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WORKING TOGETHER: EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL AND
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS ON SCHOOL DELINQUENCY

by

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B.A. May 2015, Old Dominion University
M.A. May 2017, Old Dominion University

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ABSTRACT

WORKING TOGETHER: EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS ON SCHOOL DELINQUENCY

Erica Nicole Bower
Old Dominion University, 2017
Director: Dr. Randy Myers

How do we confront the problem of school delinquency? This study examined the impact of parental and community involvement in schools on school delinquency by employing a cross-sectional secondary data analysis of the 2008 School Survey on Crime and Safety. Bivariate and multivariate analyses demonstrated that parental involvement in schools is significantly associated with and predictive of decreased school delinquency, while community involvement in schools is significantly associated with and predictive of increased school delinquency. Findings suggest that based on school administrator perceptions, stimulating parent involvement in schools and cultivating certain types of community involvement in schools may reduce delinquency occurrence and act as preventative forces against potential delinquency, decreasing reliance on reactive disciplinary policies.

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This thesis is dedicated to the people who often reminded me I could.

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Many people contributed to the successful completion of this thesis. I extend many thanks to my committee members for their guidance in my research and for willfully offering their time and patience in editing my work. The efforts of my director, Dr. Randy Myers, and his willingness to discuss ideas and provide reassurance throughout this process deserve special recognition. I also extend special thanks to Dr. Jeff Toussaint, for his considerable impact in my undergraduate study and my decision to pursue graduate work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“All mankind is tied together; all life is interrelated, and we are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly” (Martin Luther King, Jr. at Oberlin 1965).

Known for his dynamic speeches and calls to nonviolent social action, Martin Luther King, Jr. often emphasized the importance of interrelatedness and cohesion among individuals as crucial to social progress. Similarly, James Coleman has argued that strong relationships among parents, communities, schools, and the children within schools are crucial for children’s positive social development and for the distribution of knowledge to younger generations (1988). While both parental and community involvement with children have been associated with improved educational outcomes (Coleman 1988; Sanders 2001) and cultivating civic responsibility among children (Hoffmann and Xu 2002), such involvement may also improve student behavior and reduce delinquency problems (Stewart 2003; Sheldon and Epstein 2002). Arguably, part of the positive social development of children involves ensuring children refrain from delinquent behavior particularly in school, a place in which U.S. children spend a considerable amount of time between the ages of 5 and 18.

Although “school crime has always been a major concern for educators, researchers, and policymakers,” (Ruddy et al. 2010:1), the increase in U.S. school shooting incidents in the 1990s created fear among students, parents, and school officials, and stimulated intense focus from policymakers on the issue of school violence and student crime (Borum et al. 2010). This fear

and focus has recently been rekindled by fatal school shooting incidents in 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, and in 2013 at Arapahoe High School in Littleton, Colorado, the same town in which the 1999 Columbine High School shootings occurred (USA Today 2014). Although school shooting and student-related death incidents make up small portions of overall student violence experienced in U.S. schools, school related homicides have recently been increasing, and thus may indicate increases in other forms of student delinquency as well. Between 1996 and 2006 in the U.S., schools experienced an average of 21 student deaths per year (Borum et al. 2010). Between the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 school years, school-associated student deaths steadily rose, from 31 incidents in the 2010-2011 year (Robers et al. 2014), to 45 incidents in the 2011-2012 year (Robers et al. 2015), and 53 incidents in the 2012-2013 year (Zhang, Musu-Gillette, and Oudekerk 2016). In the 2013-2014 school year, schools reported 1.3 million disciplinary incidents regarding student delinquency issues including alcohol and drug use, weapons possession, or violent outbursts, as well as over 850,000 non-deadly victimizations ranging from theft, to serious violence such as rape, robbery, or aggravated assault (Zhang et al. 2016).

Delinquency and the increase of violence in schools present an additional challenge: what can be done? Central issues surrounding the problem of school delinquency include preventing undesirable behavior among students, responding to problem behavior, ensuring the safety of students, teachers, and school administrators, and maintaining an effective learning environment. Approaches to curbing delinquency and thus improving behavior in schools have been varied, ranging in nature from reactionary policies to punish student misbehavior, to preventative programs that aim to cultivate prosocial student behavior and address the needs of students at risk of delinquent behavior (Adams 2000; Gottfredson et al. 2004). Between the 1960s and

1980s, U.S. schools increasingly began to rely on exclusionary discipline and zero tolerance policies, reactionary methods of addressing student delinquency through detention, suspension, or expulsion, with a get-tough approach for even first offenses, similar to mandatory minimum sentencing (Adams 2000). Although exclusionary discipline is still a popular method of responding to student delinquency, delinquency prevention programs have been on the rise in U.S. schools as of the early 2000s (Gottfredson et al. 2004). Prevention programs aim to curb delinquent tendencies and cultivate positive student behavior, before delinquent tendencies become delinquent acts; some of these programs or preventative actions include counseling or social work interventions, behavior modification, mentoring or tutoring programs, recreational or enrichment activities, and utilizing delinquency prevention curriculum or training (Gottfredson et al. 2004). Additional prevention programs have cultivated parent and community partnerships with schools to stimulate student involvement with prosocial others in efforts to improve student behavior and sway students from delinquency (Sheldon and Epstein 2002; Sanders 2001). Establishing a better understanding of whether parent-school and community-school partnerships and involvement play a role in preventing delinquency in schools, a problem that appears to be increasing despite the continued adherence of U.S. schools to reactionary discipline, is thus the impetus for this study.

Research literature examining the effects of parental and community involvement in schools on school delinquency suggest that schools perceive partnership practices with parents and communities as effective for improving student behavior (Sheldon and Epstein 2002). Additionally, partnerships that stimulate increased parent-school and community-school involvement are associated with decreased delinquency (Stewart 2003) and disciplinary action taken by schools in addressing poor behavior (Sheldon and Epstein 2002). Increasing

opportunities for parents and community members to get involved in schools and cultivate strong relationships with students, teachers, and administrators may therefore work to curb delinquent tendencies among students, improve student behavior, and allow schools to more easily maintain discipline and school safety.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assertion that, “[w]hatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly” (1965), highlights the potential that parental and community involvement in schools have to improve student behavior and decrease delinquency, as part of a larger effort to contribute to the safety and well-being of all citizens. The prevention of delinquency in schools directly through parental and community involvement in schools may indirectly affect all other members of society, by ensuring that the next generation of adults understands the importance of behaving in accordance with societal norms and not normalizing delinquency and violence. This, in turn, would increase the public safety of all citizens. Therefore, strong relationships between parents, communities, and schools, may protect individuals outside of U.S. public school walls by preventing delinquency and violence among the students within.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine how parental and community involvement in U.S. public schools influences school delinquency. Specifically, this study will examine how the strength of the relationships between parents and schools, and communities and schools, conceptualized as social capital, affect schools’ goals of reducing delinquent student behavior.

Two central research questions guide this study:

1. Does the strength of the relationship between parents and schools via parental involvement influence school delinquency?

2. Does the strength of the relationship between communities and schools via community involvement influence school delinquency?

Social capital theory, where social capital is conceptualized as the relationships between actors that facilitate the attainment of a certain goal, informs the analysis of this study (Coleman 1988). Specifically, this study will examine whether increased parental and community involvement in schools, allowing for stronger parent-school and community-school relationships, facilitates the reduction of misbehavior in schools.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study fills a void in the literature. Prior studies examining parental and/or community involvement in schools and their effects on delinquency have utilized small, non-representative samples often including only elementary or middle schools, as well as student self-report surveys to measure delinquent behavior. Additionally, prior studies have often sampled schools based on their membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools, a program that facilitates schools in increasing or improving parent-school and community-school partnerships (Johns Hopkins University), where membership requires time and resources that many public schools do not have. This study utilizes a nationally representative sample of public elementary, middle, high, and combined schools of varying grades, where the sample includes indicators of parental involvement, community involvement, and delinquency from the perspective of schools. Therefore, this study fills a void in the literature by examining how U.S. public schools perceive the degree to which parents and community agencies are involved in schools, as well as how schools perceive what constitutes delinquency and keep track of delinquent incidents. Utilizing a representative sample of schools not solely based on their

membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools may account for problems of generalizing findings to all U.S. public schools, which has limited prior studies; by using a representative sample, this study may provide generalizable insight regarding whether increased parental and/or community involvement in schools are critical predictors of reducing student delinquency.

This study has clear and significant policy implications. Furthermore, examining data collected from school officials, who are often on the front lines of responding to student delinquency, highlights the need for schools' active involvement with policymakers in the creation and implementation of policies aimed at maintaining student discipline. Just as strong parent-school and community-school relationships may reduce student delinquency, strong relationships between school officials and educational policymakers may allow for increased communication between schools and legislatures, thus giving schools the opportunity to communicate concerns and ideas regarding policies or programs aimed at improving student behavior. Parental and community involvement, if predictive of decreased student delinquency among a nationally representative sample of U.S. public schools, may thus create a national platform for public schools to request resources and assistance from policymakers. Such resources may assist schools in creating and strengthening parent-school and community-school relationships in the pursuit of improved behavior within school walls.

The following chapter will provide a brief overview of the theoretical framework that informed the current study, as well as empirical studies that have examined the effects of parental and community involvement in schools on delinquency.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses research examining factors related to delinquency in U.S. public schools. The chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical framework guiding the current study, Coleman's formulation of social capital theory. This section also discusses additional theoretical factors relating to delinquency, including social control. A second section reviews research addressing factors related to delinquency measurement, school climate, parental and community characteristics, parental and community involvement. The review concludes with a summary and critique of the related literature and a prelude to the next chapter.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Coleman's Formulation of Social Capital Theory

Coleman (1988) conceptualized social capital as the relationships that exist between and among actors, whether individual or group actors such as organizations. Coleman's conceptualization of social capital describes social capital as being tied to social structures, and which assists the goal-oriented actions of actors within social structures. Coleman (1988) additionally described social capital as being the least tangible form of capital due to its conceptualization as the relationships that exist between persons or groups, noting its difference from physical capital, which is "embodied in observable material form" (p. S100) and from human capital, which is "embodied by the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual" (p. S100). Tzanakis (2013) described Coleman's definition of social capital as being purposive, where actors utilizing social capital "can achieve particular ends that would have been

impossible without it” (p. 4), and additionally noted that social capital according to Coleman works to bond actors to each other, and through that bonding further integrates actors to society.

Coleman also discussed the importance of social capital within families and communities, primarily in relation to positive outcomes for children. Although Coleman noted the importance of human capital for children’s outcomes, whereby parents pass on their knowledge and skills to their children, he emphasized that the amount of human capital present in families may mean nothing for children’s outcomes unless the relationships between parents and children are strong. Therefore, if parents are not present and attentive to their children, the level of social capital among families is low, and thus cannot facilitate the passing on of human capital to children, essentially rendering the human capital of parents irrelevant (Coleman 1988). The knowledge and skills children have the opportunity to learn from their families, therefore, is dependent on the strength of the relationships (or social capital) that children have with their families. Furthermore, Coleman argued that social capital among parents’ relationships with communities and institutions within communities are additionally important for the positive development of children. High levels of social capital among parents, communities, and institutions in communities such as schools are therefore important for the positive development of children.

If social capital aids actors within the social structure to achieve certain goals, strong relationships between parents, communities, and schools may therefore assist in a common goal of many U.S. schools, which is to reduce delinquency. Strong relationships between parents and schools through increased parental involvement in school activities may allow parents opportunities to pass on their knowledge and skills to children, such as information about how to act appropriately and steer clear from delinquent behavior while in school. Strong relationships between communities and schools through participation by community agencies in school

activities may also provide opportunities for children to learn from other actors about the importance of good behavior and even form relationships of their own with such community groups. Overall, the strength of the social capital created by forming partnerships between parents, communities, and schools not only has the ability to strengthen students' relationships with each of those entities, but also may help schools achieve their goals of reducing delinquency and improving discipline management. Therefore, the level of social capital between parents and schools and communities and schools via parental and community involvement may affect school-level delinquency.

