify, Table 3 displays results for the combined scale, scored so that a higher value indicates greater *intolerance* of deviance. The reliability of the scale at the neighborhood level is .60, where reliability is defined as  $\Sigma [\tau_{00}/(\tau_{00} + \sigma^2/\eta_j)] / J$ . Thus the reliability of tolerance of deviance averaged across  $J$  (342) neighborhoods<sup>6</sup> increases as the sample size ( $n$ ) in each of the  $j$  neighborhoods increases and the between-group variance ( $\tau_{00}$ ) increases relative to the within-group variance ( $\sigma^2$ ). A magnitude of .60 suggests that we are able to tap, with a reasonable degree of precision, neighborhood differences in subcultural orientations to deviance as our research strategy demands (cf. Fischer 1995).

**Table 3.** Hierarchical Linear Model of Low Tolerance for Deviance (Age 13/19 Summary Scale, Neighborhood-Level Reliability = .60): Variance Decomposition and Correlates, PHDCN Survey, 1995

	Coefficient	S.E.	t-Ratio
Intercept	3.655	.009	402.04**
<b>Person level</b> ( $N = 7,267$ )			
African American	.128	.032	3.97**
Latino American	.175	.025	6.95**
Female	.167	.015	10.86**
SES	-.010	.007	-1.52
Age	.004	.001	6.93**
Married	.085	.022	3.85**
Separated/divorced	.042	.023	1.84
Single	-.055	.025	-2.26*
Own home	.014	.018	0.77
Residential moves	-.027	.006	-4.49**
Years in neighborhood	-.001	.001	-1.82
<b>Neighborhood level</b> ( $N = 342$ )			
Concentrated disadvantage	-.048	.018	-2.69**
Immigrant concentration	.069	.012	5.59**
Residential stability	.057	.009	5.87**
	Variance Components	Variance Explained	
Within neighborhoods	.363	5%	
Between neighborhoods	.030	64%	

\*  $p < .05$       \*\*  $p < .01$

The HLM estimate of the intraclass correlation (ICC) reveals that about 8% of the scale's parameter variance lies between neighborhoods, with the remainder apportioned to a combination of random error and individual-level variation. This relatively low level of between-neighborhood variation is similar to what has been found in other studies looking at contexts such as schools and even families. Duncan and Raudenbush (1997:10) advise caution in interpreting small intraclass correlations, as effect sizes commonly viewed as large translate into small propor-

<sup>6</sup> The neighborhood cluster containing O'Hare International Airport was deleted because there were not enough sample respondents residing there to obtain reliable measures.

tions of variance in individual outcomes explained by neighborhood membership. In fact, neighborhood effect sizes as large as .8 of a standard deviation difference give rise to an ICC as low as .14. Therefore, a small correlation among neighbors does not rule out a large effect size associated with a measured difference between neighborhoods (Duncan & Raudenbush 1997:11).

The multivariate HLM results confirm the descriptive finding from Table 2 regarding race/ethnicity that contradicts common assumptions. With SES, eight other person-level predictors, and neighborhood context controlled for, we found that African Americans and Latino Americans report significantly less tolerance for deviance than whites ( $t$ -ratios of 3.97 and 6.95,  $p < .01$ , respectively).<sup>7</sup> Not only are Latinos especially intolerant of deviance, residents of concentrated immigrant areas, which are predominantly Latino in composition, are also higher in intolerance ( $t$ -ratio = 5.59). This contextual result suggests something emergent about Latino culture, perhaps religious in nature, which yields a consistent pattern of condemnation of deviance.

The neighborhood-level results reveal two other distinct findings. Areas of concentrated disadvantage and residential instability appear to have increased levels of tolerance of deviance. The HLM model adjusts for compositional differences in the sample survey with respect to race/ethnicity and SES (among other sociodemographic characteristics), pointing to a contextual component of subcultural theory. Namely, tolerance of deviance does appear to be ecologically patterned—it is higher in neighborhoods of ghetto poverty and instability but lower in concentrated immigrant neighborhoods. At the same time, however, minority groups are more intolerant of deviance than whites, even when neighborhood context is controlled.

