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Disorder and Community Decline in Forty
Neighborhoods of the United States,
1977-1983

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Wesley G. Skogan

ICPSR 8944

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DISORDER AND COMMUNITY DECLINE IN FORTY NEIGHBORHOODS
OF THE UNITED STATES, 1977-1983

(ICPSR 8944)

Principal Investigator

Wesley G. Skogan

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ACQUISITIONS

First ICPSR Edition
Fall 1988

Inter-university Consortium for
Political and Social Research
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

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**U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice**

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In order to provide funding agencies with essential information about the use of archival resources and to facilitate the exchange of information about ICPSR participants' research activities, each user of the ICPSR data facilities is expected to send two copies of each completed manuscript or thesis abstract to the Consortium. Please indicate in the cover letter which data were used.

Wesley G. Skogan

DISORDER AND COMMUNITY DECLINE IN FORTY NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE
UNITED STATES, 1977-1983 (ICPSR 8944)

SUMMARY: This data collection was designed to evaluate the effects of disorderly neighborhood conditions on community decline and residents' reactions toward crime. Data from five previously collected datasets were aggregated and merged to produce neighborhood-level data on disorder, crime, fear, residential satisfaction, and other key factors in community decline. The 40 neighborhoods studied were located in Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Newark, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Variables in the data file include: (1) disorder characteristics such as loitering, drugs, vandalism, noise and gang activity, (2) demographic characteristics such as race, age, and unemployment rate, and (3) neighborhood crime problems such as burglary, robbery, assault, and rape. Information is also available on crime avoidance behaviors, fear of crime on an aggregated scale, neighborhood satisfaction on an aggregated scale, and cohesion and social interaction. CLASS IV

SAMPLING: The 40 neighborhoods are a convenience sample based on the availability of surveys with similar variables of interest. Each of the five data collections from which the sample was drawn used different procedures for selecting respondents and different definitions of community. See detailed descriptions in Lewis and Skogan (ICPSR 8162), Greenberg (ICPSR 7951), Taub and Taylor (ICPSR 7952), Pate and Annan (ICPSR 8496), and Skogan's final report to the National Institute of Justice. Full titles are listed in the note below.

NOTE: Data in this collection were taken from the following datasets: (1) REACTIONS TO CRIME PROJECT, 1977 [CHICAGO, PHILADELPHIA, SAN FRANCISCO]: SURVEY ON FEAR OF CRIME AND CITIZEN BEHAVIOR (ICPSR 8162), (2) CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH AND LOW CRIME NEIGHBORHOODS IN ATLANTA, 1980 (ICPSR 8951), (3) CRIME FACTORS AND NEIGHBORHOOD DECLINE IN CHICAGO, 1979 (ICPSR 7952), (4) REDUCING FEAR OF CRIME PROGRAM EVALUATION SURVEYS IN NEWARK AND HOUSTON, 1983-1984 (ICPSR 8496), and (5) a survey of citizen participation in crime prevention in six Chicago neighborhoods conducted by Rosenbaum, Lewis, and Grans.

EXTENT OF COLLECTION: 1 data file and SPSS Control Cards

DATA FORMAT: Card Image

FILE STRUCTURE: rectangular

CASES: 40

VARIABLES: 68

RECORD LENGTH: 80

RECORDS PER CASE: 12

RELATED PUBLICATION:

Skogan, Wesley. "Disorder and Community Decline: Final Report to the National Institute of Justice." Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research. Northwestern University.

8944

ABSTRACT

Title: Disorder and Community Decline
Investigators: Wesley G. Skogan
Producer: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research,
Northwestern University
Date of award: 1985
NIJ number: 85-IJ-CX-0074

Purpose of the Study

Data from five previously collected data sets were aggregated and merged to produce neighborhood-level data disorder, crime, fear, residential satisfaction, and other key factor. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effects of disorderly conditions on the characteristics of community decline and residents' reactions to crime.