Applications of social capital theory

Prior studies have tested Coleman's social capital theory in relation to a wide array of subjects, including academic achievement (Morgan and Sørensen 1999), career success (Seibert, Kraimer, and Liden 2001), economic growth (Hoyman and Faricy 2009), migration (Palloni et al. 2001), and delinquency (Wright, Cullen, and Miller 2001). In relation to such subjects, social capital theory is tested through examination of the strength of social networks and relationships with others. In relation to delinquency, Wright et al. (2001) note Coleman's assertion that "the family [is] a key institution through which social capital is transmitted" (p. 2), specifically through the investment of time and effort by parents in children's lives, close relationships between parents and children, and specific criteria regarding acceptable and unacceptable behavior delineated by parents. Effects of high levels of social capital among families may therefore include strong parent-child attachment, transmission of prosocial beliefs from parents to children, and children's avoidance of delinquent peers; all of which are protective factors that work to reduce children's involvement in delinquent behavior (Wright et al. 2001).

Although Wright and colleagues (2001) test social capital theory in relation to delinquency, they do not specify the context in which the delinquency occurs, such as at home, in the community, or in school. Dufur, Parcel, and Troutman (2008), however, highlight important questions concerning social capital, particularly regarding the context in which the cultivation of social capital occurs. While focusing on the effects of social capital on academic achievement, the authors conclude that social capital in the family context and in the school context are separate phenomena, however, social capital in both contexts promotes positive academic outcomes for children. Despite Dufur et al.'s argument that family and school social capital are distinct, there is a possibility that social capital in each context may overlap, if adhering to Coleman's conceptualization of social capital as the relationships between actors that facilitate the attainment of certain goals. Parents and families may forge strong social capital with schools through increased involvement in school activities, with one important goal in mind among both parents and schools being the reduction of delinquency at the school level. The same may apply for community members or agencies by cultivating strong relationships with schools aimed at reducing delinquency at the school level. The effects of strong social capital among parents and schools, and communities and schools, may thus not only affect delinquency at the school level, but also have carryover effects of reducing delinquency in the family and community contexts.

Literature reviewed for this current study utilized Coleman's social capital theory as at least a partial guiding framework for their research. In studying the effects of school, neighborhood, and family social controls on student suspension and arrest, Kirk (2009) discussed social capital theory in relation to collective efficacy and teacher-parent trust. Citing Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) in their definition of collective efficacy, which is the ability to

convert social networks within neighborhoods to achieve collective goals, Kirk discussed Coleman's note that while social capital may facilitate certain actions or goals, it does not necessarily ensure that such goals will be realized or actions will take place. Thus, Kirk argues that social capital facilitates the realization of goals within a group of actors as long as collective efficacy occurs. Regarding teacher-parent trust, Kirk (2009) argues that "enforcement of...social norms for appropriate behavior is more likely" (p. 487) when the relationships between teachers, school administrators, and parents are strong and when all actors are in agreement on what those norms for appropriate behavior are. Therefore, high levels of social capital among parents and schools creates opportunities for both parties to achieve a consensus regarding how children should behave at school, allowing for the recognition of what constitutes delinquency and furthering efforts to reduce it.

Although not explicitly citing social capital theory in their research, some studies regarding the effects of parental and community involvement in schools on delinquency include measures of social capital to some extent. For example, Sheldon and Epstein (2002) measured schools' use of partnership practices as an independent variable in their study examining the effects of partnership formation between families, communities, and schools on school discipline. This variable included reports of whether schools implemented various family or community partnership programs to improve the behavior of students. Some of these practices included efforts to involve parents and community members to improve school safety and discipline, as well as holding parent workshops regarding "school goals and expectations for student behavior, discipline, dress, and/or conduct" (Sheldon and Epstein 2002:13). This measurement of partnership practices highlights schools' efforts to cultivate social capital and strengthen the relationships between parents, community members, and schools, in the pursuit of

improving student behavior and reducing delinquency. Stewart (2003) also utilized a measure of parent-school involvement in his study of school misbehavior, measuring the extent to which parents participated in the experiences of children at school. Utilizing such a measure not only allows for the examination of how relationships forged between parents and schools affects the misbehavior of children at school, but also may provide insight to how cultivation of parent-school social capital affects parent-child social capital. In their study of teacher-reported aggression and delinquency of students, Beyers et al. (2003) measured parental involvement of children outside of school, and included in that measure aspects of parental supervision and monitoring. Despite not measuring social capital within the school context, the authors' use of these measurements highlight Coleman's assertions that cultivating high levels of social capital among actors has the potential to influence outcomes for children, whether academic or behavioral.

Social Control

While strong relationships between parents, communities, and schools may work toward reducing delinquency, the relationships forged by such actors may also act as agents of social control. According to Sampson (1986), social control "refers to the regulation of human behavior" (p. 276). Particularly, social control as a regulator of human behavior may contribute to increased conformity (Janowitz 1975) to societal norms and values, such as refraining from delinquent behavior. When social control is strong within schools, therefore, the behavior of the students within may be properly regulated and strong conformity to school norms and values may emerge, thus resulting in decreases in delinquency. Stronger relationships between parents

and schools, and communities and schools may contribute to increasing the strength of social control among schools in the pursuit of reducing delinquency.

Social control may take two forms: informal and formal. Informal social control occurs through the actions of individuals working to preserve acceptable behavior or punish poor behavior; through informal actions such as giving individuals disapproving stares or chasing unwanted individuals out of communities (Sampson 1986). Examples of informal control may include individuals watching their neighbors' houses and collecting mail while their neighbors are away, community members questioning the motives of strangers not often seen within communities, individuals breaking up fights or other disturbances within their communities, and supervising youth within communities to ensure safety or adherence to community norms (Sampson 1986). While community members play significant roles as agents of informal social control in preserving conformity to community norms, parents may be important agents of informal social control as well, particularly regarding delinquency (Sampson 1986). The ability of parents to supervise children's activities and their awareness of children's whereabouts allows them to have some degree of informal social control over children in order to reward positive behavior or punish delinquency. This may increase conformity to societal norms and values. Increased involvement by parents and community members in schools may therefore provide more opportunities for such individuals to exercise informal social control on children while in school, and thus contribute to a school's ability to regulate student behavior and decrease delinquency.

Studies have utilized and measured informal social control in numerous ways. For instance, Kirk's (2009) study of student suspension and arrest was guided by Sampson and Laub's (1993) ideas regarding informal social control, arguing that informal social controls may

mediate certain structural effects such as neighborhood poverty on youth behavior. According to Kirk, Sampson and Laub argue that although certain structural effects such as poverty may negatively affect youth behavior by increasing the likelihood of delinquency occurrence, certain informal social controls may mitigate the negative effects of poverty. Informal social control has been measured in both neighborhood and school contexts as neighborhood and school collective efficacy; these measures indicate levels of cohesion and trust among actors in each context, as well as shared expectations regarding social control in each context (Kirk 2009). High levels of collective efficacy in schools and neighborhoods therefore have the potential to exert stronger informal social controls on the actors in each context, as long as most or all actors in those contexts understand societal norms and plan to enforce such norms regarding proper behavior. An additional measure of informal social control within the community context includes community norms against alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, measured in Armstrong, Armstrong, and Katz's (2015) study examining the effects of community characteristics on school misconduct. This measure was a scale indicating the extent to which student respondents perceived that their neighbors believed it was wrong to consume alcohol, smoke cigarettes, or use marijuana. Higher scores on this measure indicated higher levels of informal social control within communities, at least from the perspective of students living within those communities. Communities perceived to be more disapproving of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use might therefore exert higher levels of informal social control on community residents, thus potentially having more power to sway residents toward prosocial behavior.

Informal social control has also been measured as parental behavior and involvement in children's lives. Parents' involvement in children's activities in school (Stewart 2003), as well as parental supervision of, monitoring of, and involvement in children's activities outside of school

(Beyers et al. 2003) may all serve as measures of informal social control, indicating the extent to which parents are active in the regulation of their children's behavior either in or outside of school. Indicators of these measures include: parents' reports of how often their children are unsupervised; parents' awareness of the activities their children are involved with and the people present during those activities; parents' beliefs about monitoring their children's activities; youth perceptions of how much parents participate in their lives outside of school (Beyers et al. 2003; Hoffmann and Xu 2002) and youth perceptions of the extent to which parents are involved in activities at school (Stewart 2003). The ability of parents to be active, involved in, and aware of their children's activities and behavior therefore provides parents more opportunities to wage informal sanctions such as disapproval, grounding, or taking away privileges in the event that children behave delinquently (or reward good behavior), in efforts to regulate children's behavior and promote conformity.

Formal social control involves official sanctions for breaking written rules regarding behavior such as laws or formal guidelines of an organization or institution, in which individuals holding a certain official capacity in society, such as police officers or judges, enforce these laws or guidelines (Sampson 1986). Formal social control thus contributes to the regulation of human behavior by setting guidelines for behavior that apply to all individuals, and wage official punishment for not adhering to such guidelines including arrest, conviction, or expulsion from a certain institution. Formal social control differs from informal social control not only because formal control involves official sanctions for breaking rules or laws, but also because it is not specific to communities or smaller groups of individuals. Norms and values may differ between communities, resulting in differences in how conformity is achieved, but official rules and laws often apply regardless of community or group beliefs; formal social control thus affects a wider

range of individuals due to the general nature of rules and laws. Formal social control also allows for types of interaction to achieve conformity not applicable to laypeople, due to the authority of individuals allowed to enforce rules and laws contributing to formal social control. For example, police officers have the authority to stop, question, detain, or arrest individuals they feel have broken a law (Sampson 1986); laypeople within communities do not have that authority without risking breaking the law themselves.

Formal social control applies to school-level delinquency in that agents in official capacities have the ability to regulate the behavior of schoolchildren in accordance with the law and official school rules. For example, police officers have the ability to arrest students that break the law while in school, and use their authority to assist school administrators in enforcing official school rules and regulating delinquent students. Additionally, schools that partner with mental health, juvenile justice, or social service agencies, as well as other law enforcement agencies allow official members of such agencies to not only protect the wellbeing of students, but officially intervene in accordance with the law or official school rules. Increasing the involvement of such formal community agencies in schools may therefore increase opportunities for the enforcement of formal social control not only by officially punishing delinquency, but also by sending a message to other students that partaking in delinquency may result in official sanctions. On a more positive note, increasing involvement between official agencies and schools may allow for more positive interactions among students and actors from such agencies, strengthen community cohesion, and act as preventative factors for delinquency through the cultivation of strong relationships between schoolchildren and officials in their communities. Removing the stigma that formal community agents only punish poor behavior may play a key role in reducing school-level delinquency by increasing trust between students and the actors of

these formal agencies and allowing students to develop a rapport with such agents; a rapport students may not want to risk by partaking in delinquent behavior.

Factors affecting the accumulation of social capital and application of social control

Although social capital and social control may facilitate the reduction of delinquency among youth, not every parent or community is able, or sometimes willing, to cultivate the relationships necessary for the accumulation of social capital and application of social control. Larger social and economic forces experienced at both the individual and group levels may impede the ability of parents and communities to involve themselves with schools and the lives of children; some of these forces include poverty, joblessness, lack of education, crime and disorder (Armstrong et al. 2015; Kirk 2009), residential crowding (Gottfredson et al. 2005), and family structure (i.e. single parent homes) (Beyers et al. 2003).

Lareau (2003) highlights how social class affects the ways in which parents interact with children as well as other institutions such as schools, arguing that although lower class parents desire the best for their children, “[f]ormidable economic constraints make it a major life task for these parents to put food on the table, arrange for housing, negotiate unsafe neighborhoods, take children to the doctor (often waiting for city buses that do not come)...and have [children] ready for school” (p. 2). In relation to school involvement, for example, a single parent living in an economically disadvantaged area and working multiple jobs may not have the time or ability to do more than ensure their children make it to school, let alone attend standard school activities such as parent-teacher conferences or other activities aimed to stimulate parent-school involvement. The constraints that many parents face due to economic hardships significantly limit the time available to remain involved in children’s lives both in and out of school; thus,

these parents may have weaker relationships with children and the institutions that serve children. Weak relationships between parents, children, and schools may therefore result in parents being unaware of certain situations concerning their children at school, such as children not completing homework or being involved in delinquency (Lareau 2003), thus preventing parents from being able to regulate such situations.