Because of the historical connection of subcultural theory to violence, we replicated the results with the tolerance of fighting item. Perhaps not surprisingly, respondents were less likely to see fighting among 19-year-olds as extremely wrong (40%) compared with 13-year-olds (51%). Further analysis of the fighting item by individual covariates also indicated that we were better able to discriminate among differences at age 13 than at age 19, especially by race/ethnicity. Table 4 thus presents the HLM results for intolerance of fighting among 13-year-olds. Although somewhat less reliable at the neighborhood level, the basic patterns remain the same. African Americans and Latinos are significantly more likely to condemn fighting than European Americans ( $t$ -ratios = 2.89 and 6.38, respectively). And stable neighborhoods and Latino immigrant neighborhoods are more intolerant of fighting. The only difference that emerges for the

<sup>7</sup> In the model without any measured neighborhood characteristics, the coefficients for African Americans and Latinos were similarly positive, indicating greater intolerance of deviance ( $t$ -ratios = 2.47 and 7.97, respectively).

**Table 4.** Hierarchical Linear Model of Low Tolerance for Fighting at Age 13 (Neighborhood-Level Reliability = .56): Variance Decomposition and Correlates, PHDCN Survey, 1995

	Coefficient	S.E.	t-Ratio
Intercept	4.226	.016	265.22**
<b>Person level</b> ( <i>N</i> = 7,410)			
African American	.139	.048	2.89**
Latino American	.255	.040	6.38**
Female	.247	.025	10.01**
SES	-.018	.010	-1.82
Age	.004	.001	3.94**
Married	.082	.033	2.48*
Separated/divorced	.044	.038	1.15
Single	-.046	.039	-1.17
Own home	.000	.028	0.01
Residential moves	-.014	.010	-1.31
Years in neighborhood	-.001	.001	-1.33
<b>Neighborhood level</b> ( <i>N</i> = 342)			
Concentrated disadvantage	.013	.023	0.57
Immigrant concentration	.066	.021	3.18**
Residential stability	.049	.019	2.66**
		Variance Components	Variance Explained
Within neighborhoods		.919	3%
Between neighborhoods		.063	35%

\*  $p < .05$       \*\*  $p < .01$

fighting item is that the effect of concentrated poverty is no longer significant. Apparently, the greater tolerance of deviance found in ghetto poverty areas (Table 3) does not extend specifically to violence, yet another finding which undercuts a racially linked subculture of violence argument.<sup>8</sup>

Table 5 examines the HLM model of legal cynicism. The neighborhood-level reliability estimate of .54 is somewhat less than that for the tolerance of deviance scales. In addition, the variance components reveal that only about 6% percent of the variance in the measure lies between neighborhoods. These results are not altogether surprising given the attitudinal nature of the survey questions and the "individualistic" bent of the psychometric history of anomie scales. Our ability to detect neighborhood differences is thus somewhat attenuated, but we are still within the bounds of acceptability (see Duncan & Raudenbush 1997). Model 1 in Table 5 presents just the person-level predictors to reveal differential patterns in the data as we integrate levels of analysis. Note that the coefficient for African

<sup>8</sup> Recall the strong connection of neighborhood percentage black with economic disadvantage. As a further test, we examined whether blacks residing in inner-city neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage approve of fighting more than do blacks in middle-class neighborhoods. They do not. When the disadvantage factor was divided into thirds (low, medium, and high), the percentage of African Americans reporting that fighting among 13-year-olds is extremely wrong was 53, 53, and 55, respectively. Thus, if anything, blacks in high-poverty areas are more intolerant of fighting.

