response. The inegalitarian effects of criminal justice policy must be balanced against the goal of public safety.

This counterargument raises a complex question: Can public safety be achieved by policies that deepen social inequality? To answer this question, much depends on the link between inequality and crime. If inequality causes crime—and a large research literature indicates that it does—the recent reliance on punishment as the first option in criminal justice policy may be a self-defeating route to public safety. The connection between crime and inequality is well-trodden ground for students of criminology. The prison boom and its effects on racial inequality give this question renewed urgency. In earlier research and policy, the contours of social inequality were viewed as fixed and external to the patterns of crime that they generated. Our new challenge involves viewing inequality as, in part, a product of the expansion of the American system of punishment.

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The Problem with "Addition by Subtraction": The Prison-Crime Relationship in Low-Income Communities

Todd R. Clear

As a theory of public safety, incarceration is based on the premise of "addition by subtraction." It is a social policy that removes people from their communities, subtracting from those places whatever deficits were exacted by their presence. The hard-and-fast assumption of incarceration as a tool of public safety is that removing these people from their communities subtracts only (or primarily) the problems they represented for their places, and thereby leaves those places better. Any assets that are removed pose a problem for the theory.

Two points regarding this routine assumption of incarceration policy are worth noting. First, the idea that removing criminals has primarily the effect of eliminating community deficits comports closely with dominant public opinion about criminals: they are viewed as people whose net contribution to community life is negative, and so not much will be lost by their being gone. Second, neither the broad policy assumption nor the common public wisdom has been subjected to direct empirical test.

Even though the traditional theory of incarceration for public safety is one of the most uniformly held ideas in contemporary and popular crime policy, there is good reason to question both the common wisdom and the policy assumption of "addition by subtraction." I argue that very high concentrations of incarceration may well have a negative impact on public safety by leaving communities less capable of sustaining the in-

formal social control that undergirds public safety. This happens not only because incarceration, experienced at high levels, has the inevitable result of removing valuable assets from the community, but also because the concentration of incarceration affects the community capacity of those who are left behind.

COERCIVE MOBILITY AND CRIME CONTROL

The argument in this chapter is based on a continuing line of research studies undertaken by my colleague, Dina Rose, and me. In the initial paper[1] we explained a theory of "coercive mobility," based on a review of research conducted outside the criminal justice context. Taken as a whole, this suggests that high rates of incarceration can destabilize communities in ways that make them vulnerable to crime. The argument draws upon social disorganization theory, which has long held that in areas where residents are highly outwardly mobile, crime will flourish, because those locations will lack the stable infrastructure that is required as a foundation of informal social control.

Three related studies, all using data from Tallahassee, Florida, have provided support for the "coercive mobility" hypothesis. A second paper[2] showed that people who have personal experience with incarceration, either directly or through a close associate or family member, are more likely to have a low assessment of informal social control when they already have a low opinion of formal control, and makes nonblacks just as likely as blacks to hold a negative assessment of informal social control. An analysis of crime rates[3] found that neighborhoods with the highest levels of incarceration in one year had higher-than-expected crime rates in the following year, compared with other Tallahassee neighborhoods (and controlling for poverty, racial composition, and mobility). A third study[4] in which over one hundred residents and civic leaders in two high-incarceration neighborhoods were interviewed, showed that those who live or work in such areas can point to a number

of ways in which the incarceration experience has damaged the quality of life in their neighborhood.

I should emphasize that this model of "coercive mobility" applies to the highest levels of incarceration in poor and disadvantaged neighborhoods. This is not a general theory of incarceration; rather, it is a theory that applies to particular dynamics of incarceration in places that lack social capital to begin with. Indeed, we find evidence that low levels of incarceration seem to benefit neighborhoods' public safety. But when incarceration reaches a certain level in an area that already struggles for assets, the effects of imprisonment undermine the building blocks of social order. This is, for these neighborhoods, a kind of double whammy. First, they suffer the disruptions that occur when large numbers of residents are coercively removed and imprisoned. Then, they struggle with the pressures that occur when large numbers of former convicts return to community life. Both processes—removal and return—are important, but because the latter gets far more attention than the former, I will focus on the effects of removal in this essay.