Economic and social factors may also impede the ability of whole communities to forge strong relationships not only with each other, but also with institutions within communities including schools. Unsafe communities plagued by crime and disorder may be characterized by the inability of community members to trust one another or feel bonded to one another, thus significantly limiting levels of social capital cultivated among community residents and weakening informal social controls. Community residents may have trouble forging relationships with one another when some, according to Elijah Anderson, “live in neighborhoods where it can be dangerous to look people in the eye too long” (Lareau 2003:5). In communities where social interaction among residents is strained, community members may find it increasingly difficult to collaborate or form partnerships with other members or larger institutions.

Schools have additionally identified numerous challenges to forming partnerships with communities (Sanders 2001). In her study of the role of the community in partnership formation among schools, families, and communities, Sanders found that the most often reported challenge according to schools was stimulating participation in school-community activities; many schools found it difficult to convince community members to volunteer in school programs or involve themselves in any way with other school-community partnership programs. Other schools reported difficulties in forging partnerships with communities because schools “were located in resource-poor communities with few businesses and other community-based organizations”

(Sanders 2001:27). In communities experiencing economic decline, there may simply be few community agencies available or willing to partner with schools. The social and economic challenges that many communities face may therefore inhibit schools' efforts to forge school-community relationships, cultivate social capital with community members, and utilize communities as agents of informal social control to assist in the regulation of student behavior.

While social and economic factors may limit the ability of parents or community members to become involved with schools, some may actively choose not to be involved for a variety of reasons. In families or communities where English is not the first language spoken, some may choose not to become involved in school activities (despite schools' efforts) due to the difficulties of navigating language barriers (Sanders 2001). Other parents or community members may be distrusting of or disillusioned with schools' efforts to stimulate involvement due to poor past experiences with larger institutions. Some may not feel welcome within schools or believe that they are not welcome by children, teachers, or other school personnel (Davis 2000). Additionally, working class and poor families often experience strained interactions with larger social institutions, mainly because they have been unable to get such institutions to work in their favor (Lareau 2003). Strained interactions with larger institutions may therefore result in lower class families and communities distancing themselves from institutions and being at odds with their ideals. For instance, Lareau explains how some lower class parents find school rules unreasonable, dislike schools in general, and communicate those feelings to their children. When parents feel powerless to make institutions such as schools work in their favor (or their children's favor), many may choose to distance themselves and cut off involvement, with the rationale that involving themselves would make little difference. These choices may ultimately create

resistance that schools cannot overcome, despite their best efforts to involve parents and other community members in school activities to improve children's outcomes.

Although parental and community involvement in schools may increase social capital and strengthen social control, creating the possibility of regulating student behavior and reducing overall delinquency; numerous economic and social forces may impede such involvement for a variety of reasons. However, parental and community involvement in schools still occurs at various levels, and research identifies such involvement as a factor influencing delinquency in schools.

MEASURING SCHOOL DELINQUENCY

Studies examining delinquency in schools measure delinquency in a variety of ways. Some utilize measures of actual delinquent behavior in school, while others utilize measures of school reactions to delinquent behavior. School misconduct, the dependent variable in Armstrong et al.'s (2015) study of the effects of community characteristics on delinquency, was measured by asking student respondents how often in the past year they were drunk or high at school, participated in fights at school, or carried a handgun to school. Gottfredson and colleagues (2005) not only utilized self-report measures of student delinquency at school, but self-report measures of student and teacher victimization at school as well. Kirk (2009), however, measured delinquency by asking students whether they had been suspended from school at some point during the school year, while others measured delinquency in part by asking school officials to estimate the percentages of students that received different types of school disciplinary actions throughout the school year (Gottfredson et al. 2005).

Other studies utilize a combination of behavior and reaction in their measurement of delinquency in schools. For example, Stewart (2003) conceptualized school delinquency as school misbehavior, a scale of four indicators measuring how often students got into physical fights at school, got in trouble for not following school rules, received in school suspension, or were suspended or put on probation from school. Some scholars also measure delinquency as perceptions of delinquent behavior in schools. For instance, Sheldon and Epstein (2002) conceptualized delinquent behavior by surveying school officials about how problematic they believed various delinquent behaviors were in their schools, and whether those behaviors became more problematic, remained the same, or improved over the school year. Sheldon and Epstein additionally utilized schools' perceptions of disciplinary action to conceptualize delinquency, where school officials were asked to estimate the percentage of students that received certain disciplinary action throughout one school year. Beyers et al. (2003) measured teachers' perceptions of the extent of aggressive and delinquent behaviors they observed among their students.

The numerous ways in which delinquency in schools can be measured may present issues regarding the behavior and extent of behavior that is actually being measured. For example, minority students in U.S. public schools are disproportionately suspended when compared to White students, and often for minor offenses (Mendez and Knoff 2003; Welch and Payne 2010). This suggests that when determining delinquency levels based solely on suspensions, schools with high minority populations may appear exceptionally delinquent, regardless of the actual behavior of students. Thus, measuring delinquency as schools' reactions to misbehavior via disciplinary action may represent higher (or lower) delinquency levels than if students were asked to self-report their behavior, based on the racial makeup of schools.

Despite the issues that arise when utilizing schools' responses to misconduct as delinquency measures, issues arise when utilizing self-report measures as well. According to Donaldson and Grant-Vallone (2002), "research participants want to respond in a way that makes them look as good as possible" (p. 247), and often under-report participation in behavior they believe others (i.e. researchers) consider inappropriate or problematic. When considering delinquency research, therefore, there is a possibility that some students may underreport their participation in delinquent, and especially criminal behavior. Problems utilizing perceptions of victimization and delinquency may also contribute to biased delinquency measures, considering that some students may wrongly perceive themselves as victims of delinquency, and that school officials may perceive delinquency in their schools to be more of a problem than it actually is, based on student behavior. Additionally, measuring delinquency in schools as a combination of student participation in misbehavior and schools' responses via disciplinary action may create problems in determining which factors of the delinquency variable (action vs. reaction) are affected by other conditions.

Regardless of the different ways in which school delinquency is measured, prior research is generally in agreement regarding the factors that either contribute to or reduce delinquency. The following section will review empirical studies that have cited numerous factors influencing school delinquency, including school climate, parent and community characteristics, and parental and community involvement.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Because the current study is examining delinquency within the school context, it is appropriate to identify characteristics of school climates that influence delinquency. The literature regarding the relationship between school climate and delinquency reveals that positive school climates characterized by: strong student commitments (Jenkins 1995) and attachments to school; strong belief in school rules; student association with positive peers (Stewart 2003); fairness and clarity of school rules (Gottfredson et al. 2005); increased student involvement in school activities; high student perceptions of school safety (Hoffmann and Xu 2002); and cohesion, trust, and shared expectations among teachers, students, and administrators (Kirk 2009; Stewart 2003) are not only associated with decreases in actual delinquent behavior, but responses to delinquent behavior as well.

Stewart (2003), citing work by Anderson (1982), Welsh et al. (1999), and Wilcox and Clayton (2001), described school climate as a broad construct made up of different aspects, including school culture, organization, social environment, and physical environment or location, characteristics that may either contribute to or decrease school delinquency. Stewart also noted that delinquency or misbehavior at school does not always describe illegal activity, but disruptive behaviors that may negatively affect the school environment or which would warrant punishment. Despite this note regarding delinquency, only part of the study's dependent variable (school misbehavior) measured actual student behavior. School misbehavior, a scale of four indicators measuring how often students got into physical fights at school, got in trouble for not following rules, received in school suspension, or were suspended or put on probation from school, therefore mainly measured schools' responses to delinquent behavior at school.

In Stewart's study, school climate variables that were significantly associated with decreases in school misbehavior upon correlational analyses included students' school attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief in school rules, as well as association with positive peers and school cohesion. Jenkins (1995) also found school commitment to be significantly and negatively associated with three constructs of school delinquency, including school crime, school misconduct, and school nonattendance. Attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief, which Stewart conceptualized using Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory, measured the degree to which students cared about or felt positively about school (attachment); were involved in school activities (involvement); believed in the importance of education (commitment); and agreed with school rules (belief). Association with positive peers measured students' perceptions of the importance of participating in positive school behaviors with friends, while school cohesion measured the degree to which students, teachers, and school administrators trust one another, share expectations, and interact positively with one another.

Although correlational analyses indicated significant negative associations among each of the social control variables and school misbehavior, multilevel regression analyses indicated that all of the social control variables except school involvement were significantly and negatively associated with school misbehavior, where a one unit increase in school attachment and belief in school rules were associated with 19% and 33% decreases in school misbehavior, respectively (Stewart 2003). This finding indicated that while holding all other variables constant, school involvement did not have a significant relationship with school misbehavior. Multilevel analyses revealed that association with positive peers (one unit increase) predicted a 35% decrease in school misbehavior, however, did not reveal a significant relationship between school cohesion and school misbehavior (Stewart 2003).

Stewart additionally found that school size (schools with more students), school poverty (higher proportions of students receiving free or reduced price lunches), school location (urban over nonurban), and school social problems (higher levels of serious behavioral problems among students) were significantly and positively related to school misbehavior. Additional multilevel analyses indicated that a one unit increase in school size and schools in urban areas (over nonurban) were both associated with increases in school misbehavior (21% and 19% respectively). Although correlational analyses demonstrated significant relationships between school misbehavior and school poverty and social problems, multilevel regression analyses indicated otherwise (Stewart 2003). Overall, these findings suggest that school climates characterized by strong student bonds and positive associations with others (peers, teachers, administrators), may contribute to reductions in school delinquency, while certain structural characteristics of school climates such as large numbers of students and school location in urban areas may contribute to increases in school delinquency. Due to Stewart's conceptualization of school misbehavior, however, it may be argued that the aforementioned characteristics of school climates mainly affect schools' responses to delinquency.

School climates characterized by high levels of school collective efficacy have also been found to affect how schools respond to student misbehavior and maintain discipline, specifically through suspension. One of Kirk's (2009) main arguments was that "collective willingness to improve the school and maintain school discipline is enhanced when the school is characterized by cohesion and trust among teachers" (p. 495), and thus measured school collective efficacy utilizing indicators of "cohesion and trust among teachers and...shared expectations among teachers for social control" (p. 495). Findings from multilevel regression analyses revealed that school collective efficacy was significantly and negatively predictive of suspension ($\beta = -.170$)

(Kirk 2009). Therefore, students in schools with more positive school climates characterized by cohesion, trust, and shared expectations among teachers are less likely to behave in ways that would warrant suspension. Findings from both Stewart's and Kirk's studies thus provide support for the cultivation of positive relationships in the pursuit of reduced delinquency.

Gottfredson et al. (2005) also investigated the effects of school climate indicators on school disorder, defining school disorder "as crimes and acts of incivility either perpetrated by students while in the school or experienced by students or teachers while at school" (p. 419). Stemming from this definition, the authors conceptualized school disorder through the use of three indices: teacher victimization, student victimization, and student delinquency, utilizing a sample of 254 secondary public and nonalternative schools. Teacher victimization measured the number of crimes or uncivil acts teachers experienced at school during the school year; student victimization measured the number of crimes students experienced at school during the year; and student delinquency measured whether students damaged or destroyed school property, hit or threatened to hit a teacher/other staff, or other students, or stole or attempted to steal an item at school within the past year. School disorder in this study thus measured acts perpetrated by students, as well as acts perpetrated by students that resulted in the victimization of teachers or other students.

School climate indicators included the following: fairness of school rules and clarity of school rules, constructed from the student survey, and organizational focus, morale, planning, and administrative leadership, constructed from the teacher survey (Gottfredson et al. 2005). These school climate indicators were combined into two final constructs of school climate: discipline management (fairness and clarity of rules), and psychosocial climate (organizational focus, morale, planning, administrative leadership). Discipline management demonstrated

significant negative correlations with each of the three school disorder indices, while psychosocial climate had a significant positive correlation with student victimization and a significant negative correlation with teacher victimization (Gottfredson et al. 2005). However, additional findings from this study demonstrated that schools located in concentrated poverty areas and those with higher percentages of African American students and teachers had less positive school climates according to both students and teachers. These findings suggest that while more positive school climates according to students relates to decreased school disorder, and while more positive school climates according to teachers relates to decreased teacher victimization, other structural characteristics may diminish the overall effects of positive school climate on school disorder.