**Table 5.** Hierarchical Linear Model of Legal Cynicism (Neighborhood-Level Reliability = .54): Variance Decomposition and Correlates, PHDCN Survey, 1995

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coefficient	S.E.	t-Ratio	Coefficient	S.E.	t-Ratio
Intercept	1.852	.008	231.25**	1.850	.008	235.23**
<b>Person level</b> ( $N = 7,408$ )						
African American	.060	.017	3.58**	.022	.021	1.01
Latino American	.039	.021	1.88	.027	.023	1.18
Female	-.068	.013	-5.08**	-.069	.013	-5.15**
SES	-.089	.006	-15.58**	-.083	.006	-13.64**
Age	-.002	.000	-3.96**	-.002	.000	-3.62**
Married	-.079	.021	-3.79**	-.079	.021	-3.76**
Separated/divorced	-.050	.023	-2.20*	-.051	.023	-2.20*
Single	.011	.023	0.50	.012	.023	0.52
Own home	-.018	.016	-1.12	-.016	.016	-0.99
Residential moves	.006	.005	1.13	.008	.005	1.45
Years in neighborhood	-.000	.000	-0.36	-.000	.000	-0.63
<b>Neighborhood level</b> ( $N = 342$ )						
Concentrated disadvantage				.047	.011	3.99**
Immigrant concentration				.008	.010	0.76
Residential stability				.013	.008	1.65
	Variance Components			Variance Explained		
				Model 1	Model 2	
Within neighborhoods		.291		5%	5%	
Between neighborhoods		.018		56%	61%	

\*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$ 

Americans is both positive and significant ( $p < .01$ ), meaning that blacks report higher levels of cynicism about legal norms than do whites. The other pattern is that high-SES respondents, females, older respondents, and those either married or separated/divorced report lower levels of estrangement from legal norms.

Model 2 introduces neighborhood context into the picture. Once neighborhood-level differences in concentrated disadvantage are accounted for, the coefficient for blacks is reduced to insignificance. *Note that no other person-level predictors change.* For example, the coefficient for SES remains virtually invariant (-.089 vs. -.083), whereas the coefficient for African Americans is cut by more than 50% (.060 to .022). It seems, then, that minority status is confounded with neighborhood context—blacks appear more cynical because they are disproportionately likely to live in residential environments of concentrated disadvantage. The magnitude of difference in ecological niches of residence by race is in fact striking: 20% of blacks live in neighborhoods with a poverty rate greater than 40%, compared with 3% of Latinos and less than 1% of whites. Even more disturbing, over 50% of blacks in Chicago live in neighborhoods in the upper one-third of the city-wide distribution on the concentrated disadvantage factor, compared with 17% of Latinos and just 2% of whites. Thus African

Americans in particular, relative to *both* whites and Latinos, are much more likely to reside in ecologically distinct environments of concentrated disadvantage. The data in Table 5 suggest that it is precisely this contextual reality of ecologically structured disadvantage—and not race at the person level—that is the driving component of the legal cynicism result. Interestingly, the strong influence of concentrated disadvantage is such that residential instability and immigrant concentration do not matter in predicting legal cynicism.

The concentrated disadvantage result in Table 5 held up when we introduced a multisource measure of the violent crime rate across neighborhoods. It may be, for example, that experience with personal victimization or the perception of rampant crime in the neighborhood breeds hopelessness and cynicism about sociolegal norms of responsibility (Skogan 1990). Because we know that concentrated disadvantage is strongly linked to violent crime (Sampson et al. 1997), we explicitly entertained this rival hypothesis. A measure for violence was created by combining standardized measures of homicide (incidents of police-recorded homicide in the neighborhood, normed by population size),<sup>9</sup> survey-reported personal victimization by violence, and a scale of perceived violent acts committed in the neighborhood. All three constituent measures of violence refer to the year 1995. Although the summary measure of violence was rather highly correlated with concentrated disadvantage ( $r = .66$ ,  $p < .01$ ), the results were invariant to its consideration. The coefficient estimate for concentrated disadvantage remained significant and at the same magnitude (.047,  $t$ -ratio = 3.70), but the estimate for violent crime was close to zero ( $t$ -ratio =  $-.41$ ). This test reveals that concentrated disadvantage is a robust predictor of legal cynicism that adjusts for not only compositional differences in respondents but also rates of violent crime in the neighborhood.<sup>10</sup>

Table 6 presents the HLM results for the final measure tapping satisfaction with the Chicago police. Again we present separate models that reveal the confounding of race and neighborhood. Unlike the analysis for Table 5, however, we retain the models that control for violent crime rates because they reveal significant relationships. This is not surprising. In evaluating attitudes about the police, one would expect that those living in high-crime areas would express less satisfaction with the police than those living in relatively crime-free environments. The more interesting questions from our perspective are: Does the ecological context of concentrated disadvantage predict satisfaction with

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<sup>9</sup> Homicide is generally agreed to reflect smaller biases in police recording than other crimes. Nevertheless, we obtained similar results for total violent crime (per capita incidents known to the police of murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault).