CONCENTRATION OF INCARCERATION

For the last thirty years, one aspect of corrections has overshadowed all others: growth. The decade of the 1970s began with barely 200,000 Americans in prison, and an incarceration rate around 100 per 100,000 citizens. Beginning in 1972, the prison population started a pattern of unrelenting growth in annual increments, lasting for over a generation and continuing today. This sustained growth in imprisonment has occurred with little relationship to crime rates (which have both risen and fallen during this period), economic patterns (which have cycled through good times and bad), and population demographics (which have seen the number of crime-aged males in the population both increase and decrease). Today, a 500 percent increase in prisoners leaves the country with over 1.3 million citizens in prison (counting those in

jail, almost 2 million are confined) and an incarceration rate of nearly 700 per 100,000. This is not the place to offer a full-scale explanation of the growth of Americans in prison; suffice it to say that at no time in human history has there been such a sustained, systematic increase in the use of confinement as a tool of social control.

For our purposes, it is important to recognize that the growth of incarceration has been concentrated among certain groups and in certain locations. Men, for example, are eight times more likely to go to prison than women. The lifetime probabilities of spending time in prison are 28.5 per 100 for African-American males and 16 per 100 for Hispanic males, about six and four times higher respectively, than for white males.[5] Incarceration is far more an issue for minority communities than in white communities, especially among men.

Because poor men of color live in concentrations in neighborhoods that are racially and economically homogeneous, some of the places where these men live are particularly hard-hit by incarceration. Depending upon the size of the neighborhood and the method of counting, studies have estimated that up to 25 percent of the adult male residents in particular neighborhoods are locked up on any given day,[6] up to 13 percent of adult males enter prison or jail in a given year,[7] and up to 2 percent of all residents enter prison in a given year.[8] To be sure, incarceration affects all social groups and can happen in any neighborhood; but it is far more prevalent among some groups and in some areas than in others.

The dynamics of growing concentrations of the residents of certain neighborhoods going to prison (and jail) are not insignificant for these locations. Imagine, for a moment, living in an area where one in eight parent-aged males is removed for confinement each year, and one in four is locked up at any given time. It is not difficult to see that this social process, over time, would be one of the truly important aspects of community life. The question is, how does this level of concentrated coercive mobility affect public safety through its impact on the building blocks of social order?

BUILDING BLOCKS OF PUBLIC SAFETY

We are used to the idea that public safety is the task of criminal justice. Yet upon minimal reflection, we are bound to realize that the lion's share of public safety comes about not from the actions or practices of public agencies of government but from the everyday decisions and perspectives of citizens. When places become unsafe, it is not primarily due to a breakdown in the formal social controls of the state, but because of the limitations of the informal social controls operating in those places. This is a routine sociological insight.

Over the years, sociologists have developed numerous ways of describing the nature of informal social controls and how they work. In previous writing on the impact of incarceration on community, Dina Rose and I have borrowed mainly from the works of Hunter,[9] Hirschi,[10] and Shaw and McKay.[11] These are established control theories in criminology, and they remain useful to any understanding of the nature of informal social control and the limits of formal social control. For this chapter, I want to stray a bit from these established theories and offer a simplified idea of three levels of informal social control that promote safer places: what people do privately with intimate relations; what people do collectively in social relations; and the normative views people adopt regarding criminal conduct. I will describe each of these levels of control, and illustrate how they work to promote safer places. Then I will show how high levels of incarceration might undermine the capacity of each level.

Before I begin this line of analysis, I want to briefly note four important sociological ideas that work their way throughout this essay, explicitly and implicitly. *Human capital* refers to the talents a person brings to social life, innate and acquired. *Social capital* is the capacity of a person to accomplish important personal aims through that person's connections to others. Where human capital is an attribute of a person in detachment from others, social capital is an attribute that refers to the quality and potency of interpersonal attachments, and thus may be an at-

tribute both of individuals and of the groups to which they belong. *Social networks* are webs of relationships through which social action occurs. Social networks occur in a wide variety of ways and have an even wider variety of capacities: they may be dense or shallow, intimate or impersonal, weak or strong, and a host of other comparable attributes. It is through the potency of one's social networks that one's social capital is realized. Finally, *collective efficacy* (a new term coined by Robert Sampson and his colleagues)[12] refers to the ability of an aggregate to put shared expectations for their community into action and to achieve desired qualities of community life.

