

NEIGHBORHOOD DISORDER, COMMUNITY SOCIAL CAPITAL, AND PARENTAL STRESS OF SINGLE MOTHERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

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Research Context

- Parental stress as a predictor of child maltreatment
 - ▣ Parental stress increased child abuse potential (Rodriguez & Green, 1997)
 - ▣ Depressed fathers/mothers were more likely to spank/verbally abuse children (Whipple & Webster-Stratton, 1991)
- Thus, important to understand factors and mechanisms causing parental stress
 - ▣ Neighborhood contextual factors has gained increased research attention

Concepts

- Neighborhood disorder
 - ▣ Definition
 - Perceived lack of order and social control in the community (Skogan, 1990)
 - ▣ Physical disorder indicators
 - Graffiti, noise, vandalism, broken/abandoned buildings, etc.
 - ▣ Social disorder indicators
 - Crime rate, people hanging on street, drug activities and alcohol usage, perception of safety, etc.

Concepts (cont.)

- Community social capital
 - Trust
 - Interpersonal trust and trust on government and institutes
 - Norms
 - Consensus guiding people behavior in a society, such as reciprocal support
 - Networks
 - Networks with relatives, friends, or via voluntary organizations and other groups
 - Measurement
 - Aggregate & individual levels

Empirical Evidence

- Neighborhood disorder and parental stress
 - Both mothers and interviewers' perception of neighborhood safety were linked with maternal depression (Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2002)
 - Perception of neighborhood process (disorder/social capital/social control) was positively associated with parental stress (Guterman et al., 2009)
 - Neighborhood disorder predicted drug users' depression 9 month later (Latkin & Aaron, 2003)

Empirical Evidence (cont.)

- Neighborhood disorder and community social capital
 - ▣ The decline in neighborhood cohesion increased crime and disorder, which in turn reduced cohesion (Markowitz, et al., 2001)
 - ▣ Disorder increased mistrust, which was partially mediated by criminal victimization (Ross, et al., 2002)
 - ▣ Violent crimes (homicide, assault, & robbery) and burglary were associated with low trust levels (Kawachi, et al., 1999)

Empirical Evidence (cont.)

- Community social capital and parental stress
 - ▣ Lower perceptions of emotional support was associated with increased chronic parental stress (Quittner et al., 1990)
 - ▣ Lower social support was associated with mothers' lower role satisfaction and maternal self-esteem and with higher psychological symptoms (Koeske & Koeske, 1990)
 - ▣ Neighborhood social capital (group memberships) was negatively associated with distress among less financially advantageous individuals (Scheffler, et al. 2007)
 - ▣ Adolescent perception of social cohesion was negatively associated with depression (Aneshensel & Sucoff, 1996)

