

What Can Communities Do to Help Working Families?

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Presentation Outline

- Wilson's New Urban Poverty
- How Neighborhoods Matter
- Life Course/Ecological Approach
- Family-Friendly Communities in Upstate NY
- Policy Implications

The New Urban Poverty

(William Julius Wilson)

- Economic Restructuring
- Spatial Restructuring
- Social Transformation of Inner-City
 - Poverty is more concentrated
 - Weak attachment to the labor force
 - Loss of middle-class “social buffers”
 - Poorer individual and collective efficacy.

Neighborhood Effects Across the Life Course

Early Childhood

- Child Abuse
- Low Birth Weight
- Infant Mortality
- IQ (age 3)
- Externalizing

Middle Childhood

- Aggression
- Delinquency
- Peer Rejection

Adolescence

- Pregnancy
- Delinquency
- H.S. Dropout
- Substance Use
- Gang Friends
- Church Attend
- Well-being

Adulthood

- Drug Use
- Violent Crime
- Schooling
- Income/Poverty
- Unemployment
- Single Parenthood
- Mortality
- Well-being

How Neighborhoods Influence Youth Development

Neighborhood Demographics

- Income
- Human Capital
- Race/Ethnicity
- Household & Age Structure
- Population Stability

Neighborhood Social Capital

- Intergenerational Closure
- Bonding Ties
- Informal Controls
- Bridging Ties
- Institutions

Neighborhood Quality

- Safety
- Positive Expectations
- Collective Efficacy

**Positive
Youth
Outcomes**

The Family-Friendly Community in Upstate New York

with

Stephen Sweet – Ithaca College

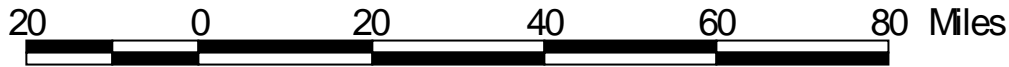
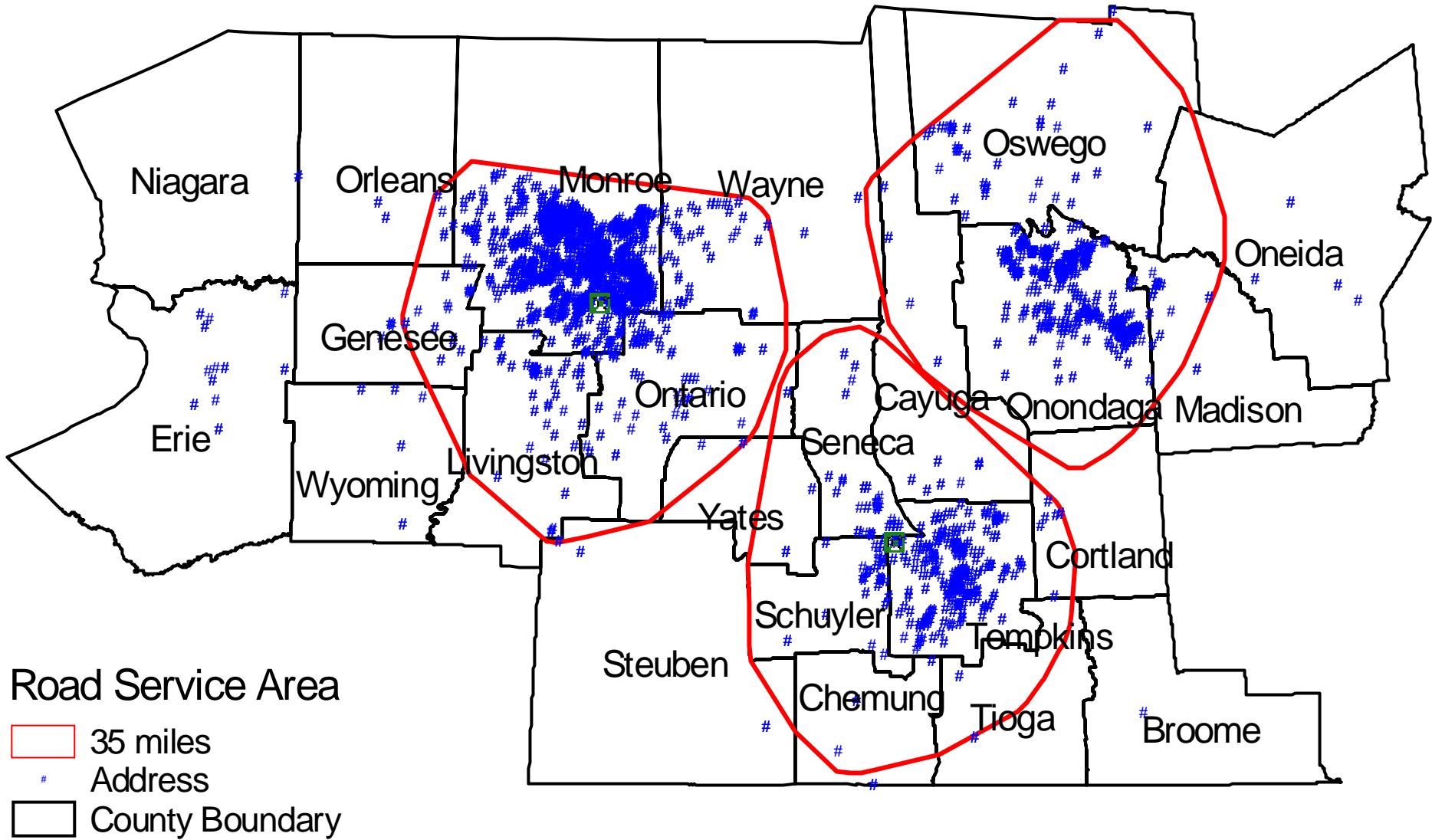
Phyllis Moen – Cornell and
University of Minnesota