Methodology

Sources of information:

Personal or telephone interviews with 13,000 residents of 40 neighborhoods in six cities were aggregated to produce neighborhood-level data. The original studies were: Lewis's and Skogan's "Reactions to Crime Project" in Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco (ICPSR 8162); Greenberg's study "Characteristics of High- and Low-Crime Neighborhoods" in Atlanta (ICPSR 7951); Taub's and Taylor's study "Crime Factors and Neighborhood Decline" in Chicago (7952); Pate's and Annan's study "Reducing Fear of Crime Project" in Houston and Newark (ICPSR 8496); and a survey of citizen participation of crime prevention in six Chicago neighborhoods conducted by Rosenbaum, Lewis and Grant (not yet available through ICPSR; see Skogan, 1987a, for further information).

Sample:

The 40 neighborhoods are a convenience sample based on the availability of surveys with similar measures of the variables of interest. Each study used different procedures for selecting respondents and different definitions of community.

See detailed descriptions in Lewis and Skogan (ICPSR 8162), Greenberg (ICPSR 7951), Taub and Taylor (ICPSR 7952), Pate and Annan (ICPSR 8496) and Skogan's (1987a) final report to the National Institute of Justice.

Dates of data collection:

The data sets merged were conducted between 1977 and 1983. See detailed descriptions in each of the five studies.

Summary of Contents

Special characteristics of the study:

The unique feature of this study is the use of the neighborhood as the unit of analysis.

Description of variables:

The file contains 68 variables for each of the 40 neighborhoods. Variables include information on: demographic characteristics as race, age, unemployment, rate etc.; disorder characteristics as loitering, drugs, vandalism, noise and gang activity etc.; neighborhood crime problems as burglary, robbery, assault, rape etc.; and others as crime avoidance behaviors, aggregated scale of fear of crime, aggregated scale of neighborhood satisfaction, cohesion and social interaction.

Unit of observation:

Observations are neighborhoods.

Geographic Coverage:

Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Newark, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

File Structure

Data file:	1; Skogan.Raw
Unit:	neighborhood
Variables:	68
Cases:	40

The neighborhood data reside in the file Skogan.Raw which contains 40 cases with 12 records per case. There is also a file which contains SPSS^x control cards which identifies the input format of the raw data file.

File	Filename	Description	Recfm	Blksize	Lrecl	#Records	#Cases
1	Skogan.raw	neighborhood file	FB	7200	80	480	40
2	Skogan.sps	SPSS ^x cards	FB	80	80	28	

Reports and Publications

Skogan, Wesley (1987a). *Disorder and Community Decline: Final Report to the National Institute of Justice*. Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research. Northwestern University.

Skogan, Wesley (1987b). *Disorder and Community Decline: Draft Executive Summary for the National Institute of Justice*. Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research. Northwestern University.

Variable Positions

Variable	Rec	Start	End	Format	Width	Dec
CITY	1	1	12	F	12	8
AREA	1	13	24	F	12	8
STUDY	1	25	36	F	12	8
LOITER	1	37	48	F	12	8
DRUGS	1	49	60	F	12	8
VANDALS	1	61	72	F	12	8
NOISE	2	1	12	F	12	8
GANGS	2	13	24	F	12	8
ABANDON	2	25	36	F	12	8
DRINKING	2	37	48	F	12	8
LITTER	2	49	60	F	12	8
TRASH	2	61	72	F	12	8
INSULTS	3	1	12	F	12	8
PROSTUTN	3	13	24	F	12	8
SMUT	3	25	36	F	12	8
DOGS	3	37	48	F	12	8
GARBAGE	3	49	60	F	12	8
SOCIAL	3	61	72	F	12	8
PHYSICAL	4	1	12	F	12	8
DISORDER	4	13	24	F	12	8
LEAAFEAR	4	25	36	F	12	8
NORCFEAR	4	37	48	F	12	8
BURGPBROB	4	49	60	F	12	8
ASSPROB	4	61	72	F	12	8
RAPEPROB	5	1	12	F	12	8
ROBPROB	5	13	24	F	12	8
CRMNRBY	5	25	36	F	12	8
CRMTREND	5	37	48	F	12	8
CRMPROB	5	49	60	F	12	8
NBSAT	5	61	72	F	12	8
NBHOME	6	1	12	F	12	8
NOMOVE	6	13	24	F	12	8
NBPAST	6	25	36	F	12	8
NBFUTURE	6	37	48	F	12	8
NBSATISF	6	49	60	F	12	8
HELPOTHR	6	61	72	F	12	8
SOCLEVNG	7	1	12	F	12	8
CHATNBR	7	13	24	F	12	8
TELLSTRN	7	25	36	F	12	8
INTERACT	7	37	48	F	12	8
LANDLORD	7	49	60	F	12	8
PEOPLEIN	7	61	72	F	12	8
MARK	8	1	12	F	12	8
AVOIDOUT	8	13	24	F	12	8
NBWATCH	8	25	36	F	12	8
PURSEVIC	8	37	48	F	12	8