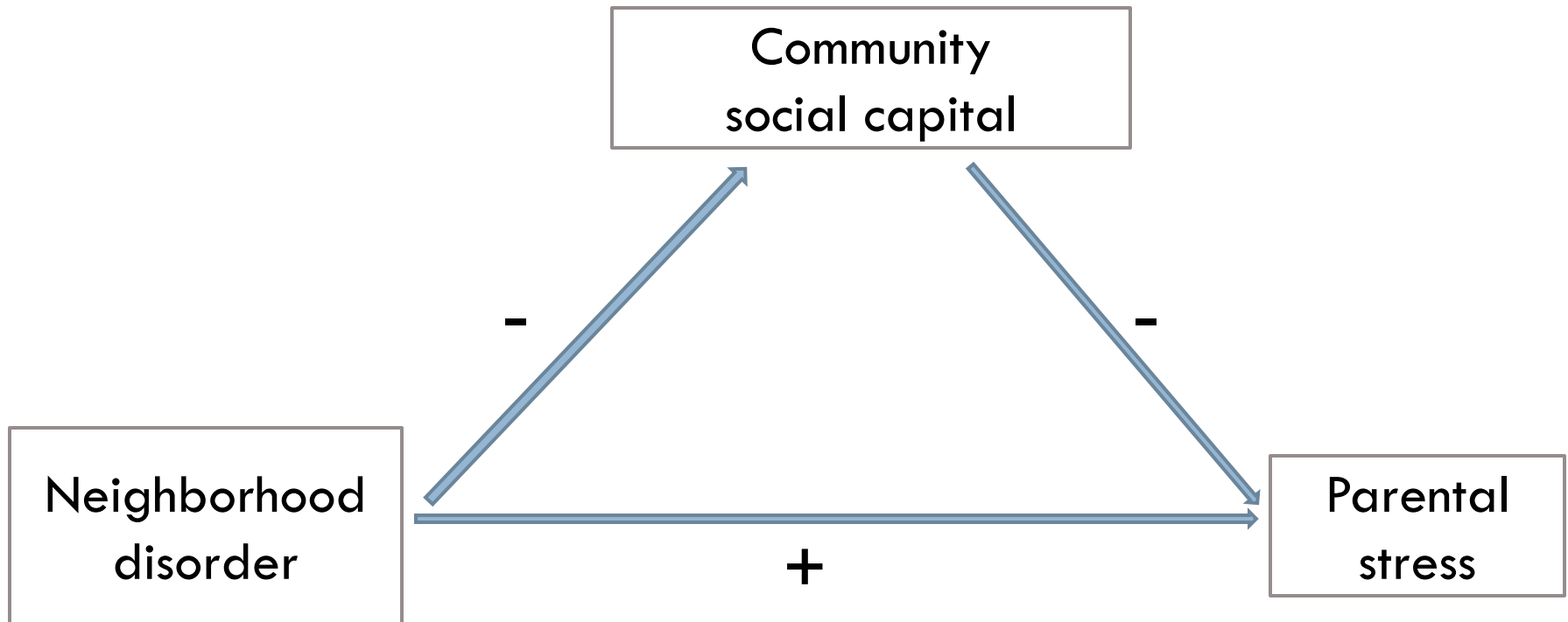
Limitations of Existing Studies

- Limited studies have focused on the effects of neighborhood disorder on single mothers' maternal stress
- Few studies have examined the mediating effect of community social capital on between neighborhood disorder and single mothers' parental stress

Purpose of This Study

- Whether neighborhood disorder affects maternal stress of single mothers with young children, and if so, whether such effect is mediated by community social capital

Hypothesized Model



Data and Methods

- Data & sample (N=1116 single mothers)
 - ▣ Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCW) wave 3 mother core data (2001-2003)
 - ▣ In-home survey of 3-year-old children
- Methods (4 sets of OLS models)
 - ▣ Model 1: disorder – stress
 - ▣ Model 2: disorder – social capital
 - ▣ Model 3: social capital - stress
 - ▣ Model 4: disorder & social capital - stress

Measures – Dependent Variables

- Parental stress (12 items mainly from Early Head Start Study)
 - ▣ Sample items on a 5-point scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree):
 - frequent feelings of not handling things very well
 - giving up more life than expected to meet child's needs
 - feeling trapped by parental responsibilities
 - unable to do new and different things

Measures – Independent Variable

- Neighborhood disorder (8 items from Neighborhood Environment for Children Rating Scales, Coulton, 1995)
 - ▣ Items on a 4-point scale (never to frequently) regarding neigh. prevalence of:
 - drug dealers or users hanging around
 - drunks hanging around
 - unemployed adults/ young adults loitering
 - gang activity
 - misbehaving groups of young children/teens/adults