These terms are of enduring importance to an understanding of public safety. People who suffer limited human capital will be able to exercise few personal choices in their pursuit of whatever desires guide their lives; they will instead rely upon available social capital to advance their personal aims. Places where social networks are weak or thin will provide little basis upon which social capital may be produced. The worst situation a person can confront is to possess little in the way of human capital, suffer a dearth of network relationships, and hence have little social capital to call upon for personal aims. Such a person will face a life of limited choices, indeed. Concentrate a large number of such people in a particular area, and there will be little basis for generating collective efficacy, the translation of social capital into social action. My comments below will make a few points about how incarceration, in concentrated levels, works on community life through the way it affects these attributes.

Having laid this conceptual foundation, let us now consider the three mechanisms of informal social control that help a place become safer, and how high levels of incarceration affect them.

What people do privately with intimate relations. There is no more important source of public safety than the family unit. It is from their families that children learn behavioral norms and experience the first consequences of disobeying those norms. Families also structure the time of young people in childhood and especially in adolescence. It is

safe to postulate that children who grow up under prosocial normative expectations and structured availability of time will be less inclined to engage in criminal conduct. Thus, the first way in which private social control operates as an important source of public safety is through the processes of child rearing in family units. Important elements of child rearing are normative socialization and basic supervision.

In addition, families establish the framework for a person's human capital and eventual social capital. They support or impede education; they help develop or retard personal skills. Young people who hail from families that invest in the child's human capital grow up in a web of informal social controls that are not experienced otherwise. The social network of the parents also frames the child's initial social capital: "connections" can lead to job opportunities, and this in turn provides the network of controls that reinforce prosocial choices.

Intimates provide informal social control in other ways. Close associates reinforce values learned in childhood, and they share activities with one another. When those values and activities are prosocial, they serve as effective mechanisms of informal social control. In this way, intimate associations carry on the social control functions of the family into later life. Intimates can also become key components of potential new networks of social relations because their networks (and their resulting social capital) may be tapped through the interpersonal connection. A close friend will help someone get a job; a family member's friend will help someone deal with legal trouble through connections to the legal system.

This discussion illustrates a central point made a half-generation ago by Albert Hunter.[13] Much of the work of social control is performed in private, interpersonal relations. Family members and close friends are sources of a person's association to the larger society, and they form the most basic source of informal social control. It is a plain fact that, aside from the importance of these relations, not everyone has them in equal abundance. Some children are born into families that provide less support for human capital formation, offer fewer networks of relations that

can promote social capital, and supply a much more limited foundation upon which informal social control can be built. These children are well known to us; we call them "at risk."

The way concentrated neighborhood levels of incarceration affect these "private" sources of social control is at once obvious and also subtle. Families that lack adult male role members are known, on average, to face economic stresses and provide reduced levels of child supervision. When these families live in settings where the absence of adult males is common, there are widespread problems in recruiting males as fathers, mentors, providers, and role models.

The efforts of many women who raise families with absent fathers is heroic, and the immense capacity of many women to lead their families despite missing men is an undeniable fact. But to understand the significance of incarceration, we have to recognize that it is not just some families who are affected in high concentration locations, but nearly all families. Almost every family faces the loss of male role-takers, and a large number of additional families face the burden of female members in confinement. Anthropologists who study these areas describe a reality in which a child being raised with stable male and female adult supports is the exception rather than the rule.

High incarceration locations are always places where poor people live. In the face of the dearth of resources, incarceration in wholesale amounts exacerbates the limits of social support. Here is the blunt reality. Children who grow up in areas where substantial amounts of human capital are not easily acquired struggle with inadequate schools, limited leisure time choices, and insufficient formative supports. The systematic absence or weakening of male sources of support for human capital formation makes a bad situation worse and adds a further impediment to overcoming these disadvantages of birth.