ASSVIC	8	49	60	F	12	8
BURGVIC	8	61	72	F	12	8
ROBVIC	9	1	12	F	12	8
RAPEVIC	9	13	24	F	12	8
MARRIED	9	25	36	F	12	8
WORKING	9	37	48	F	12	8
UNEMPLOY	9	49	60	F	12	8
KEEPHSE	9	61	72	F	12	8
WHITE	10	1	12	F	12	8
BLACK	10	13	24	F	12	8
LATINO	10	25	36	F	12	8
NONANGLO	10	37	48	F	12	8
HSGRAD	10	49	60	F	12	8
LRESIDE	10	61	72	F	12	8
AGE	11	1	12	F	12	8
ADULTS	11	13	24	F	12	8
RENTER	11	25	36	F	12	8
BIGBILD	11	37	48	F	12	8
ALONE	11	49	60	F	12	8
INC20	11	61	72	F	12	8
STABLE	12	1	12	F	12	8
POOR	12	13	24	F	12	8

Figure 4: List of Variable Names

CITY	AREA	STUDY	LOITER	DRUGS
VANDALS	NOISE	GANGS	ABANDON	DRINKING
LITTER	TRASH	INSULTS	PROSTUTN	SMUT
DOGS	GARBAGE	SOCIAL	PHYSICAL	DISORDER
LEAAFEAR	NORCFEAR	BURGPBOP	ASSPROB	RAPEPROB
ROBPROB	CRMNRBY	CRMTREND	CRMPROB	NBSAT
NBHOME	NOMOVE	NBPAST	NBFUTURE	NBSATISF
HELPOTHR	SOCLEVNG	CHATNBR	TELLSTRN	INTERACT
LANDLORD	PEOPLEIN	MARK	AVOIDOUT	NBWATCH
PURSEVIC	ASSVIC	BURGVIC	ROBVIC	RAPEVIC
MARRIED	WORKING	UNEMPLOY	KEEPHSE	WHITE
BLACK	LATINO	NONANGLO	HSGRAD	LRESIDE
AGE	ADULTS	RENTER	BIGBILD	ALONE
INC20	STABLE	POOR		

3 The Variables

The following sections describe the variables included in the data set. A list of the variable names is found in Figure 4.

3.1 Area Identifiers

The following variables identify each case. The neighborhood identification numbers were documented in Figure 3.

CITY	City identification number 1-Chicago 2-Newark, NJ 3-Houston 4-Philadelphia 5-San Francisco 6-Atlanta
AREA	Neighborhood identification number (see Figure 3 above)
STUDY	Study identification number (see Figure 2 above) 1-Chicago-1983 2-Chicago-1979

3-Houston-Newark
4-Three Cities
5-Atlanta

3.2 Perceptual Measures

This section presents the wording of survey questions which are represent those which were examined in detail in the NIJ report. It identifies them by substantive category, and by their SPSS-X variable names. As indicated above, there often were slight differences from study to study in the wording of questions or response categories. Where those differences were judged to be important, the analyses were conducted separately for major wording variants, and the various questions are presented here. Where responses to more than one substantial question variant were combined for analysis, the various versions of the questions are also presented here. Finally, this section also documents how neighborhood-level scores on individual items were combined to form composite indicators which are included in the data file.

3.2.1 Measures of Disorder

In every study these items were preceded by introductory statements asking respondents to react to "... things that you may think are problems in this area," or to assess the extent to which "... things that are sometimes problems in neighborhoods" were local problems. In every case respondents were to indicate if the stimulus was "a big problem" (score 3), "some problem" (score 2) or "no problem" (score 1) in their area. The neighborhood-level data are mean scores on this 1-3 scale.