Measures – Mediator

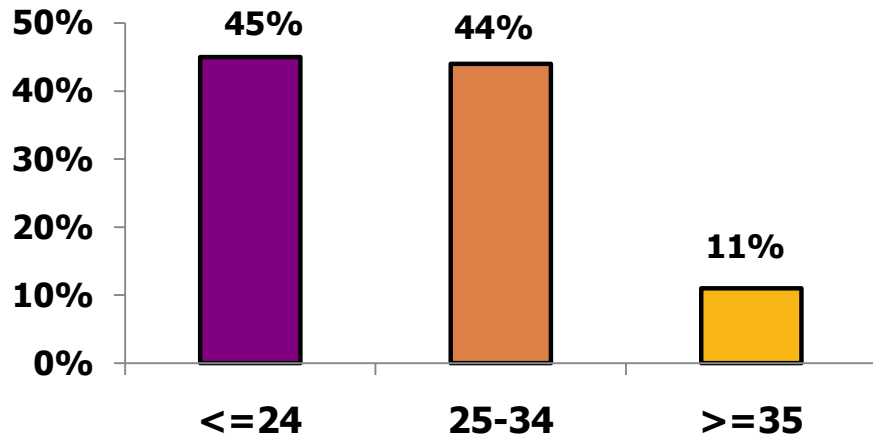
- Community social capital (5 items from Social Cohesion and Trust Scale, Sampson, 1997)
 - ▣ Items on a 5-point scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) asking:
 - neighbor help
 - neighborhood close-knit
 - interpersonal trust
 - people getting along w/ each other
 - people sharing the same value

Control variables

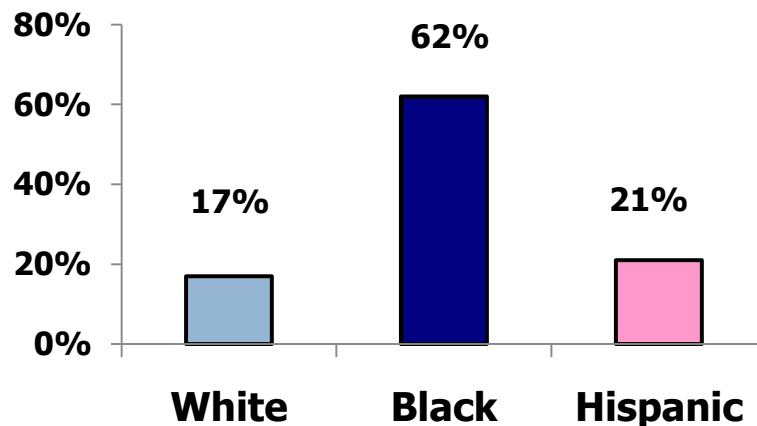
- Mother demographic characteristics: age, race/ethnicity
- Mother SES: education, living arrangement, number of children, family income, employment, FSP and TANF receipt, material hardship
- Mother health and others: maternal alcohol consumption, health status, and stress level
- Child characteristics, gender, and health