Motivation

- Family-friendly workplace well understood.
- Neighborhoods & communities less so.
 - Life stage principle
 - Person-Environment Fit
 - Neighborhood–Life Stage Fit
 - Look to neighborhoods for varying things at different stages of the life course.
 - Perceptions of neighborhood are enhanced by the fit between one's own life stage and the neighborhood's life course structure.

Cornell Ecology of Careers

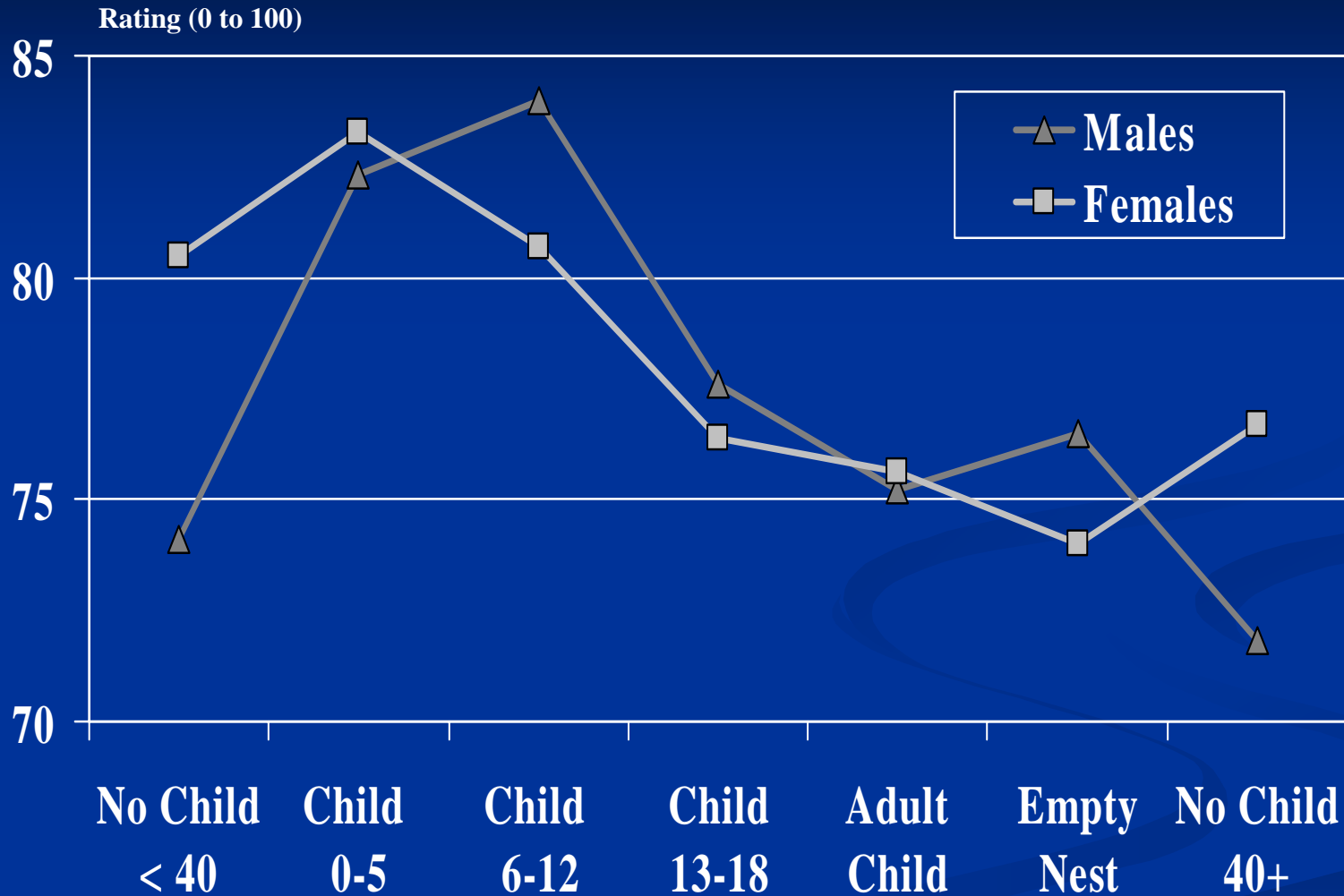
- Cornell Couples and Careers I and Midcareers Paths and Passages Studies
- **Cornell Community Study**
 - 57 block groups in Rochester, Syracuse, and Ithaca
 - Telephone survey conducted in 1999-2000
 - 1534 individuals in 631 couples
 - 761 in “family-friendly” questions module



Family-Friendly Questions

1. On a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being extremely “family-unfriendly” and 100 being extremely “family-friendly” how “family-friendly” would you rate your community?
2. In your community, what are the most helpful family-friendly features?

Overall Ratings



Source: Cornell Community Study.

What Does Family-Friendly Mean?

Recreation: “Festivals, parks, lakes, bike trails, the Y...