LOITER	Groups of teenagers hanging out on the streets? Goups of people hanging around on corners or in streets?
DRUGS	People selling illegal drugs? People using illegal drugs in the neighborhood? Presence of drugs and drug users? Sale or use of drugs in public places?
VANDALS	Vandalism (like kids breaking windows or writing on walls or things like that)?
NOISE	Noisy neighbors (people playing loud music or having late parties)?

	Noisy neighbors; people who play loud music, have late parties, or have noisy quarrels.
GANGS	Gang activity? Gangs?
ABANDON	Abandoned buildings or vehicles? Abandoned houses or other empty buildings in this area? Buildings or storefronts sitting abandoned or burned out?
DRINKING	People drinking in public places like on corners or in streets? People drinking in public places like streets or playgrounds?
LITTER	Garbage or litter on the streets and sidewalks? Dirty streets and sidewalks in this area?
TRASH	Vacant lots filled with trash and junk?
INSULTS	People who say insulting things or bother people as they walk down the street?
PROSTITUTN	Prostitutes? Prostitutes walking the streets or standing on corners?
SMUT	Pornographic movie theaters or bookstores, massage parlors, topless bars? Adult movie theaters or adult bookstores?
DOGS	Dogs barking loudly or relieving themselves near your home?
GARBAGE	People not disposing of garbage properly or leaving litter around the area?

3.2.2 Constructing Disorder Scales

Three multi-item scales were constructed to indicate the area-level distribution of disorder. Social Disorder (variable name "SOCIAL") combined values for the loitering, drugs, vandalism, gangs, public drinking and insults items. Physical Disorder

(variable name "PHYSICAL") combined values for the noise, abandon, litter, and trash items. The summary Disorder scale (variable name "DISORDER") averaged responses to the two, in effect equally weighting their contribution to the total score for each area. These measures are available for all 40 areas.

The two original scales were constructed by summing the component items which were available for each area and then dividing that sum by the number of available items. Thus the scale scores for each set of study areas could be made up of slightly different combinations of particular items, although the component items which were chosen for inclusion in the scales were available for most of the areas. Each subset of items was substantially intercorrelated, as were many items across sets. The social and physical disorder measures are highly correlated ($r=.81$), and for most purposes there are few differences between them.

3.2.3 Measures of Fear of Crime

There are two standard single-item measures of fear of personal victimization. Unfortunately, they have different referents and different response formats, and they appear to be incommensurate. One survey (eg, Atlanta) asked an extreme variant of the second question, and cannot easily be compared to the remainder.

LEAAFEAR How safe do you feel or would you feel being out alone in your neighborhood at night? Do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?

NORCFEAR Is there any area right around here -- that is, within a mile -- where you would be afraid to walk alone at night? (yes-no)

Every survey included other "worry" and "concern" questions to measure fear of personal victimization, but none were comparable across enough studies to justify their analysis here. This project used the LEAAFEAR measure, which is superior.

3.2.4 Measures of Neighborhood Crime Problems

There were several different questions concerning neighborhood crime problems which were common across many studies. One set of questions asked about the extent to which various types of crime constituted problems in the respondents' neighborhoods. All were scored from 1-3, as "no problem" (score 1), "some problem" (score 2), or a "big problem" (scored 3). Others inquired about the extent (from "none" to "quite a lot") of local crime problems ("How

much crime...?), and about recent trends. The latter is scored 1-3, from "decreased," through "about the same," to "increased."

- BURGPBROB people breaking in or sneaking into homes to steal things?
- ASSPROB People being attacked or beaten up by strangers?
- RAPEPROB Rape or other sexual attacks?
Sexual assaults?
- ROBPROB People getting robbed or having their money, purses or wallets taken?
- CRMNRBY How much crime would you say there is on the few blocks right around your home?

How much crime would you say there is in your own immediate neighborhood?

How much crime would you say there is in the two block area around your home?
- CRMTREND In the past year or so, has the amount of crime in your neighborhood increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

Within the past two years, do you think crime in your neighborhood has increased, decreased, or remained the same?