<sup>10</sup> The results for tolerance of deviance and fighting (Tables 3 and 4) also held when the violent crime rate was controlled.

**Table 6.** Hierarchical Linear Model of Satisfaction with the Police  
(Neighborhood-Level Reliability = .77): Variance Decomposition  
and Correlates, PHDCN Survey, 1995

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coefficient	S.E.	tRatio	Coefficient	S.E.	tRatio
Intercept	2.837	.016	179.06**	2.845	.011	254.67**
<b>Person level (N = 7,396)</b>						
African American	-.156	.028	-5.50**	-.016	.029	-0.55
Latino American	-.041	.028	-1.45	-.014	.028	-0.49
Female	-.039	.016	-2.36*	-.037	.016	-2.26*
SES	.047	.008	6.03**	.033	.008	4.20**
Age	.007	.001	9.80**	.007	.001	9.14**
Married	-.043	.026	-1.68	-.050	.025	-1.99*
Separated/divorced	-.028	.029	-0.93	-.026	.029	-0.91
Single	.006	.029	0.21	.007	.029	0.23
Own home	.007	.021	0.35	-.023	.020	-1.14
Residential moves	-.003	.007	-0.41	-.006	.007	-0.87
Years in neighborhood	-.002	.000	-2.78**	-.002	.000	-1.96*
<b>Neighborhood level (N = 342)</b>						
Concentrated disadvantage				-.148	.017	-8.90**
Immigrant concentration				-.028	.013	-2.10*
Residential stability				.002	.012	0.15
Violent crime rate				-.061	.007	-8.30**
	Variance Components			Variance Explained		
				Model 1	Model 2	
Within neighborhoods	.505			1%	2%	
Between neighborhoods	.092			36%	82%	

\* *p* < .05      \*\* *p* < .01

the police independent of the crime rate? And does the combination of concentrated disadvantage and violent crime account for the relationship established in Table 2 whereby African Americans express more negative attitudes than do whites toward the police?

The answers given in Table 6 are fairly clear and affirmative on both counts. First, in the within-neighborhood regression with no structural characteristics (Model 1), African Americans, along with low-income respondents, females, younger persons, and long-term residents, express significantly lower levels of satisfaction with the police. The negative evaluation of criminal justice agents by minority groups conforms to the earlier finding of Hagan and Albonetti (1982). Second, the measure of police satisfaction is very reliable at the neighborhood level (.77), with more than 15% of the variance lying between neighborhoods. To explain this variation, we introduce in Model 2 the three neighborhood characteristics in conjunction with the violent crime rate. As expected, the data show that higher-crime areas emit the least satisfaction with the police. Yet concentrated immigrant neighborhoods and poverty areas show lower levels of police satisfaction regardless of the violent crime rate. To be sure, when the



violent crime rate is dropped from the model, the size of the concentrated disadvantage coefficient increases substantially to  $-.23$  ( $t$ -ratio =  $-13.32$ ). This finding tells us that violent crime is a major part of the story of why residents of concentrated poverty areas rate the police so negatively. Still, violent crime is not the whole story nor is individual race/ethnicity—the contextual effect of disadvantage retains its strong predictive power.

Third, and perhaps most intriguing, introducing the combined influence of concentrated neighborhood disadvantage and violent crime completely accounts for the race/ethnic differences observed in Model 1. Model 2 shows that the coefficient estimate for African Americans is reduced by a factor of 10 ( $-.156$  to  $-.016$ ) and is now insignificant. Again, by contrast, the other sociodemographic correlates of satisfaction barely change when neighborhood context is simultaneously considered. The large change in individual-level coefficients when neighborhood context is simultaneously considered is thus specific to blacks. Apparently, then, it is a neighborhood context more than a race-specific attitude that explains estrangement from the police.