Increased student involvement in school activities and high perceptions of school safety are additional school climate indicators associated with decreased delinquency among school students. Hoffmann and Xu (2002), examining the relationships among student participation in school activities, community service, and delinquency, measured involvement in delinquency by asking students how many times in the past year they: got into physical fights in or out of school, received in school or out of school suspension, were transferred for disciplinary reasons, were arrested, and spent time in a juvenile detention center. Both involvement in school activities and student perceptions of school safety were significantly and negatively related to student delinquency, therefore suggesting that students who were more involved in school activities and who had higher perceptions of school safety are less involved in delinquent behavior (Hoffmann and Xu 2002). It is also important to note the authors' finding that student involvement in community activities exerted a stronger negative effect on student delinquency when perceptions of school safety were low, and therefore, student-community involvement may mitigate the

effects of poor school climate on student delinquency. Therefore, although negative school climates may contribute to increased delinquency, providing students with opportunities to connect with their communities may mitigate the effects of such negative school environments. The following section will discuss empirical studies that have identified associations between certain parental and community characteristics and delinquency in schools.

PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Because parental and community involvement in schools is often influenced by certain parental and community characteristics, it is important to identify such characteristics and examine their relationship with school delinquency. This section will discuss empirical studies that have identified such characteristics and their relationships with delinquency.

Family Structure

Prior research has revealed somewhat conflicting findings regarding the affect of family structure on school delinquency. In relation to single vs. dual parent households, some have found that family structure is not significantly related to student misbehavior in school (Stewart 2003), while others reveal that living in a single parent family is significantly predictive of aggression and delinquency in schools, at least for children of certain ages (Beyers et al. 2003). Such conflicting findings may result from differences in the measurement of school delinquency. For example, Beyers and colleagues utilized teacher reports of student misbehavior in the conceptualization of a 34-item delinquency scale, while Stewart utilized student self-reports of both actual delinquent behavior and responses to misbehavior, combined to create a 4-item

delinquency scale. Therefore, the effects of family structure on delinquency may depend on how researchers measure delinquency.

In examining the effects of school commitment on measures of school crime and delinquency among students in one Delaware middle school, Jenkins (1995) conceptualized delinquency utilizing three indices: school crime, school misconduct, and school nonattendance, as self-reported by students. School crime measured student participation in numerous acts deemed criminal (i.e. alcohol and drug use/sale, theft, weapons possession, assaulting a teacher, etc.) while on school grounds; school misconduct measured whether students participated a variety of noncriminal acts of misbehavior while in school; and school nonattendance measured student absence from school, class cutting, and tardiness. Jenkins also measured the extent to which school commitment mediated the effects of certain predictor variables on delinquency, including family structure; this variable indicated whether students were living with both parents, a stepparent, or a single parent.

Findings from Jenkins's study regarding delinquency participation revealed that hitting another student and damaging school property were the most frequently reported school crimes, and small percentages of students reported marijuana use and other illegal drug use (6% and 4% respectively). Talking in class, not completing homework, and copying homework were the most common forms of school misconduct; being late for both class and school tied for the most frequent types of school nonattendance; and over one-third of the sample reported cutting school (Jenkins 1995). Although family structure did not have any significant direct effects on delinquency, further findings revealed that both living with a stepparent and living with a single parent were significant predictors of reduced parental involvement at school ($\beta = -.48$ and $\beta = -.55$ respectively). This finding is important considering that parental involvement was a

significant predictor of increased school commitment, which had significant negative associations with all three of Jenkins' delinquency measures (crime, misconduct, nonattendance). These findings reveal that certain family structures might inhibit parental involvement in schools, weaken children's commitment to school, and thus increase the likelihood of delinquency occurrence in a variety of ways (crime, misconduct, nonattendance) while on school grounds.

Socioeconomic Status

Overall, research has found an inverse relationship between family socioeconomic status (or social class) and delinquency in schools, where increased socioeconomic status is associated with decreased delinquency. However, studies have measured family socioeconomic status in differing ways. For instance, Jenkins (1995) utilized mother's education as a proxy for family social class, to measure whether students' mothers graduated from college or had less than a college education, Stewart (2003) measured family socioeconomic status as total annual family income, and Beyers et al. (2003) utilized parents' education and job status to conceptualize family social class.

Jenkins found that although mother's education did not directly have significant predictive effects on any of the delinquency indices (crime, misconduct, and nonattendance), having a mother with a college education was a significant predictor of increased parental involvement ($\beta = .76$). Because increased parental involvement was significantly predictive of increased school commitment, and increased school commitment was negatively associated with all of Jenkins's delinquency indices, family socioeconomic status was therefore indirectly

negatively associated with delinquency. This finding additionally supports other research outlining the difficulties that lower class parents have with school involvement (Lareau 2003).

Other scholars have found direct associations between family socioeconomic status and delinquency. In their longitudinal study of students' externalizing aggressive and delinquent behaviors between ages 11 and 13 as reported by teachers, Beyers et al. (2003) found that higher family socioeconomic status was significantly related with less externalizing aggressive and delinquent behavior at age 11. Stewart (2003) also found family income to be significantly related to decreases in school misbehavior. However, Stewart's measurement of school misbehavior as a combination of student delinquency and responses to delinquency make it difficult to determine whether family income significantly affected both misbehavior and the reactions to misbehavior. Despite this technicality, prior studies conclude that higher family socioeconomic status is associated with decreased delinquency in schools, whether directly or indirectly as mediated through other variables.

Studies have also found associations with the socioeconomic status of communities and delinquency in schools. Much like family social class, however, socioeconomic status of communities has been measured in several different ways. Beyers and colleagues (2003) utilized structural disadvantage and concentrated affluence to measure community socioeconomic status. Structural disadvantage was a combined measure of summed standardized scores for the proportions of female headed families, individuals in poverty, households receiving public assistance, and unemployed individuals; and concentrated affluence was a combined measure of the proportions of families with incomes of \$75,000 or more, individuals who received a college degree, and individuals employed in professional or managerial positions. This study found that higher structural disadvantage and lower concentrated affluence of communities were both

related to more externalizing behavior problems for children at school as reported by teachers at each age between 11 and 13. However, the predictive effect of concentrated affluence was not significant, indicating that while structural disadvantage and concentrated affluence are both significantly related to decreased delinquency, structural disadvantage is more significantly predictive of delinquency than concentrated affluence. Therefore, communities suffering from more serious socioeconomic decline are more likely to influence increased aggressive or delinquent behavior in schools as observed or perceived by teachers.

In their study of the effects of community characteristics on school misconduct, Armstrong et al. (2015) measured community socioeconomic status as concentrated disadvantage: a principal components analysis of indicators from the 2000 U.S. Census based on Arizona public schools' zip codes, including the percent of individuals: living in poverty, on public assistance, unemployed, possessing less than a high school education, and the percentage of female headed households. The study's dependent variable, school misconduct, was an individual level measure based on the summed scores of 3 questions asked to student respondents, which included: how often in the past 12 months students were drunk or high at school, participated in fights at school, and carried a handgun to school. The original 3 indicators of the school misconduct scale were based on their own 7-point Likert-type scales, where higher values indicated more frequent behavior for each indicator (Armstrong et al. 2015). Findings from this study revealed that when controlling for individual and school level characteristics, in communities with higher levels of concentrated disadvantage, students were more likely to engage in school misconduct. Therefore, schools located in more disadvantaged communities were more likely to have poorer student behavior.

The effects of community economic disadvantage on school delinquency are also evidenced in Gottfredson and colleagues' (2005) study investigating school climate effects on school disorder. The authors found that schools located in concentrated poverty areas experienced significantly higher levels of two measures of school disorder: teacher victimization and student delinquency. Differing slightly from previously reviewed studies, the authors measured school disorder utilizing self-reported measures of victimization (both teacher and student) in addition to self-reported measures of student delinquency. Utilizing victimization measures may account for students that do not fully disclose the extent of their own delinquent behavior. Concentrated poverty was measured in this study utilizing indicators from the 1990 U.S. Census for zip codes in which schools were located, where indicators included the following: average household welfare/public assistance income; the ratio of single female headed households with children younger than 18 to married couples with children under 18; median income, or the proportion of households making annual incomes less than \$27,499; poverty rate; divorce rate; and both male and female unemployment. Despite differences in both the measurement of community socioeconomic status and school delinquency, this study is in agreement with prior research indicating that community socioeconomic status affects delinquency participation within schools.

Regardless of whether delinquency is measured based on teacher perceptions of student misbehavior or student-self reports of misbehavior, community socioeconomic status has an inverse and often significant relationship with delinquency. However, community socioeconomic status has no significant relationship with delinquency when delinquency is measured as schools' responses to misbehavior. Kirk (2009), who examined the effects of certain community characteristics on student suspension, a student self-report measure indicating whether students

were suspended from school at some point during the year, found that concentrated poverty was not significantly related to suspension. Concentrated poverty in this study was measured as a scale of economic disadvantage, consisting of the following indicators: percentage of families below the poverty line, percentage of families receiving public assistance, percentage of unemployed individuals in the civilian labor force, and the percentage of female headed families with children. Based on the reviewed literature, therefore, although community socioeconomic status significantly affects actual delinquent behavior in schools, it may not affect how schools respond to delinquent behavior.

Additional Community-Level Characteristics

Studies have examined the effects of additional community-level characteristics on school delinquency, including ethnic heterogeneity, community norms against alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use, perceptions of crime and disorder (Armstrong et al. 2015), neighborhood collective efficacy, residential stability (Kirk 2009; Beyers et al. 2003), and residential crowding (Gottfredson et al. 2005). Such characteristics measure both community structure, and community norms and values.

Community structure

Ethnic heterogeneity measured community structure by conducting a principal components analysis of the indicators: percent foreign born, percent Hispanic, and percent black; this measure was found to not affect school misconduct in Armstrong and colleagues' (2015) study. However, it should be noted that the authors' sample consisted of communities and public schools from one U.S. state, limiting generalizability to all U.S. public schools. Utilizing a

nationally representative sample may indicate different relationships between the racial composition of communities and school misconduct. Residential crowding, a factor score computed from 1990 U.S. Census indicators including the ratio of households with five or more people to other households, and the proportion of households not English speaking, was a measure of community structure in Gottfredson and colleagues' (2005) study of school disorder. Findings from this study revealed that schools located in more residentially crowded areas reported significantly higher levels of teacher victimization, indicating that schools may experience more delinquent behavior particularly aimed at teachers when located in areas of increased residential crowding.

Community stability, measured as residential stability by Kirk (2009) and residential instability by Beyers and colleagues (2003), were essentially measures of transience. Residential stability comprised census indicators including the percent of residents age five and older that had lived in the same house for at least five years and the percentage of homes occupied by homeowners (Kirk 2009), while residential instability included the proportion of renter occupied homes and the proportion of householders living in neighborhoods less than five years (Beyers et al. 2003). Increased residential instability was associated with increased aggressive and delinquent behavior among students (as reported by teachers), between the ages of 11 and 13; additionally, high residential instability interacted with low parental monitoring to increase the likelihood of externalizing aggressive and delinquent behaviors (Beyers et al. 2003; Kirk 2009). Both effects of residential instability therefore indicate that communities experiencing more resident transience may be associated with more student delinquency in schools, at least according to teachers. Despite the findings from Beyers and colleagues' study, Kirk found residential stability to be unrelated to student-reported suspension. These findings suggest that

community stability may influence actual delinquent behavior, but not schools' reactions to such behavior.

Community norms and values

Armstrong and colleagues utilized two measures of community norms and values, including community norms against ATOD use and community crime and disorder. Community norms against ATOD use measured respondents' perceptions of how wrong their neighbors believed it was to use marijuana, drink alcohol, or smoke cigarettes; and community crime and disorder measured respondents' perceptions of how prevalent fights, graffiti, empty buildings, and drug sales were in their neighborhoods. Both measures had statistically significant relationships with school misconduct, where schools in communities that were perceived to be more disapproving of ATOD use reported lower levels of misconduct ($\beta = -.182$), and schools in communities with higher levels of crime and disorder reported higher levels of misconduct ($\beta = .089$) (Armstrong et al. 2015). The authors therefore demonstrated that community norms and values have the ability to significantly affect levels of misconduct in schools. Additionally, when student perceptions of community norms against ATOD use interacted with positive school climate, Armstrong et al. (2015) found that this factor demonstrated a significant negative association with school misconduct. Students who perceive that their neighbors believe ATOD use to be wrong and also attend schools with more positive school climates therefore demonstrate decreased levels of misconduct, and thus reduce delinquency levels in schools.