Concentrated incarceration also impedes the formation of social capital in impoverished locations. Social capital is most enhanced by expansive networks that include "weak" ties—that is, broad networks that interact with numerous other networks in simple ways.[14] Poor locations tend to produce "strong" ties—kinship and similar relational ties that are

sustained by close contact—in smaller networks that are isolated from other networks. This lack of connection between poor peoples' networks and others' outside narrow environs explains the very limited capacity these networks have for their members' social capital. A middle-class person, for instance, can call upon relationships with a wide variety of acquaintances for various types of assistance and support, but a poverty-stricken person living in the impoverished inner city has a limited list of people—mostly family and a few close friends—who may be tapped for help. When these limited networks of mostly "strong" ties become saturated with people who have been incarcerated, the capacity of the networks is hampered further. Being poor is associated with problematic social ties, and experiencing incarceration aggravates that difficulty.

What people do collectively in social relations. People are social animals, and their drive for social interaction is what forms a society. Between the formal controls of the state and the informal controls of the family and intimates exists a range of socializing associations and groups. Just to mention a few of these shows how important they might become in a person's life: churches, social clubs, business leagues, volunteer groups, organized youth groups, neighborhood associations, and even patterned social get-togethers. One of the primary ways many people spend their time is in personal collective social relations that go beyond family ties. These social controls are intermediate, in that they fall between the private sources of control offered by the family and other intimates and the public forms of control managed by the state. Because these forms of control are often products of social arrangements particular to a group or neighborhood location, they have been called "parochial" controls.[15]

Parochial social control contributes to public safety in three ways. At its most basic, these associations occupy free time for those who engage in them, thereby reducing the amount of time that remains available for other activities, including antisocial behavior. The old saw "idleness is the devil's playground" is not without merit. Second, parochial social controls can substitute for absent or limited parental contact. This is one

of the reasons so much importance is placed on summer and after-school activities for youth who otherwise would lack adult supervision. Finally, the range of parochial associations operating in a given area creates a social web of relationships that influence behavior. Attending church, belonging to a social club, sharing leisure pursuits with a regular group, knowing the local store owner personally—all these patterned relationships act as controls on behavior.

In the poor places that contribute residents to the prison system in large numbers, there are already limits in the capacity of parochial social control. One of the effects of high mobility, for example, is that these informal community relationships are less likely to form and less likely to thrive.[16] Mobility is not the only culprit. Studies show that crime leads people to isolate themselves from their neighbors and therefore inhibits the social activity that promotes parochial social control.[17] People who have to struggle to make ends meet simply do not have the time to devote to the intermediate social activities that create the interpersonal networks of parochial social control. People who fear their neighbors and feel unsafe on the streets where they live do not venture out to frequent whatever intermediate social interactions are offered. For the most part, those who live in unsafe places also face economic hardship, and this poses a double-edged challenge to the ability of these places to develop new forms of intermediate social controls and sustain those that might already exist.

High incarceration rates exacerbate these dynamics. When primary (private) social control systems, principally families, are impaired by the instability of adults flowing into and out of prisons, they become less capable of participating in the intermediate social activity that underpins parochial social control. Thus, coercive mobility imposed by the state begins to have the same destabilizing effects on neighborhood social structures that have been observed for voluntary mobility, with the added problem that those who remain may have a weakened capacity for this form of social activity. One study[18] interviewed residents in two high-incarceration areas in Tallahassee, Florida. These people reported that the levels of imprisonment in their neighborhoods created prob-

lems in children's self-esteem and supervision, and led neighbors to isolate themselves further from one another due to the social stigma associated with imprisonment. Stories were told of incarceration of a family member leading to the family's estrangement from churches, neighbors, and social groups. And while a general ethic of a willingness to forgive and accept back home was expressed regarding most locals who run afoul of the law, it was also clear that families who send a loved one to prison often face a social crisis with their neighbors. In this way, incarceration affects not just those who go to prison, but those who are left behind as well.