## Conclusion

Direct measurement of cultural values and normative orientations is rare in the social sciences, especially in contextual perspective. Addressing this limitation, we developed three scales tapping dimensions of subcultural tolerance, cynicism about legal norms and police effectiveness. Although the proportion of variance that lies between neighborhoods was relatively small, we were able to measure neighborhood-level differences reliably. The HLM models explained a reasonably large amount of this variance in systematic ways. The results suggested that if there is a subcultural system that tolerates deviance and turns a cynical eye toward the law and agents of criminal justice, it is not linked in a simple way to race. Put simply, there is no “black” subculture of violence. If anything, African Americans are *less* tolerant of crime than their European American counterparts.

At the same time, inner-city “ghetto” areas displayed elevated levels of legal cynicism, dissatisfaction with the police, and tolerance of deviance generally defined. This consistent finding cannot be explained away by compositional differences or by levels of violent crime in the neighborhood, even though these factors clearly matter. In support of contextual accounts of subculture (e.g., Anderson 1990, 1997; Sampson 1997), it thus appears that there is an ecological structuring to normative orientations—“cognitive landscapes” where crime and deviance are more or less expected and institutions of criminal justice are mistrusted. These differences are not large, but they are consistent nonetheless. We would thus offer the take-away message that normative

orientations toward law and deviance are rooted more in experiential differences associated with neighborhood context than in a racially induced subcultural system. Because race and neighborhood are confounded, the tendency in the literature has been, incorrectly in our view, to attribute to African Americans a distinct culture of violence.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps we should not be surprised that those most exposed to the numbing reality of pervasive segregation and economic subjugation become cynical about human nature and legal systems of justice—even as they personally condemn acts of deviance and violence that make life more precarious. Meares and Kahan (1997), proponents of the “New Chicago School” (Lessig 1998) of legal reasoning, examine the relationship between law and norms from a different angle but with similar implications. They argue that law has the potential to be most effective when it operates in concert with social norms of order that informally control behavior, and is sensitive to norms against *disorder* that may give rise to crime. Meares and Kahan encourage policymakers to attend to the unintended consequences of get-tough policies and heavy-handed enforcement practices on a community’s ability to contribute to crime-reduction efforts. As an alternative, they advocate crime-control strategies in disadvantaged African American communities that bolster neighborhood social organization and involve the community in significant ways to show that crime is not tolerated there. Such norm-sensitive strategies have the potential to alleviate some of the legal cynicism that pervades disadvantaged communities, expressed even by residents with little tolerance for the crime that surrounds them. The implications of our findings for rethinking how the police and other agents of criminal justice should approach social norms in inner-city America are thus potentially far-reaching.

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<sup>11</sup> Davis (1997) maintains that “race of interviewer effects” may bias responses to both racial and nonracial survey questions, as respondents adjust their answers according to their perceptions of the “racial expectations” of the interviewer. From this view, non-random measurement error could mask honest reports on issues such as voting behavior, trust in government, or attitudes about violence. Davis, for example, demonstrated the inhibitory effect that white interviewers had on African Americans’ reports of racial consciousness and support for Jesse Jackson as a presidential candidate. An anonymous reviewer pointed out that this type of “race of interviewer effect” could be responsible in part for the lack of support for the subculture hypothesis in previous survey research. In the present study, however, interviewers were quite diverse in race/ethnic background (covering all three major groups) and language. Indeed, many interviews were conducted in Spanish and Polish. Moreover, if the race of interviewer in any way biased blacks’ responses to the tolerance of deviance items (assuming for the sake of argument that interviewers were white), we should have seen bias in the same direction for the legal cynicism and satisfaction with policing questions. Specifically, blacks would report low levels of cynicism and high satisfaction with police. That they clearly did not suggests that race of interviewer cannot explain the findings.

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