Neighborhood collective efficacy, a measure of social control, measured levels of cohesion and trust among neighborhood residents in neighborhoods that surround schools, along with how willing community residents would be to take action in order to control the behavior of

youth residents (Kirk 2009). Suspension was significantly affected when low neighborhood collective efficacy and low school collective efficacy interacted: that is, “in neighborhoods with low levels of collective efficacy, students in schools with low levels of school collective efficacy [were] drastically more likely to be suspended” (Kirk 2009:504). This finding indicates that in schools in which social control is low, located in neighborhoods where social control is also low, suspension is more likely to occur. Overall, schools located in communities that adhere to societal norms and values, where residents are more likely to trust one another and regulate the behavior of youth are more likely to experience reductions in delinquent actions as well as responses to delinquency such as suspension. The following section will discuss empirical studies that have examined the relationships between both parental involvement and community involvement and delinquency in schools.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Sheldon and Epstein (2002) framed their study around the idea that schools, families, and communities act as three “spheres of influence” (p. 5) in the lives of students that when overlapping or intersecting, may contribute to improved behavior depending on the strength of each sphere and the degree of overlap with the other spheres. Noting that “[e]ducators play an important role in determining the degree to which family, school, and community contexts overlap” (Sheldon and Epstein 2002:5), the authors identified six types of family and community involvement in which schools can increase collaboration. One of the six types of involvement included community-school collaboration and integrating community resources or services, to improve student behavior and the relationships between students, families, and schools.

According to Sheldon and Epstein, therefore, the ability of schools to work with communities in order to support students and families may improve the behavior that occurs within school walls.

Because prior research suggests that community-school involvement may contribute to improved behavior in schools and decreased reliance on school discipline, it is additionally important to identify the types of community partnerships schools may have and the characteristics of those partnerships. Sanders (2001) identified several community agencies or services with which schools partner in her study of 443 U.S. public schools; in that same study, she also described the foci of school-community partnership activities and discussed challenges regarding implementation. The schools in the study identified over 800 activities involving community partnerships, and 70% of schools reported participation in at least one community partnership activity. Additionally, of the 355 schools that reported partnership counts, most schools (48%) reported having 1-3 partners. Of the activities that schools reported, Sanders categorized the activities under 10 community partners: businesses/corporations, universities/educational institutions, government and military agencies, health care organizations, faith organizations, national service/volunteer organizations, senior citizens' organizations, cultural and recreational institutions, other community based organizations, and individuals in the community. Additional findings revealed that most school-community partnership activities involved one or more local businesses of various types and sizes, along with national corporations and franchises, where 45% of the sample reported at least one such business partnership. For each of the other 9 community partner categories that Sanders identified, schools reported partnering with community agencies or services falling under each of those categories 10% or less of the time.

Sanders additionally identified 4 foci of school-community partnerships that developed throughout her study, including focus on students, families, schools, and communities; most partnerships identified in the study were student centered, and the least were community centered. Although a student-centered focus is unequivocally important for positive student outcomes, the fact that the lowest number of partnerships in this study were community-centered may have informed some of the challenges of community-school partnership formation identified by the sampled schools. Challenges to partnership implementation included the following: poor participation on the part of school faculty, families, students, or members of the community; lacking time to meet with or contact community partners; problems identifying community partners especially in communities with few businesses; lack of school leadership and/or funding; poor communication; and lack of focus in partnerships (Sanders 2001). While cultivating community-school partnerships are important for improved student outcomes, such partnerships may have the ability to improve resident ties within communities as well, and thus a stronger community-centered focus may be necessary to overcome the aforementioned challenges.

Community-school involvement may not necessarily be conceptualized solely as community member or agency partnerships with schools, as it may also involve connecting students with meaningful involvement in community activities; and prior research has shown that student involvement in community activities may reduce delinquency. Using a nationally representative sample of high school seniors, Hoffmann and Xu (2002) examined the effects of student participation in school and community activities on delinquency both in and out of school. Involvement in delinquent behavior was measured with a set of 7 questions asking how many times in the past year students got into physical fights at school and out of school, received

in school suspension, received out of school suspension, were transferred for disciplinary reasons, were arrested, and spent time in a juvenile detention center. Involvement in community activities was measured by asking whether, in the past two years, students participated in unpaid or volunteer community service activities through youth groups, service groups, political groups, church groups, community groups, education groups, or volunteer work in a hospital. Findings from this study demonstrated that students involved in more community activities partook in less delinquent acts, particularly when involvement in school activities was lower. Additionally, involvement in community activities had a significant negative effect on delinquency when controlling for individual-level and school-level variables, and had stronger negative effects on delinquency when student perceptions of school safety were low (Hoffmann and Xu 2002). This study therefore demonstrated that providing opportunities for students to form relationships with communities might reduce involvement in delinquent behavior.

Schools additionally perceive community involvement to be an effective method of improving school discipline by reducing delinquent behavior among students and decreasing schools' use of disciplinary action. Sheldon and Epstein (2002) revealed that schools perceived the use of community mentor involvement in schools to aid students with behavior problems, as well as the use of community volunteers in schools as effective means for improving student behavior. Additional findings revealed that community involvement in schools is associated with decreases in the use of certain disciplinary practices. Sheldon and Epstein conceptualized delinquency not only as schools' perceptions of the extent of behavior problems, but also schools' perceptions of disciplinary action. After controlling for prior discipline rates, the authors found that schools that created and utilized more opportunities for community members to volunteer in schools with the goal of improving safety and student behavior had lower

percentages of students sent to principals' offices and given detention (Sheldon and Epstein 2002). Overall, findings regarding community-school involvement suggest that making concerted efforts to connect communities (as agencies or individual members) with schools may reduce delinquency in schools by improving student behavior and decreasing the use of disciplinary action. The next section will discuss parental involvement as a factor influencing school delinquency.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Prior research suggests that parental or familial involvement both in schools and in the lives of students outside of school improves student behavior and decreases schools' reliance on disciplinary practices, thus reducing delinquency levels in schools (Sheldon and Epstein 2002; Epstein and Sheldon 2002; Stewart 2003; Kirk 2009). Jenkins (1995) described parental involvement in school as "parents...encouraging and reinforcing good study habits, maintaining contact with teachers and administrative personnel, attending school activities in which their children participate, and encouraging behavior that is appropriate in an educational setting" (p. 225). Types of parental involvement in schools include orientations for new families, parent workshops identifying schools' expectations for student behavior, parent-teacher conferences, parent involvement in prevention programs or activities and review of school policies, and opportunities for parents to volunteer at school, attend school sponsored events, and partner with schools to improve school safety and discipline (Jenkins 1995; Sheldon and Epstein 2002; Epstein and Sheldon 2002). Such efforts on behalf of schools to involve parents therefore represent opportunities for parents to build relationships with students, teachers, and other personnel, thereby increasing their levels of social capital.

Although not directly affecting school delinquency, Jenkins (1995) found that middle school students' commitments to school mediated the effects of parental involvement on three indices of school delinquency: crime, misconduct, and nonattendance. Parental involvement measured whether parents volunteered in school, went on class trips, and belonged to the parent teacher association, as well as how often parents visited school, attended parent-teacher conferences, talked about school at home, and checked homework. Utilizing path analysis, findings from this study revealed that school commitment was strongly and inversely related to each of the school delinquency indices, and that parental involvement additionally had a strong and positive direct effect on school commitment. Therefore, findings demonstrate that increased parental involvement with children both at home and at school strengthens students' commitments to school, thereby decreasing participation in school delinquency.

Other studies have cited parental involvement as a factor influencing student delinquency, particularly by increasing attendance rates (Epstein and Sheldon 2002). Conducting a longitudinal study over the course of one school year to examine how partnerships between families, communities, and schools affected attendance and absenteeism among a sample of 12 elementary schools, the authors studied changes in attendance and the percentage of students chronically absent (20 or more absences), as reported by schools. Findings revealed that when schools implemented family and community partnership practices to improve attendance, the average chronic absenteeism rate decreased from 8% to 6.1%, and average daily attendance increased as well. Other findings revealed that certain practices to involve parents and families were perceived as effective in increasing school attendance, including making home visits to families of chronically absent students, creating a point of contact person at schools for parents

to contact regarding student absence issues, and calling home when students were absent (Epstein and Sheldon 2002).

Certain activities to involve parents and families also had strong and positive correlations with average daily attendance over the course of one school year, including assigning a truant officer to families of students with attendance issues ($r = .822$), connecting parents with point of contact persons to discuss absence issues ($r = .581$), and holding family workshops focusing on improving student attendance ($r = .533$) (Epstein and Sheldon 2002). Connecting parents with point of contact persons and making home visits to students with chronic absence problems were also associated with reductions in chronic absenteeism ($r = -.623$ and $r = -.648$, respectively). After controlling for schools' prior rates of attendance, the same aforementioned involvement activities were the best predictors of improved student attendance and decreased chronic absenteeism (Epstein and Sheldon 2002). Schools are therefore more easily able to increase student conformity to school norms and values (i.e. attending school) through strengthened parent-school partnerships.

Parental involvement in school was also measured as an independent variable in Stewart's (2003) test of social control theory, which examined how individual and school level characteristics affected student misconduct among a sample of 10,578 tenth grade students. Parental school involvement was measured using six questions that asked respondents to indicate the degree to which their parents or guardians were involved in various school activities, including how often parents attended a school meeting, spoke with teachers or counselors, attended a school event in which students participated, volunteered at school, checked that homework was completed, or helped with homework. Although parental involvement was significantly associated with decreases in school misbehavior self-reported by student

respondents, it should be noted that the school misbehavior variable was constructed utilizing a combination of delinquent behavior measures and school disciplinary measures (Stewart 2003). Therefore, it may be difficult to determine whether increased parental involvement in this study affected student misbehavior or schools' responses to delinquency. Other studies have found that increased parental involvement with children outside of school predicts decreases in aggressive and delinquent student behavior over time as reported by teachers (Beyers et al. 2003), and that significant associations exist between increased parent-child communication about school affairs and decreased student delinquency (Hoffmann and Xu 2002). These findings suggest that increases in parental involvement both in and out of schools have the ability to improve student outcomes by decreasing delinquent behavior according to both students and teachers.

Research also cites parental involvement as a factor affecting schools' responses to delinquency, according to both school reports and student self-reports. Sheldon and Epstein (2002) examined how the formation of partnerships between schools, families, and communities affected school safety and discipline among a sample of 47 elementary, middle, high, and middle-high schools. At the time of the study, the sampled schools were working on utilizing or creating school, family, and community partnerships to improve student behavior. The authors conducted a longitudinal study, administering baseline and follow-up surveys at the beginning and end of one school year, to examine the use and effectiveness of partnership practices, use of disciplinary actions, and student behavior changes over time. Findings revealed that the greatest proportion of students were sent to principals' offices and received detention as forms of disciplinary action (11% and 10%, respectively). The study also revealed that although most schools considered all of the family partnership practices as effective for improving student behavior, schools that actually implemented such practices rated the programs as more effective.

Additional findings demonstrated that schools' perceptions of the most effective partnership practices for improving student behavior centered on parental or familial involvement with schools, such as using planners or assignment books to communicate with parents or families, holding orientations for new families prior to the new school year, and holding parent workshops regarding schools' expectations and goals for student behavior. Schools in the study also rated parent-teacher conferences, parent involvement in prevention programs and activities, and parent involvement in the annual review of school policies as effective practices for improving student behavior.

Furthermore, partial correlation analyses revealed that after controlling for prior discipline rates, schools' utilization of family involvement activities was associated with statistically significant decreases in the use of certain disciplinary actions, including the percentages of students sent to principals' offices and given detention (Sheldon and Epstein 2002). The family involvement activities associated with such decreases included opportunities for families to volunteer within schools in order to improve safety and behavior, and activities to help parents understand schools' goals for student behavior, strengthen parenting skills, and to educate parents about how the home environment may affect student behavior. Additionally, schools that actively worked to communicate with parents or families of students had lower percentages of students that received in school suspension, and schools that involved parents in schools' policymaking processes and the evaluation of policies had lower percentages of students receiving detention (Sheldon and Epstein 2002). This study's findings suggest that if both parents and schools can work to increase parental involvement within the school context and strengthen parent-school relationships, schools may rely less on disciplinary action to maintain discipline and ensure safety.