The normative views people develop regarding criminal conduct. Collective efficacy, which studies show is one of the sources of public safety, is founded on normative cohesion. That is, people who share common values and know that these values will be supported create a place where people feel free to act publicly to uphold those standards of conduct. When this is true, people collectively create a public order through their expectations of one another's conduct and their actions to reinforce those expectations. Thus, a critical component of ordered societies is a level of consensus about the values of social order and a belief in the legitimacy of social order.

Researchers have long known that direct personal experience with the criminal justice system affects how a person evaluates the system. Two general patterns of findings are worth noting. First, people of color report they are more likely to experience unfair treatment at the hands of the police.[19] Second, people who feel they have been unfairly treated by the justice system feel less obligation to obey the law.[20] This may explain why so many people of color have such negative attitudes toward the criminal justice system: they believe it is unfairly biased against them.

The importance of personal experience has a neighborhood component. Sampson and Jeglum-Bertusch[21] show that people who live in places where social control fails and social disorder thrives express a strong distrust of formal social control and a greater degree of tolerance for those who engage in deviance. It may well be that a sustained, collective experience with criminal justice in these troubled areas promotes a

negative view about the justice system, a nuanced view about offenders, and a cynical view about social control. Rose and Clear[22] found, for example, that people who know someone personally who has been incarcerated and feel negatively about formal social control also hold more negative views about the capacity of informal social control in the areas where they live.

It would not be surprising to learn that places sustaining high levels of incarceration are home to residents who feel unjustly treated by the criminal justice system. When they see their ex-convict family members caught up in a cycle that keeps them jobless, drug-dependent, and at the edge of recidivism, they blame the system for making things worse. Indeed, residents interviewed in Tallahassee are quick to identify racism as one of the causes of the high levels of incarceration they experience and one of the consequences of the way incarceration affects their lives.[23] This antagonistic view of the work of formal social control systems undermines the capacity of informal social control by sustaining an attitude of "we-versus-they." It makes the neighbors less inclined to trust the aims of representatives of formal social control systems, and it pits friends, family members, and formal agents of control against one another. Under such conditions, collective efficacy is not possible.

A COMMENT ON THE COUNTERFACTUAL

This has been an argument that high incarceration rates destabilize community life and undermine the community forces that promote public safety. It is a subtle set of forces; less a scissor that slices social fabric and more a straw that breaks the back of social control. Each of the dynamics described above is modest in its own right; together, they add up to a significant social force. In neighborhoods that suffer large numbers of offenders removed from incarceration and then returning from prison, these small effects are so common as to become a major dynamic of community life.

The idea that incarceration becomes problematic for some communi-

ties is deeply counterintuitive in today's public opinion climate. It seems beyond debate that any policy that removes people who do bad things leaves those who remain better off; it seems laughable to say that "incarceration causes crime." It is important, then, to be clear about what is being argued and what is not. The line of analysis developed above is *not* meant to say that "incarceration causes crime." The relationship between amounts of incarceration and levels of crime is complicated, and it would be far-fetched to claim that incarceration makes no contribution to public safety. It surely does in specific cases and under particular conditions.

The argument made here is a much more narrow one. Well-established theory and a solid body of evidence indicate that high levels of incarceration concentrated in impoverished communities has a destabilizing effect on community life, so that the most basic underpinnings of informal social control are damaged. This, in turn, reproduces the very dynamics that sustain crime.

There are, of course, plenty of families that rally in the face of a loved one being sent to prison, finding ways to strengthen child-rearing and locating substitute resources to replace the lost family member. There are plenty of families, too, that benefit from the temporary reprieve from what may well have been a damaging member of the household. Nothing in this theory of "coercive mobility" should detract from the large numbers of valiant adults and children who rise to the challenge of incarceration in their lives by finding ways to overcome the effects and not only survive, but become stronger. There are such families; there are, one can suppose, such neighborhoods. Yet, these stories are the exception rather than the rule. On average, the effects of very high levels of incarceration are destabilizing in the aggregate, and they pose a problem even the strongest families must struggle to deal with. Too many families and too many neighborhoods fail the challenge.