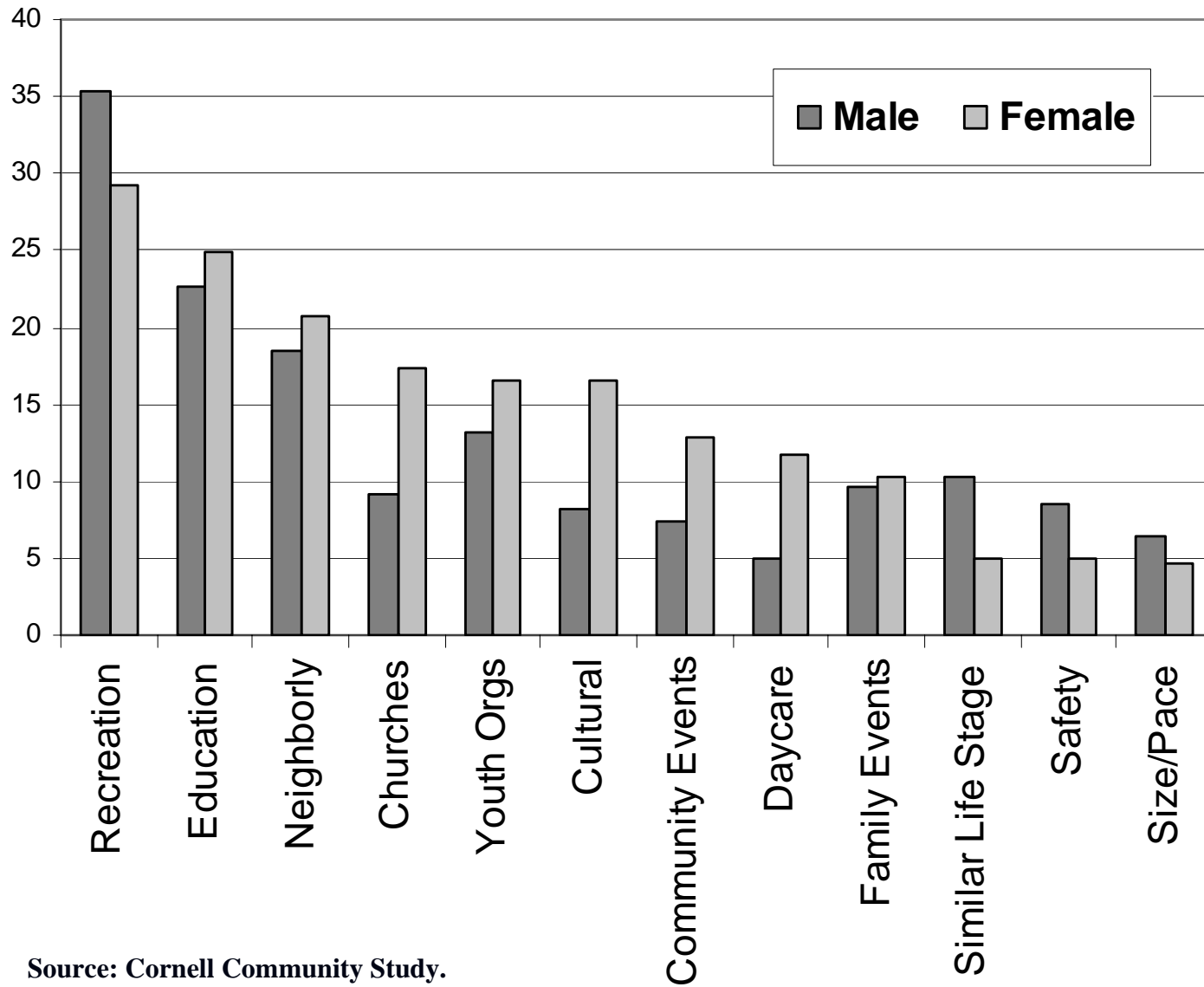
Education: High quality day care and schools, library, science center.

Neighborly: Very caring and watchful, people there if you need them, everybody watches out for each others kids, call you if your kids are doing something wrong, neighborhood watch.

Youth Orgs: Youth programs to keep kids occupied, so they are not wandering on the streets.