Other research cites parental involvement as a factor associated with the reduction of school disciplinary action self-reported by students. Kirk (2009) measured the effects of various social control variables on student suspension and arrest in his study of 7,407 sixth and eighth grade students and 1,792 teachers, drawn from the 1997 Student Survey of Chicago Public Schools. Of Kirk's independent variables, two measures specifically focused on some aspect of parental involvement, and included parental supervision and teacher-parent trust. Parental supervision measured how often students' parents waited for them at home after school, made sure students got to school on time, were available for students to get in touch with, and knew where students were after school, where higher scores for this measure indicated more parental supervision. Teacher-parent trust was a summary measure including 13 items that described the degree to which teachers felt mutual respect and trust with parents, and that parents supported teachers' educational efforts, where higher scores indicated higher levels of teacher-parent trust.

Of the student sample in Kirk's (2009) study, 16% reported being suspended, where the variable suspension was a binary measure (yes/no) of whether or not students were suspended at some point during the school year. In the analysis of the social control measures on suspension and arrest, Kirk (2009) conducted multilevel analyses and utilized two-level logit models, and findings revealed that parental supervision was significantly predictive of suspension, where increased parental supervision was associated with the decreased likelihood of student suspension. Parental supervision was also highly predictive of suspension even when the other independent social control variables were included in the final two-level logit model. Teacher-parent trust, however, was unrelated to suspension in this study. Despite the lack of association with teachers' perceptions of mutuality with parents, this study demonstrated that even when

school disciplinary action is measured according to students' responses, increased involvement in the lives of children regarding schooling might work to reduce delinquency in schools.

SUMMARY AND CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature discussed issues of delinquency measurement, as well as ways in which school climate, parental and community characteristics, and parental and community involvement affect delinquency in schools. Delinquency measurement differs understandably based on the activity researchers aim to examine; however, some measurement techniques such as self-report or utilizing respondent perceptions may result in over or underreporting delinquent behavior. Utilizing measures of school disciplinary action may also create bias by not measuring actual student misbehavior, but schools' reactions to behavior, where some studies argue that schools react differentially to student behavior based on certain characteristics such as race (Mendez and Knoff 2003; Welch and Payne 2010).

A review of the literature revealed that positive school climates work to decrease delinquency and schools' use of disciplinary practices. Furthermore, providing students with opportunities to connect with their communities through service or volunteer involvement may mitigate the effects of negative school environments. Research discussing parental and community conditions revealed that numerous characteristics of parents, families, and communities affect delinquency in schools, where some effects differ based on variable measurement. Overall, however, increased delinquency is associated with families and communities suffering increased economic disadvantage, as well as communities lacking cohesion, trust, and ability to agree on and enforce societal norms and values. Additionally, parental involvement both with students and schools, in addition to community involvement in

schools and student involvement in community activities is associated with decreases in school delinquency and the use of disciplinary practices. Other research on parental and community involvement revealed that schools perceived partnership formations with parents and communities as effective means for improving student behavior and overall school discipline. Research additionally provided support for the use of social capital theory in examining the effects of parental and community involvement in schools on school delinquency, demonstrating that increasing partnerships and strengthening relationships among parents, communities, and schools creates the potential for reducing delinquency and achieving schools' goals of improving overall discipline and safety.

There were limitations to the reviewed literature, as many of the studies utilized small sample sizes and often focused on either elementary or middle schools (or students) either in one school district, or in only a few U.S. states. Additionally, multiple studies utilized samples of schools based on their membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), schools that at the time of data collection were actively working with NNPS facilitators to create or sustain partnerships between parent and community groups. These limitations highlight the fact that many of the studies reviewed could not generalize their results to all U.S. schools or students, and thus may not be representative of elementary and secondary schools or students in the United States. Although some studies were longitudinal, much of the research reviewed was cross sectional in nature, and therefore unable to examine how parental and community involvement affected student delinquency and the maintenance of school discipline over time. Some studies also had low school participation rates due to the inability or unwillingness of some schools to provide statistics on student behavior and disciplinary practices. Lastly, some

studies that mentioned a focus on community involvement did not include specific community involvement measures.

A review of the available literature allows for the examination of factors that independently and interdependently affect delinquency in schools. However, much of the research available has utilized small samples of schools often based on their membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools, and has often neglected high schools. Thus, the samples of prior research studies may not be fully representative of all U.S. public schools and their levels of parental and community involvement. Due to this main limitation, this study will examine the effects of parental and community involvement in schools on school delinquency among a nationally representative sample of 2,560 elementary and secondary schools in the United States. The hypotheses of the current study are as follows:

- H1. Stronger parent-school relationships through increased parental involvement in schools is predictive of reduced school delinquency.
- H2. Stronger community-school relationships through increased community involvement in schools is predictive of reduced school delinquency.

This chapter provided an overview of the theoretical framework guiding the current study, an overview of empirical studies discussing the effects of parental and community involvement on school delinquency, and a summary and critique of the reviewed literature. The following chapter will present the methodology utilized in this research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology that will be used to examine how parental and community involvement in schools affects school delinquency. The chapter will include an overview of the data source utilized in the study, a discussion of the research design, variables and measurement, a discussion of the analytic plan, and a prelude to the next chapter.

DATA SOURCE

The data for this research study come from the public-use file of the 2008 School Survey on Crime and Safety, a nationally representative cross-sectional survey of public elementary and secondary schools in the United States (NCES), which “is the only periodic survey that collects detailed national information on crime and safety from the perspective of schools” (Ruddy et al. 2010:2). Administered by the United States Department of Education National Center of Education Statistics every other year, the School Survey on Crime and Safety aims to collect nationally representative data regarding crime, disorder, and discipline in schools, in addition to programs or policies associated with school crime and delinquency (NCES). The School Survey on Crime and Safety questionnaires are sent to schools and completed by school principals, and cover topics related to the frequency of disciplinary problems in schools, school policies regarding crime and delinquency, parental and community involvement in schools, security, staff training, barriers to the prevention of crime, and other characteristics associated with school crime (NCES). Data collection for the 2008 School Survey on Crime and Safety was conducted

by mailing surveys to schools and utilizing follow-up telephone calls, mainly to ensure that the questionnaire was received (Ruddy et al. 2010).

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is a cross-sectional secondary data analysis designed to examine how parental and community involvement in schools influence school delinquency. The sample consisted of 2,560 schools in which schools' principals completed the School Survey on Crime and Safety Principal Questionnaire for the 2007-2008 school year. Schools were designated as primary, middle, high, or combined, based on specific parameters set by the survey data collectors (Ruddy et al. 2010). High schools were defined as schools where the lowest grade included in the school was not below grade 9 and the highest grade included was not above grade 12; middle schools included schools housing grades not lower than grade 4 but not higher than grade 9; primary schools were defined as the lowest grade not higher than grade 3 and the highest grade is not above grade 8; and combined schools included other combinations of grades such as K-12 schools. This study will employ descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses to examine the relationships between parental and community involvement in schools and school delinquency.

VARIABLES

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study is delinquency. This variable was operationalized by the original data collectors as INCID08, total number of delinquent incidents by students recorded by schools, where delinquent incidents included rape or attempted rape, sexual battery

other than rape, robbery with and without a weapon, physical attack/fight with and without a weapon, threats of physical attack with and without a weapon, theft/larceny, possession of a firearm or explosive device, possession of a knife/sharp object, distribution/possession/use of illegal drugs or alcohol, and vandalism (Ruddy et al. 2010), which was a continuous variable in the original data collection. For this study, delinquency will remain a continuous variable.

However, due to the highly skewed nature of the variable, a natural log transformation will be performed in order to normalize the distribution for bivariate and multivariate analyses (Knoke, Bohrnstedt, and Mee 2002).

Independent Variables

The independent variables, parental involvement and community involvement, were constructed using Coleman's (1988) formulation of social capital theory, in which social capital is conceptualized as the relationships that exist between and among actors that aid in the attainment of a certain goal.

Parental involvement measures the strength of parents' relationships to schools as best estimated by school principals that participated in the questionnaire. Parental involvement was operationalized by first recoding the responses to the questions: "What is your best estimate of the percentage of students who had at least one parent or guardian participating in the following events during the 2007-08 school year" (Ruddy et al. 2010), in which the events listed included open house or back to school night, regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences, special subject-area events such as science fairs or concerts, and volunteering at school or serving on a school committee. For each event, the coding was 0=0-25%, 1=26-50%, 2=51-75%, and 3=76-100%. The response "school does not offer" for each event was recoded into the 0=0-25%

category, considering that a school not offering the opportunity for parental involvement in any event would result in lower involvement. After the responses to the indicators were recoded, parental involvement was computed as a scale of the four indicators from 0-12, in which 0=lowest involvement and 12=highest involvement. After the scale was constructed, a scale reliability analysis of the four indicators was performed to determine how consistent each of the four indicators were in measuring the construct of parental involvement, revealing a Cronbach's alpha of 0.764 and indicating acceptable internal consistency (Gilem and Gilem 2003).

Community involvement measures the strength of community relationships to schools as determined by school principals that participated in the questionnaire. Community involvement was operationalized by first recoding responses to the questions: "Were any of the following community and outside groups involved in your school's efforts to promote safe, disciplined, and drug free schools" (Ruddy et al. 2010), in which the groups listed included parent groups, social service agencies, juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement agencies, mental health agencies, civic organizations/service clubs, private corporations/businesses, and religious organizations, where the coding for each group was 1=yes and 2=no. These indicators were then recoded as 0=no and 1=yes, and community involvement was computed as a scale of the eight indicators from 0-8, in which 0=no community involvement and 8=highest community involvement. A scale reliability analysis of the eight indicators was also performed, revealing a Cronbach's alpha of 0.737 and indicating acceptable internal consistency (Gilem and Gilem 2003).

Control Variables

The control variables in this study include percent minority enrollment, school type, school size, school location, and crime level in school location.

Percent minority enrollment measures the combined percent of Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaska Native students within schools, indicated as the percent minority composition. Coding for this variable is as follows: 1=less than 5%, 2=5 to less than 20%, 3=20 to less than 50%, and 4=50% or more.

School type identifies schools based on grades offered within, including primary (lowest grade not higher than grade 3 and highest grade not higher than grade 8), middle (lowest grade not lower than grade 4 and highest grade not higher than grade 9), high (lowest grade not lower than grade 9 and highest grade higher than grade 12), and combined (other combinations of grades such as K-12) (Ruddy et al. 2010). For descriptive and bivariate analyses, school type is coded as 1=primary, 2=middle, 3=high, and 4=combined. For multivariate analyses, school type will be made into dummy variables, where primary schools will comprise the reference category.

School size measures the size of student enrollment within schools, ranging from less than 300 to 1,000 or more. School size is coded as 1=less than 300, 2=300-499, 3=500-999, and 4=1,000 or more for descriptive and bivariate analyses. For multivariate analyses, school size will be made into dummy variables, where less than 300 students will comprise the reference category.

School location measures the type of locale in which schools reside. School location is coded as 1=city, 2=suburb, 3=town, and 4=rural for descriptive and bivariate analyses. For multivariate analyses, school location will be made into dummy variables, where city will comprise the reference category. Somewhat differing from past research, this study will utilize the city locale as the reference category in multivariate analyses in order to measure how school delinquency in often neglected locales compares to school delinquency in cities.

Crime level in school location measures the description of the crime level in areas in which schools are located according to questionnaire respondents (school principals). For descriptive and bivariate analyses, this variable is coded as 1=low level of crime, 2=moderate level of crime, and 3=high level of crime; for multivariate analyses, this variable will be made into dummy variables, where low level of crime will serve as the reference category.