3.2.5 Constructing A Neighborhood Crime Problems Scale

Because of the small number of cases involved in this analysis, it was desirable to move from specific measures to indicators of more general constructs whenever possible. Of the items above, three could be combined to form a more general measure of the extent of neighborhood crime problems, one which referred to several types of crime. Measures of concern about assault and robbery were highly correlated ($r=.89$), and responses to the burglary question were substantially related (.71 and .86) to both. The resulting crime problems scale ("CRMPROB") is available for 20 neighborhoods. Measured concern about rape problems in these neighborhoods was much lower and uncorrelated with most other factors, which is consistent with individual-level studies. Other similar items were included only in a few studies.

3.2.6 Measures of Neighborhood Satisfaction

The items below all were scored so that a high value reflects satisfaction with or commitment to living in the area. The "area a home" questions were dichotomies, with a high score indicating satisfaction. Respondents to the "likelihood of moving" questions which did not employ "yes-no" response dichotomies were categorized as "not moving" if they rated themselves as "definitely" or "probably" not moving. The "past" and "future" trend questions were scored 1-3, with high values indicating positive changes in the area.

NBSAT On the whole, how do you feel about this area as a place to live? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied? (High score satisfied)

NBHOME Some people feel their neighborhood is a real home to them. Other people think of their neighborhood as just a place where they happen to be living. Which comes closest to the way you consider your neighborhood?

Do you really feel a part of your neighborhood, or do you think of it more as just a place to live? (High score feel a part or area a real home)

NOMOVE Do you expect to be living in this neighborhood two years from now? (High score does not intend to move)

Do you plan on moving from this neighborhood sometime soon, say within the next two years?

How likely is it that you might move out of (AREA) within the next year? (High score does not intend to move)

NBPAST Overall, in the past two years [in the past year or so], would you say your neighborhood has become a better place to live, has gotten worse, or is it about the same as it used to be?

Would you say that your neighborhood has changed for the better or for the worse in the past couple of years, or has it stayed about the same? (High score past change for the better)

NBFUTURE All things considered, what do you think the neighborhood will be like two years from now? Will it be a better place to live, will it have

gotten worse, or will it be about the same as it is now? (High score future change for the better)

3.2.7 Scaling Neighborhood Satisfaction

A summary Neighborhood Satisfaction measure was created by summing standardized scores for the "area a home" and "satisfaction" questions reproduced above, and dividing that sum by two for areas for which both items were available. In those areas the two measures were correlated $r=.85$. The resulting measure is available for all 40 areas. The variable is NBSATISF

3.2.8 Measures of Neighborhood Cohesion

There were only four far-from-satisfactory measures of neighborhood cohesion available for several sets of study areas.

HELPOTHR In some areas people do things together and help each other. In other areas people mostly go their own way. In general, what kind of area would you say this is, is it mostly one where people help each other, or one where people go their own way?

SOCLEVNG About how often do you spend a social evening with one of your neighbors? (1-4; "never" to "once a week")

CHATNBR How often do you chat with your neighbors when you run into them on the street? (1-4; "never" to "always")

TELLSTRN How hard is it to tell a stranger in your neighborhood from somebody who lives there? Is it pretty hard or pretty easy most of the time? [easy or difficult]

3.2.9 Scaling Social Interaction

To measure neighborhood social interaction, responses to the "sociable" and "friendly" items above were combined in standard-score fashion. The two measures were correlated .80. The resulting variable is INTERACT.

3.2.10 Other Perceptual Measures

Other issues examined in this report include the impact of crime and disorder on housing markets, and population succession. Three studies included a "problems" measure (with responses ranging from "no problem" [score 1] to "big problem" [score 3]) concerning landlords in the area. Residents of sixteen areas were asked about residential succession.

LANDLORD Landlords who don't care about what happens to the neighborhood?

PEOPLEIN The wrong kind of people moving in?

3.3 Measures of Crime Avoidance Behavior

Except for the "avoid going out" questions, these items all employed a "yes-no" response format.

MARK Have you engraved any of your valuables to help recover them in case they are stolen?

Have any valuables here been marked with your name or some number?

In order to avoid crime, have you ever engraved identification numbers on valuables?