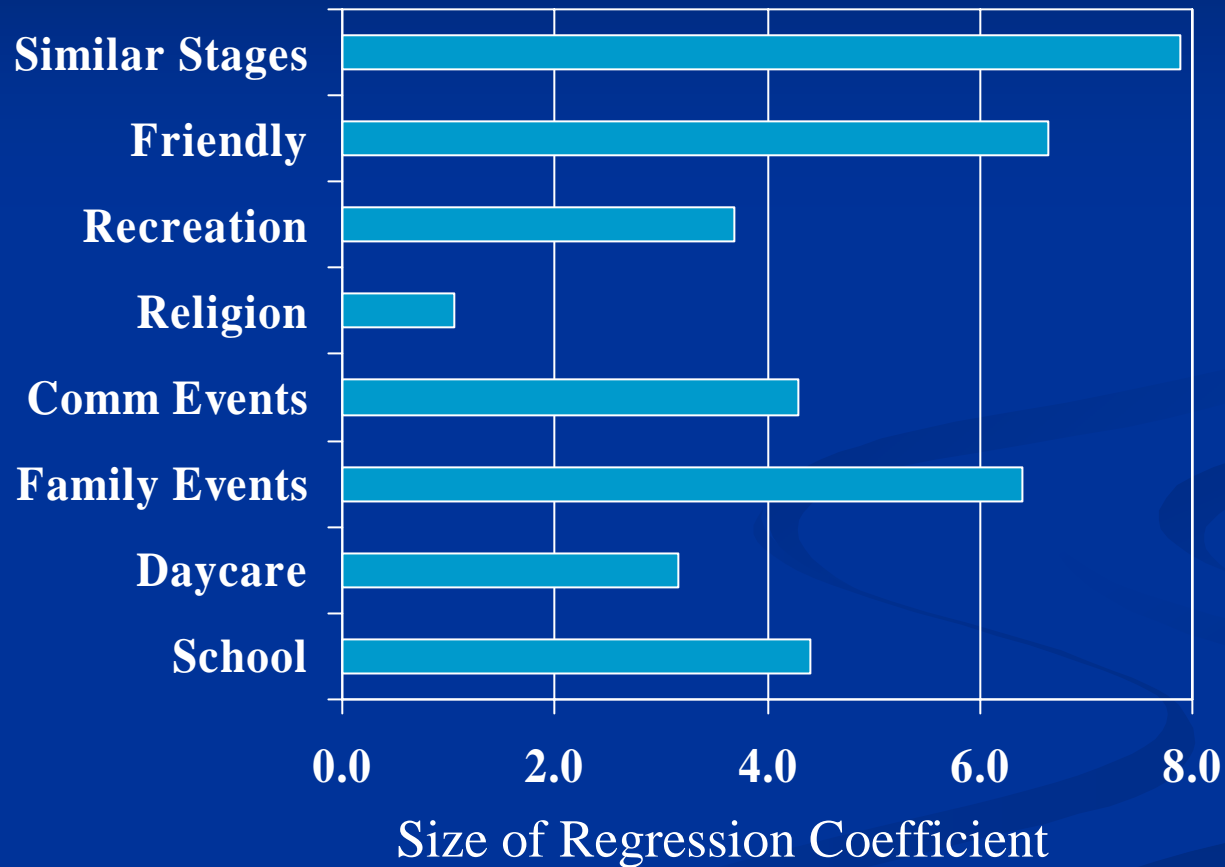
Life Stages: Lots of children and kids, everybody has kids, many families in same age range, similar people in time of life, kids of similar ages, diversity of people.”

Frequency of Features Mentioned



Source: Cornell Community Study.

Relationship Between Overall Ratings and Specific Features Mentioned



Women Mentioning Schools as Family-Friendly Feature



Women Mentioning Religious Institutions as Family-Friendly Feature



Conclusions

Findings:

- Definitions of a family-friendly community vary significantly by gender, life stage, and work status.
- Fit between family's life stage and those of neighbors is important.