Table 1. Variables in the Study

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	DESCRIPTION	CODING
Delinquency	Total number of delinquent incidents by students recorded by schools.	Continuous
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES		
Parental Involvement	Strength of parents' relationships to schools.	Scale
Community Involvement	Strength of community relationships to schools.	Scale
CONTROL VARIABLES		
Percent Minority Enrollment	Combined percent of Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaska Native students.	1=Less than 5%; 2=5 to less than 20%; 3=20 to less than 50%; 4=50% or more
School Type	School type identification based on grades offered.	1=Primary; 2=Middle; 3=High; 4=Combined
School Size	Size of student enrollment.	1=Less than 300; 2=300-499; 3=500-999; 4=1,000 or more
School Location	Type of locale in which schools reside.	1=City; 2=Suburb; 3=Town; 4=Rural
Crime Level in School Location	Crime level in areas in which schools are located.	1=Low; 2=Moderate; 3=High

ANALYTIC PLAN

This study will utilize several statistical techniques in order to provide descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses. This section will discuss the statistical techniques as well as the reason for utilizing such techniques.

Descriptive Statistics

This study will utilize the measure of central tendency, mean, and measure of dispersion, standard deviation, for descriptive analyses. The mean is an appropriate measure for continuous variables (Knoke et al. 2002); continuous variables are those that are not categorized and may have a wide range of possible values (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2012), such as the number of delinquency incidents reported by schools over the course of one school year. Due to the continuous nature of the dependent variable in this study, the mean is therefore the most appropriate measure for descriptive analyses. Utilizing the mean as the primary measure of central tendency additionally makes appropriate the use of standard deviation as the primary measure of dispersion. Standard deviation measures how data is spread around the mean, in order to determine how each case of a variable relates to that variable's average; and this measure is additionally appropriate for continuous variables (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2012).

Bivariate Analysis

To analyze bivariate relationships, this study will utilize Pearson's correlation coefficient (or Pearson's r). Pearson's correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables, where the coefficient may have values ranging from -1 to +1 (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2012). Coefficients closer to 1, whether negative or

positive, indicate stronger correlations, while a coefficient of 0 indicates no relationship between variables (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2012). The negative or positive sign of Pearson's correlation coefficient indicates the direction of the relationship; a positive coefficient indicates that as one variable increases, so does the other, and a negative coefficient indicates that as one variable decreases, the other increases (or vice versa). Because both the dependent and independent variables in this study are continuous in nature, Pearson's correlation coefficient is therefore the most appropriate measure for bivariate analyses. The effect of percent minority enrollment (a continuous variable coded categorically) on the dependent variable will also be measured utilizing Pearson's correlation coefficient.

This study will also employ one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) as well as post-hoc Tukey tests for bivariate analyses. One-way ANOVA allows for a comparison of means across three or more categories of an independent variable in relation to a continuous dependent variable, in order to determine whether significant differences exist between group means (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2012), as well as whether variation across categories of an independent variable (as opposed to chance factors or random error) contribute to variation in the dependent variable (Knoke et al. 2002). Although one-way ANOVA determines whether significant differences exist overall between category means, it cannot determine which specific category means significantly differed (i.e. if group 1 significantly differed from group 2, but not group 3). Thus, post-hoc Tukey tests will be utilized after one-way ANOVAs to determine which specific group means significantly differed from each other (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2012). The categorical nature of certain control variables and the continuous nature of the dependent variable thus makes one-way ANOVA and post hoc Tukey tests appropriate bivariate techniques for this study.

Multivariate Analysis

This study will employ multiple linear regression to analyze the relationships among multiple variables. Multiple linear regression is utilized to examine the relationship between a dependent variable and two or more independent variables, additionally allowing for the inclusion of control variables (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2012). Multiple linear regression is an appropriate statistical technique for multivariate analyses because it will measure the individual effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable while holding all other variables constant, thus accounting for spurious relationships (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2012). Findings from multiple linear regression models represent how changes in independent variables predict changes in the dependent variable (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2012).

Two separate regression models will be used in this analysis. Model 1 will examine the relationship between the independent variables, parental involvement and community involvement, and the dependent variable delinquency. This allows for the examination of each independent variable's individual effect on the dependent variable. Model 2 will the relationship between the independent variables, parental and community involvement, as well as the control variables, on the dependent variable delinquency.

Significance Level

The significance level, also known as alpha level or p-value, is set at .05 for this study. If the p-value of data analyses was less than .05, the null hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternative or research hypothesis (Knoke et al. 2002). Oppositely, if the p-value of data analyses was greater than .05, the null hypothesis was not rejected in favor of the research hypothesis, and it was concluded that no relationship existed between the variables in question.

This section provided an overview of the data source, research design, variables and measurement, and analytic plan for the current study. The next chapter will present the research findings for this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses utilized to examine how parental and community involvement in schools affects school delinquency.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Table 2. shows descriptive statistics for all variables in the study. Schools in the study experienced an average of 41 delinquent incidents over the course of the school year. Due to the highly skewed nature of the delinquency variable, however, it is important to note that most of the sampled schools reported 0 delinquent incidents for the year. The sample demonstrated moderate levels of parental involvement, averaging at 5.79 on a 12-point scale, as well as moderate levels of community involvement, averaging at 4.48 on an 8-point scale.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for All Variables

	Mean	SD	Range	N
Delinquency	41.71	53.05	0.00-577	2,560
Parental Involvement	5.79	3.00	0.00-12.00	2,560
Community Involvement	4.48	2.18	0.00-8.00	2,560
% Minority Enrollment	2.78	1.05	1.00-4.00	2,560
School Type	2.21	.86	1.00-4.00	2,560
School Size	2.90	.97	1.00-4.00	2,560
School Location	2.42	1.14	1.00-4.00	2,560
Crime Level in School Location	1.31	.57	1.00-3.00	2,560

The average school in the sample had 20 to less than 50 percent minority enrollment, an enrollment of 500-999 students, and was a middle school. Middle schools and high schools each made up about 35% of the sample. Slightly more schools were located in the suburbs (31.8%) than cities (26.5%) or rural areas (26.4%). Crime level in school locations was mainly reported as low, making up slightly over 75% of the sample.

BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS

Table 3. demonstrates Pearson's correlation coefficients for associations between delinquency and measures of social capital (parental and community involvement). Both measures of social capital had statistically significant relationships with delinquency, parental involvement having a moderate negative relationship ($r = -.374$, $p < .001$) and community involvement having a weak positive relationship ($r = .186$, $p < .001$). Increased parental involvement was therefore associated with decreased delinquency. The positive association between community involvement and delinquency was unexpected, however; this may be the result of the operationalization of the community involvement scale. The inclusion of juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement agencies, and mental health agencies in the community involvement scale may have contributed to the positive correlation with delinquency, considering that such agencies often become involved in schools after delinquency has occurred, and are themselves often associated with increased delinquency in schools.

Table 4. demonstrates the Pearson's correlation coefficient for the association between delinquency and percent minority enrollment. Percent minority enrollment had a weak and positive association with delinquency ($r = .199$), and this relationship was statistically significant ($p < .001$). This finding demonstrates that higher percentages of minority enrollment in schools

are associated with increased school delinquency. Additional findings from bivariate correlations revealed that parental involvement had a negative (albeit weak) association with percent minority enrollment ($r = -.133$), which was significant at $p < .001$.

Table 3. Pearson's Correlation of Delinquency and Measures of Social Capital

	Delinquency	Sig.	N
Parental Involvement	-.374***	.000	2,560
Community Involvement	.186***	.000	2,560

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Table 4. Pearson's Correlation of Delinquency and Percent Minority Enrollment

	Delinquency	Sig.	N
% Minority Enrollment	.199***	.000	2,560

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

One-way ANOVAs were performed to calculate the effects of school type, school size, school location, and crime level in school location categories on delinquency. There was a significant effect of each variable's group means on delinquency at $p < .001$. For school type [$F(3, 2,556) = 279.85, p = .000$]; school size [$F(3, 2,556) = 331.019, p = .000$]; school location [$F(3, 2,556) = 27.813, p = .000$]; and crime level in school location [$F(2, 2,557) = 52.724, p = .000$]. The statistical significance of each one-way ANOVA thus prompted post hoc comparisons utilizing Tukey tests to determine which of the variables' categories significantly differed from each other.

Post hoc Tukey tests indicated that each of the category means for school type and school size significantly differed from each other. For school type categories: primary ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 1.83$), middle ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.26$), high ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.14$), and combined ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.53$) were all significantly different from each other at $p < .001$. For school size categories: less than 300 ($M = 1.49$, $SD = 1.62$), 300-499 ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.58$), 500-999 ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.41$), and 1,000 or more ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.00$) were also significantly different from each other at $p < .001$.

Not all of the school location category means differed significantly from each other; cities ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.53$) differed significantly from suburbs ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.66$), towns ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.43$), and rural locations ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.60$) at $p < .001$; suburbs also differed significantly from rural locations at $p < .001$. However, school locations in suburbs and rural areas each did not significantly differ from towns. Findings comparing effects of the crime level in school locations demonstrated that low level of crime ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.62$) differed significantly from moderate level ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.36$) and high level ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.56$) of crime at $p < .001$; however, the difference between moderate level and high level of crime was not significant.

REGRESSION RESULTS

Table 5. demonstrates OLS regressions predicting delinquency in two models. Model 1 utilized parental and community involvement as predictor variables; Model 2 utilized parental and community involvement as well as the control variables. Because the delinquency variable was logarithmically transformed in order to normalize this variable's distribution, the regression

models will be interpreted as such: a 1 unit increase/decrease in the predictor variables is associated with a percentage increase/decrease in delinquency.

Results indicate that the two predictor variables in Model 1 (parental and community involvement) explained 17% of the variance in school delinquency ($R^2 = .170$, $p < .001$). Holding all others constant, both parental involvement and community involvement had statistically significant predictive effects on school delinquency at $p < .001$. Parental involvement (for every 1 unit increase) predicted a 36.8% decrease in school delinquency ($\beta = -.368$, $p = .000$); this finding supported Hypothesis 1 (stronger parent-school relationships through increased parental involvement in schools is predictive of reduced school delinquency). Community involvement (for every 1 unit increase) predicted a 17.3% increase in school delinquency ($\beta = .173$, $p = .000$). This finding therefore did not support Hypothesis 2, that stronger community-school relationships through increased community involvement in schools, is predictive of reduced school delinquency. However, as previously noted, this may have resulted from the operationalization of the community involvement scale.

Model 2 included both measures of social capital as well as the control variables in analyzing predictive effects on school delinquency, and these predictor variables accounted for about 44% of the variance in school delinquency ($R^2 = .441$, $p < .001$). The addition of the control variables resulted in reduced predictive effects (holding all others constant) for both parental and community involvement, however, these effects were both statistically significant at $p < .001$. Parental involvement predicted about a 16% decrease in school delinquency ($\beta = -.161$, $p = .000$), while community involvement predicted about a 6% increase in school delinquency ($\beta = .062$, $p = .000$). The addition of the control variables therefore mediated the individual effects of parental and community involvement in schools on school delinquency.

Consistent with correlational analyses, percent minority enrollment (for every 1 unit increase) predicted a 6.6% increase in school delinquency ($\beta = .066$, $p = .000$). Additionally, each of the dummy variables for school type, school size, and crime level in school location predicted statistically significant effects on school delinquency at $p < .001$. Particular findings of interest reveal that middle schools and high schools predicted similar percentages of school delinquency; middle schools predicted about a 32% increase in school delinquency ($\beta = .323$, $p = .000$), and high schools predicted about a 31% increase in school delinquency ($\beta = .312$, $p = .000$). Increases in school size additionally revealed greater predictive effects on school delinquency. Schools housing 300-499 students predicted about a 13% increase in school delinquency ($\beta = .128$, $p = .000$), schools with 500-999 students predicted about a 36% increase in school delinquency ($\beta = .362$, $p = .000$), and schools housing 1,000 or more students predicted about a 53% increase in school delinquency ($\beta = .526$, $p = .000$).

Schools located in areas with moderate levels of crime predicted about a 9% increase in school delinquency ($\beta = .087$, $p = .000$), while high crime level areas predicted about a 7% increase in school delinquency ($\beta = .067$, $p = .000$). This finding is of particular interest considering popular ideas about the disorganization of schools in high crime areas. Specific school location as suburb, town, or rural each predicted decreases in school delinquency, however, significant effects were only found for school locations in suburbs ($\beta = -.058$, $p = .003$), where suburb locations predicted a 5.8% decrease in school delinquency.