Selected Sample Characteristics

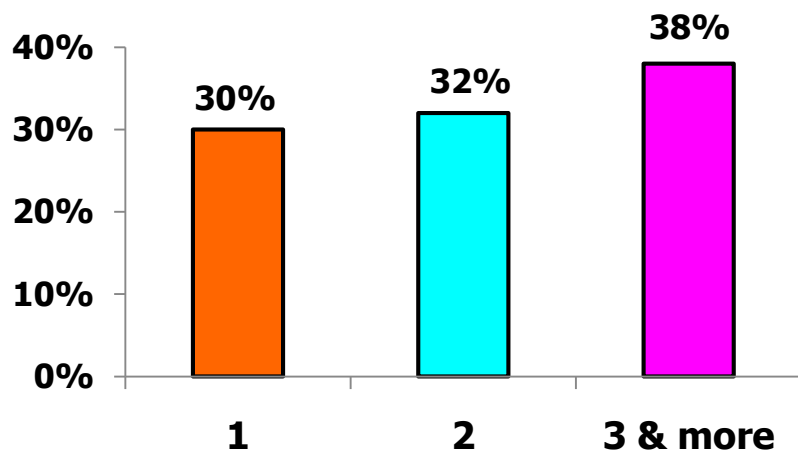
Mom Age



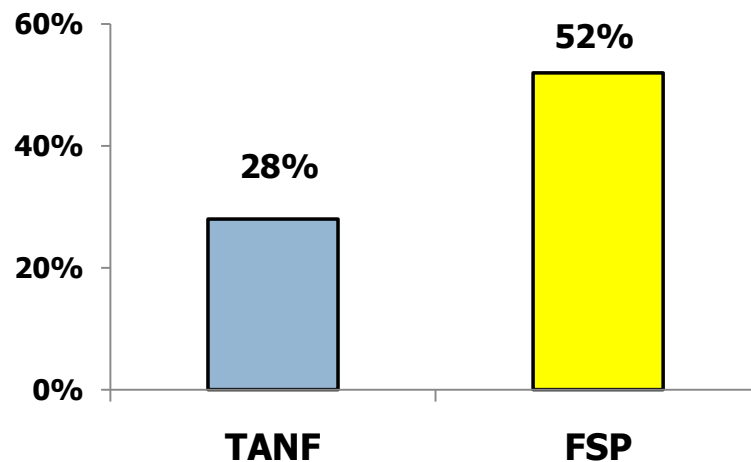
Race/ethnicity



Number of Kids

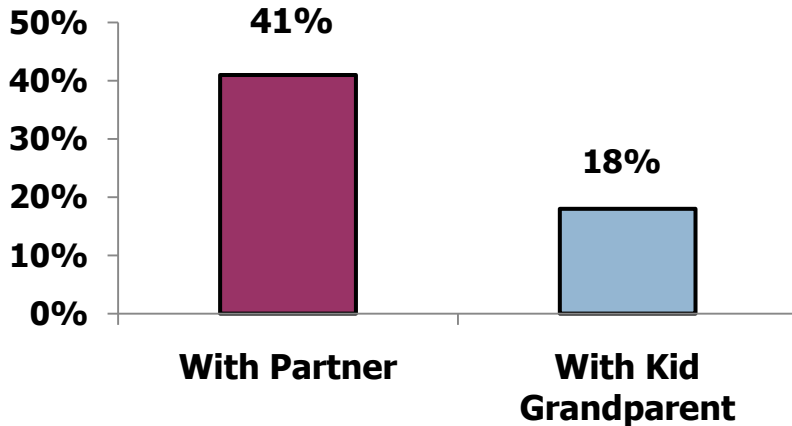


Public Assistance

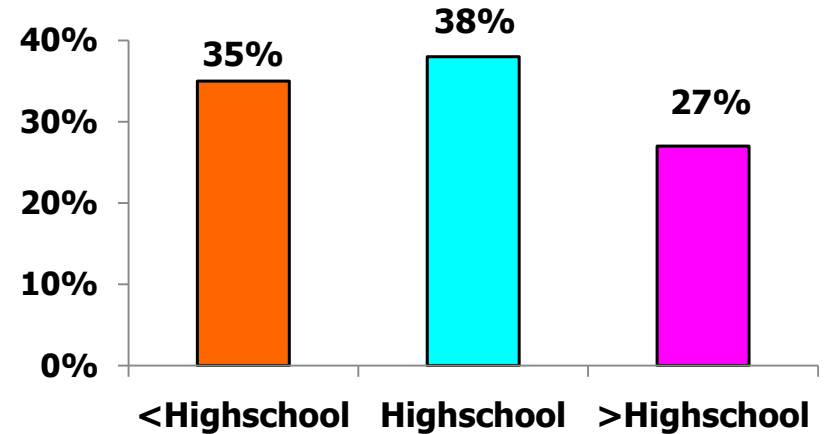


Sample Characteristics (cont.)