Have you engraved your valuables with your name or some sort of identification, in case they are stolen? (Proportion "yes")

AVOIDOUT In general, how often do you avoid going out after dark in this area because of crime? Do you avoid going out most of the time, sometimes, or never?

How often do you avoid being outside alone at night because of crime?

NBWATCH Think about the last time when no one was home for at least a day or so. Did you ask a neighbor to watch your home?

To protect you and your belongings, have you had a neighbor keep watch on your home while you were away? (Proportion "yes")

3.4 Measures of Victimization

All of the surveys examined here includes a separate and extensive victimization "screener" section designed to identify recent victims of personal and household crime. Each item included or the context implied a "reference period" for the incident in question, some period of the past which the respondent was to review in answering the question. That period differed from study to study. Some asked about "the past year," and others about events since a stated date (eg, "... since the first of the year ..."). In principle, interviews employing longer reference periods should identify a larger proportion of victims, but two factors affecting incident recall -- forward telescoping and forgetting (see Skogan, 1981) -- work against that difference in practice, and in any event the recall periods varied only by a few months among most of these surveys. Also, some surveys combined questions about successful and attempted incidents (see "assault" below), while others asked separately about completed and attempted events (see "burglary" below). Other surveys utilized both approaches, depending upon the crime in question. The variables all are the proportion "yes" for each screener item or set.

- PURSEVIC During the past year, in the neighborhood where you live now, has anyone picked your pocket or taken a bag or package directly from you without using force or threatening you? (Proportion "yes")
- ASSVIC During the past year, in the neighborhood where you live now, has anyone physically attacked you or has anyone threatened or tried to hurt you even though they did not actually hurt you? (Proportion "yes")
- BURGVIC Since the first of this year, has anyone broken into your home, garage, or another building on your property to steal something? PLUS: Have you found any sign that someone tried to break into your home, garage, or another building on your property to steal something? (Proportion "yes" to either")
- ROBVIC Since the first of this year, has anyone stolen something directly from you by force or after threatening you with harm? PLUS: Other than that, has anyone tried to take something from you by force even though they did not get it? (Proportion "yes" to either)
- RAPEVIC Has anyone sexually attacked you, or tried to, since the first of this year? (Proportion "yes")

3.5 Demographic Measures

These area demographic measures also were aggregated from the survey data. Unless indicated otherwise, each of the following variables were scored as dichotomies at the individual level, and aggregated as proportions. The base for calculating the proportions was all respondents.

MARRIED	Marital status "married"
WORKING	In the labor force - working full or part time
UNEMPLOY	In the labor force - unemployed
KEEPHSE	Not in the labor force - status "keeping house"
WHITE	Race nonhispanic white
BLACK	Race nonhispanic black
LATINO	Race-ethnicity "hispanic," "latino," "Mexican-American," etc.
NONANGLO	Combined blacks and hispanics at the individual level
HSGRAD	High school graduate or higher education
LRESIDE	Average length of residence, in years
AGE	Average age of respondents, in years
ADULTS	Average number of adults in household
RENTER	Household tenture renting rather than owning
BIGBILD	Living in large building-size code category, usually "7 or more units"
ALONE	Living with no other adults
INC20	Household incomes \$20,000 and higher
STABLE	Neighborhood stability factor score (see below)
POOR	Neighborhood poverty factor score (see below)

Figure 5: Factor Analysis of Area Demographics

Principle Components Factor Analysis

<u>Measures</u>	<u>Factor Loadings</u>	
	<u>stability</u>	<u>poverty</u>
average length of residence	<u>.862</u>	.187
average age of respondents	<u>.836</u>	.087
pct single family homes	<u>.711</u>	-.041
percent rental dwellings	<u>-.811</u>	.250
pct high school graduates	.123	<u>-.710</u>
pct working full/part time	.381	<u>-.780</u>
pct incomes over \$20,000	-.020	<u>-.799</u>
percent unemployed	<u>-.450</u>	<u>.532</u>
pct of total variance explained by factor	37.1	28.6
eigenvalue	2.97	2.29

3.5.1 Scaling Demographic Indicators

In the report, demographic factors usually are represented by principal components factor scores for Neighborhood Poverty and Neighborhood Stability. Figure 5 reports the results of the factor analysis from which factor scores were calculated.