Table 5. OLS Regression Predicting Delinquency

	Model 1		Model 2	
	β	Sig.	β	Sig.
Constant	3.472*** (39.613)		1.019*** (6.357)	
Parental Involvement	-.368*** (-20.438)	.000	-.161*** (-9.268)	.000
Community Involvement	.173*** (9.625)	.000	.062*** (4.043)	.000
% Minority Enrollment			.066*** (3.687)	.000
<u>School Type</u>				
Middle			.323*** (16.071)	.000
High			.312*** (12.712)	.000
Combined			.071*** (4.331)	.000
<u>School Size</u>				
300-499			.128*** (5.760)	.000
500-999			.362*** (14.153)	.000
1,000 or more			.526*** (19.194)	.000
<u>School Location</u>				
Suburb			-.058** (-2.958)	.003
Town			-.025 (-1.334)	.182
Rural			-.028 (-1.306)	.192
<u>Crime Level in School Location</u>				
Moderate			.087*** (5.281)	.000
High			.067*** (4.108)	.000
R squared	.170		.441	
N	2,560		2,560	

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Overall, research findings provide support for Hypothesis 1, but not Hypothesis 2, demonstrating that parental involvement in schools may be more beneficial for decreasing school delinquency than community involvement. However, the conceptualization of community involvement to include law enforcement, mental health, and juvenile justice agencies, may have contributed to findings in this study that community involvement predicts increases in school delinquency; such agencies often become involved in schools after delinquent behavior has occurred, and therefore are associated with increased school delinquency. This particular finding allows for consideration of ways in which relationships (i.e. social capital) may be cultivated and/or strengthened between schools and certain community agencies such as law enforcement, in efforts to prevent delinquency as opposed to responding to delinquency. The next chapter will further discuss these considerations and other implications of this study.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This section provides further discussion of the research findings, implications of the study, research limitations, and considerations for future research.

PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IMPACT ON SCHOOL DELINQUENCY

To answer the research questions of this study: the strength of both parent-school and community-school relationships influence school delinquency, however in different ways. The findings of this study suggest that parental involvement in schools is significantly associated with and predictive of decreased school delinquency, as perceived by school administrators. This finding remains when accounting for other factors such as percent minority enrollment in schools, school level, school size, school location, and crime levels in school locations. Therefore, increased parental involvement in schools is perceived by school administrators to reduce the amount of delinquent behavior in which students participate. These findings are further supported by prior research demonstrating that based on the perceptions of school administrators, increased school partnerships with families are associated with decreases in schools' use of disciplinary action (Sheldon and Epstein 2002). The effects of parental involvement in schools on school delinquency also provide support for the effects of social capital, where stronger relationships between parents and schools assist schools in attaining goals of reducing delinquency among students (Coleman 1988). Increased parental involvement in schools provides more opportunities for parents to pass on their knowledge and skills (human

capital) regarding proper behavior to children, and the strength of the relationship formed through such involvement is essentially twofold: increased parental involvement not only strengthens parents' relationships with schools, but with their children within the school context. The increase in social capital through strengthened relationships between parents and schools therefore facilitates the reduction of school delinquency.

The effects of community involvement in schools on school delinquency were not as originally hypothesized: community involvement had significant effects on delinquency; however, this involvement was associated with and predictive of increases in delinquent behavior. As previously noted, however, this finding may have resulted in part from the conceptualization of the community involvement measure in this study, which included agencies within communities whose involvement with schools often begin after delinquent behavior has occurred. Nevertheless, the significance of community involvement's effects on school delinquency suggests that the strength of the community-school relationship is meaningful and may affect behavior within schools. These findings prompt further investigation into how changing the nature of relationships between schools and certain community agencies (i.e. law enforcement and juvenile justice) from reactive to proactive may change the nature of community-school partnership effects on delinquency.

Additional findings of interest demonstrate that based on school administrators' perceptions, schools in areas with moderate crime and high crime levels predict only slight increases in school delinquency when accounting for all other factors. This finding is of particular interest considering not only popular ideas about the disorganization of schools in high crime areas, but research demonstrating that communities perceived as having higher crime levels are associated with increased school misconduct (Armstrong et al. 2015). However, crime

levels in school locations in this study were measured based on school administrator perceptions, which may vary based on administrator ideas about crime. Furthermore, while schools located in suburban locations are commonly perceived as being well organized and therefore less delinquent, findings from this study suggest that school locations in suburbs are predictive of only slight decreases in delinquency compared to school locations in cities. This finding suggests that school delinquency in cities and suburbs may not be significantly different, and that other factors including school racial makeup or delinquency reporting patterns may account for school delinquency more so than geographic location. Such findings demonstrate difficulties in determining how to effectively measure delinquency in schools.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This study has clear and significant policy implications. By examining a nationally representative sample of U.S. public schools of all levels, regardless of their current efforts to forge partnerships with parents and/or communities, this study highlights the need for schools' active involvement with policymakers in the creation and implementation of policies aimed at maintaining student discipline and reducing delinquency. Paying attention to school officials, who are often on the front lines of responding to student delinquency, may thus provide significant insight to schools' perceptions of parental involvement, community involvement, and prevalence of delinquency in schools. This study also supports prior research indicating that schools perceive efforts to involve both parents and communities in schools as effective for maintaining school discipline (Sheldon and Epstein 2002; Epstein and Sheldon 2002); schools' perceptions should thus be considered by policymakers when creating and implementing policy aimed at reducing delinquency. Strong relationships between school officials and educational

policymakers allow for increased communication between schools and legislatures, thus giving schools the opportunity to communicate concerns and ideas regarding policies or programs aimed at improving student behavior.

Because parental and community involvement in schools is predictive of delinquency among a nationally representative sample of U.S. public schools, this may create a national platform for public schools to request resources and assistance from policymakers. Such resources may assist schools in creating and strengthening parent-school and community-school relationships in the pursuit of improved behavior within school walls. School resources aimed at stimulating parental involvement may assist parents in overcoming certain socioeconomic factors that often prevent or restrict their involvement in schools, including economic disadvantage, lack of transportation, or language barriers (Lareau 2003). Resources aimed at stimulating parental involvement in schools are additionally important considering this study's finding that parental involvement had a significant inverse relationship with percent minority enrollment in schools. Understanding the specific issues that many minority parents face regarding involvement in their children's education and overcoming such factors may allow schools to more easily reach out and connect with parents in support of improving outcomes for children.

Furthermore, certain policies may assist schools in creating programs aimed at cultivating positive relationships between schools and certain community agencies, such as law enforcement, mental health agencies, and juvenile justice agencies. Persuading policymakers that community involvement in schools is significantly predictive of school delinquency, but may be dependent on the nature of certain community-school partnerships, may allow schools opportunities to cultivate positive relationships with community agencies that are often associated with negative outcomes regarding delinquency. Allowing for the cultivation of

positive relationships between schools and community agencies, specifically law enforcement and juvenile justice, may provide opportunities for agency personnel to take on positive and proactive roles in schools. This may provide opportunities for students to associate these community agencies as being helpful, sources of support, and there to assist in preventing delinquency, instead of reactionary agencies that become involved only after delinquency has occurred. Finally, findings that parental and community involvement in schools are both predictive of school delinquency based on the perceptions of school administrators provides support for the promotion of delinquency prevention programs (Sheldon and Epstein 2002; Sanders 2001) as opposed to reactive disciplinary policies that often result in punishment.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

As with any research, this study had limitations that should be noted. First, the study utilized secondary data that was also a public-use file. Public-use files do not include certain variables found in restricted-use files such as sensitive or confidential information, and therefore, certain variables that may have been useful to this study were not available. Utilizing secondary data also makes difficult the construction and conceptualization of certain variables as precisely as the researcher would like, where variables using secondary data must be constructed using only the information in the pre-collected dataset. For instance, the highly skewed nature of the delinquency variable utilized in this study prompted efforts to create a delinquency rate; however, individual school populations were not made available in the public use file. This therefore hindered the ability to conceptualize the delinquency variable as precisely as possible. The cross-sectional nature of this study, focusing only on the 2007-2008 school year, also limits

the ability to examine whether parental and community involvement in schools affects student delinquency over time.

An additional limitation stems from the conceptualization of the community involvement variable. Prior studies have measured community involvement mainly through the use of positively perceived programs such as community mentors or volunteers (Sheldon and Epstein 2002) or other businesses or volunteer agencies associated with positive community involvement (Sanders 2001). The dataset utilized in this study had limited options to consider when measuring community involvement, where certain options included law enforcement agencies, mental health agencies, or juvenile justice agencies. The inclusion of these agencies in the conceptualization of community involvement likely contributed to results indicating that community involvement was associated with increases in school delinquency, despite prior research findings. Having the ability to tease out positively vs. negatively perceived community involvement actors may therefore have produced different findings for this study.

A final, albeit important, limitation of this study is the use of data collected from school administrators. Despite the policy implications of a study utilizing data from the perspective of schools, utilizing measures based on school administrator reports raises issues regarding discrepancies between what school administrators have been made aware of regarding delinquency, as well as parental and community involvement, and the actions that have actually occurred. Regarding parental involvement, for instance, the 2008 School Survey on Crime and Safety asked school principals to provide their best estimate of the percentage of students that had a parent or guardian involved in certain events during the school year; a best estimate therefore may either over or under estimate the actual percentage of students with involved parents or guardians throughout the school year, especially if principals are distant and not

concretely aware of the extent of parental involvement occurring in their schools. Additionally, measuring delinquency from the perspective of school administrators, as opposed to students' or even teachers' perspectives, may not account for delinquent acts not officially made known to school administrators, and thus not recorded. Due to the administrative nature of school principals' jobs and their inability to observe the actions of all students at one time, principals may only report activity of which they have been made aware. Therefore, in schools where delinquency occurs but is unobserved, or where teachers over or under report incidents of delinquency, what school principals know to be occurring, and thus report, may be significantly skewed.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In an effort to determine whether parental and community involvement in schools affects school delinquency over time, scholars may consider employing longitudinal studies with nationally representative samples of U.S. public schools. Future studies may also consider utilizing samples of U.S. public school students, their parents, and school administrators, in order to determine whether student reports of delinquency are similar to school administrators' perceptions of delinquency, and whether students' perceptions of parental involvement in school are similar to parent self-reports. While obtaining information solely from school administrators may have important policy implications, understanding student and parent perceptions of factors affecting delinquency in schools allows scholars to consider the perceptions of the multiple actors that are involved in school delinquency. Surveying parents may also provide insight regarding parent perceptions of barriers to involvement in schools, in order to better inform school efforts aimed at stimulating and strengthening parent-school partnerships. Future research

may also consider distinguishing between types of community involvement in schools; in order to more effectively investigate whether specific community agencies or groups are associated with either increased or decreased school delinquency. Surveying personnel in certain community agencies (law enforcement, mental health, juvenile justice) regarding their perceptions of school delinquency in the communities they serve may also allow schools to better understand how these personnel perceive delinquency in schools. This in turn may inform strategies for schools toward creating and implementing positive partnerships with certain community agencies aimed at preventing delinquency.

As a final note, this study's findings regarding community involvement's effects on school delinquency may be explained in a wider context by the increasing use of school resource officers (SROs) in U.S. public schools, where school resource officers have many of the same powers of the police, including the right to detain and arrest students (Sanburn 2015). While proponents of school resource officers may argue that officers maintain school order more effectively than teachers or administrators, critics argue that disciplinary matters in schools that would normally have been addressed "in house" by school administrators are now becoming criminal matters handled by the police (Sanburn 2015), even for elementary-aged children (Fowler 2011). The increasing criminalization of student behavior within schools is therefore aligning delinquent students more closely with the criminal justice system and contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline effect, whereby delinquent student behavior handled by law enforcement officers instead of school administrators increases the chances that delinquent students will drop out of school and enter the juvenile or criminal justice systems (Fowler 2011). Future research may therefore consider whether, in the advent of increased reliance on school resource officers in handling school disciplinary matters, partnerships between schools and law

enforcement are possible or desirable. Research may also question whether school resource officers are even necessary agents of control over delinquent behavior, considering “[t]he historical reality...that America’s public schools are *very safe*, even those in high-crime neighborhoods” (Fowler 2011:15-16). The notion of community involvement in schools and how such involvement influences school delinquency is thus a complex concept that merits further investigation.

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