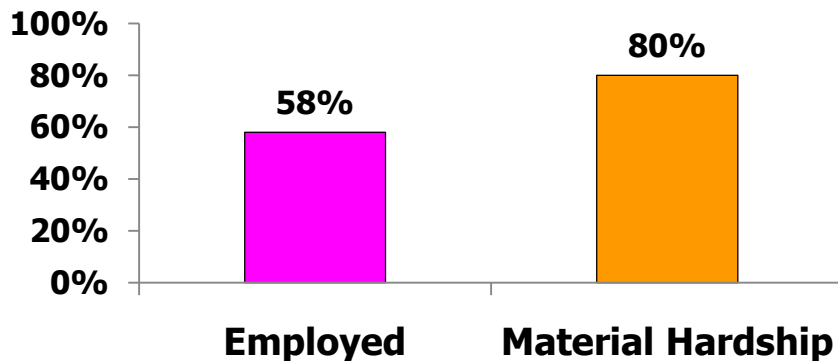
Mom Living Arrangement



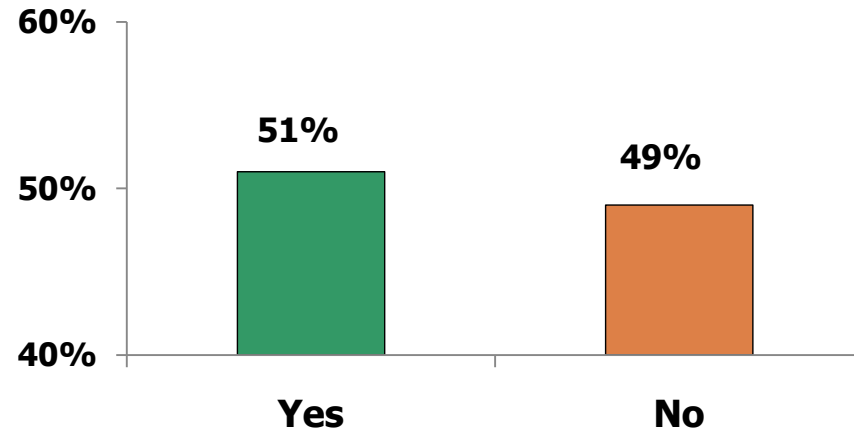
Education



Employment & Hardship



Alcohol Drinks



Multivariate Analysis (n=1116)

Variable	Parental Stress	Community Social Capital	Parental Stress
Comm. Social capital (Mediator)			-0.16***
Neigh. disorder (IV)	0.09**	-0.32***	0.04
Social support	-0.67***	0.35***	-0.61***
High school	-1.31*		-1.36**
Beyond high school	-1.50*		-1.53*
Alcohol use (1/0)	0.95*		0.90*
Material hardship (1/0)	1.84**		1.80**
Child anxiety	0.43***		0.41***
Child withdrawing	0.45***		0.46***
Child aggression	0.18***		0.17***
Child health excellent	-1.63*		-1.68***
Adj. R ²	0.27	0.29	0.28

Findings

- Neighborhood disorder is positively associated with maternal stress
- Neighborhood disorder is negatively associated with community social capital
- Community social capital is negatively associated with maternal stress
- Community social capital mediates the effect of neighborhood disorder on maternal stress

Implications

- Maternal stress intervention programs should take into account neighborhood social contexts
- Efforts for reducing neighborhood disorder
 - ▣ effective law enforcement, increased police presence, surveillance camera installation (Curry, et al., 2008)
 - ▣ Amending “broken window” (Cohen et al., 2003)
- Efforts for strengthening community social capital
 - ▣ Community involvement
 - ▣ Social network development

Limitations and Future Research

□ Limitations

▣ Measurement limitation

- Solely relying on mother report

▣ Model limitation

- Correlation but not causal relationship

□ Future research

▣ Using triangulating measures

▣ Applying longitudinal datasets

▣ Testing other pathways to maternal stress



Thank You!

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