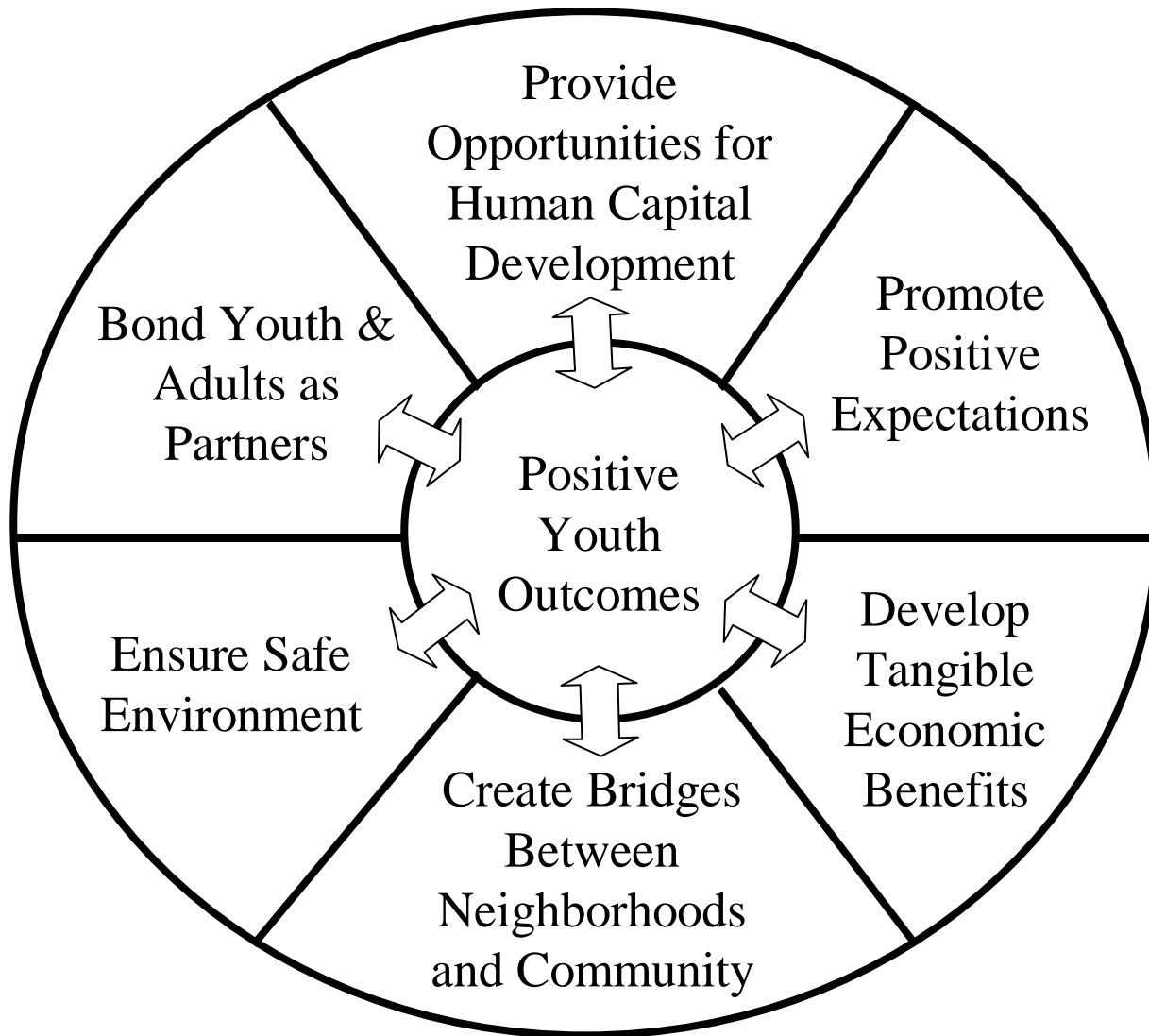
Limitations:

- Restricted sample – primarily middle-class, upstate New York.
- Cross-sectional
- Future work will examine consequences for work-family adaptation.

Potential Implications?

- Family and child-oriented events in less family-oriented neighborhoods.
- Create opportunities for intergenerational connections.
- Targeting of specialized programs for different life stage groups.
- Residential location counseling.

Fig. 10.1 – Components of Model Neighborhood Youth Development Initiatives



**Fig. 10.2 - Interactions Between
Neighborhood and Family Resources**

		Neighborhood Resources	
		Low	High
Family Resources	Low	Concentrated Disadvantage	Social Buffers
	High	Competitive Advantage Adaptive Strategies	Concentrated Advantage

How Neighborhoods Shape College Expectations

