

Aggravated Inequality: Delinquency, School, and Neighborhood Disadvantage

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Labor Force Participation, Labor Markets, and Crime

- NIJ support (Grant number 2000-IJ-CX-0026) to use the NLSY to study how labor markets and employment influence criminal involvement by young adults and juveniles
- This this paper presents results for juveniles
- Two questions:
 - How is juvenile employment related to crime?
 - Does labor market participation of adults effect juveniles?

Work and juvenile delinquency

- Previous studies found a positive relationship between work and delinquency
- Interpretations for this finding
 - work causes delinquency
 - excessive work causes delinquency
 - children already likely to engage in delinquency are more likely to work than the average school kid
 - Warren, LePore, & Mare (2000)

For juveniles, it is school that matters

- Research has found that school attachment and school performance are negatively associated with delinquency
- In earlier work we found that kids who work were, on average, more involved in delinquency
- But the highest levels of delinquency are among kids who are neither working nor in school

This Paper—focus on the neighborhood context

- Wilson's argument in *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987)
- When jobs disappear in communities it usually is not the adults who lose jobs that turn to crime
- So, how does job loss translate into increased crime?
- What becomes of kids when adults are marginalized...

Labor Stratification and Juveniles

- The adult thesis—all jobs are not created equal
 - Unemployment and secondary sector jobs
- For kids adult marginalization leads to lower school investment
 - (Crutchfield et al., 1993; Wadsworth 1997; Bellair, et al., 2003).
- Which in turns leads to more delinquency

The Study

- NLSY & The Center for Human Resources Development at The Ohio State Univ.—trials and tribulations—“The Matrix”
- Used Mothers and Children of the NLSY-98
- Series of OLS regressions & path models on the full sample and 3 sub-samples
 - Respondents in Metropolitan Areas
 - Respondents in Central Cities
 - Respondents outside of SMSAs—“Rural Sample”

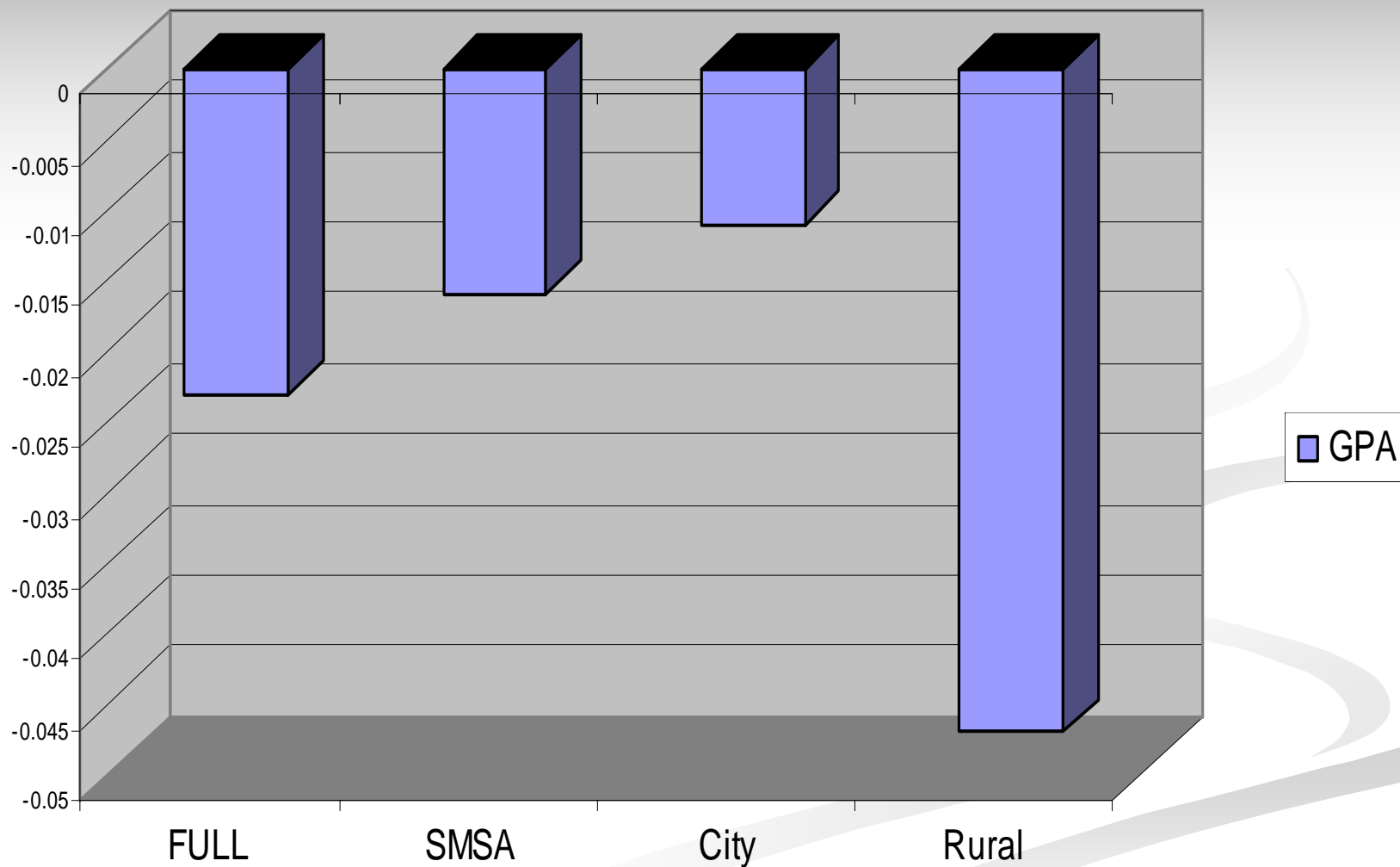
Variables in the Models

- Background variables: sex, age, race, ethnicity, father or stepfather present
- Parental SES variables: family pov, mother's ed.
- School variables: attachment, grades, par. invol.
- Youth employment
- Mothers employment
- Neighborhood variables: % black, % Hispanic, Disadvantage, % marginal employment. % of adults w/out a high

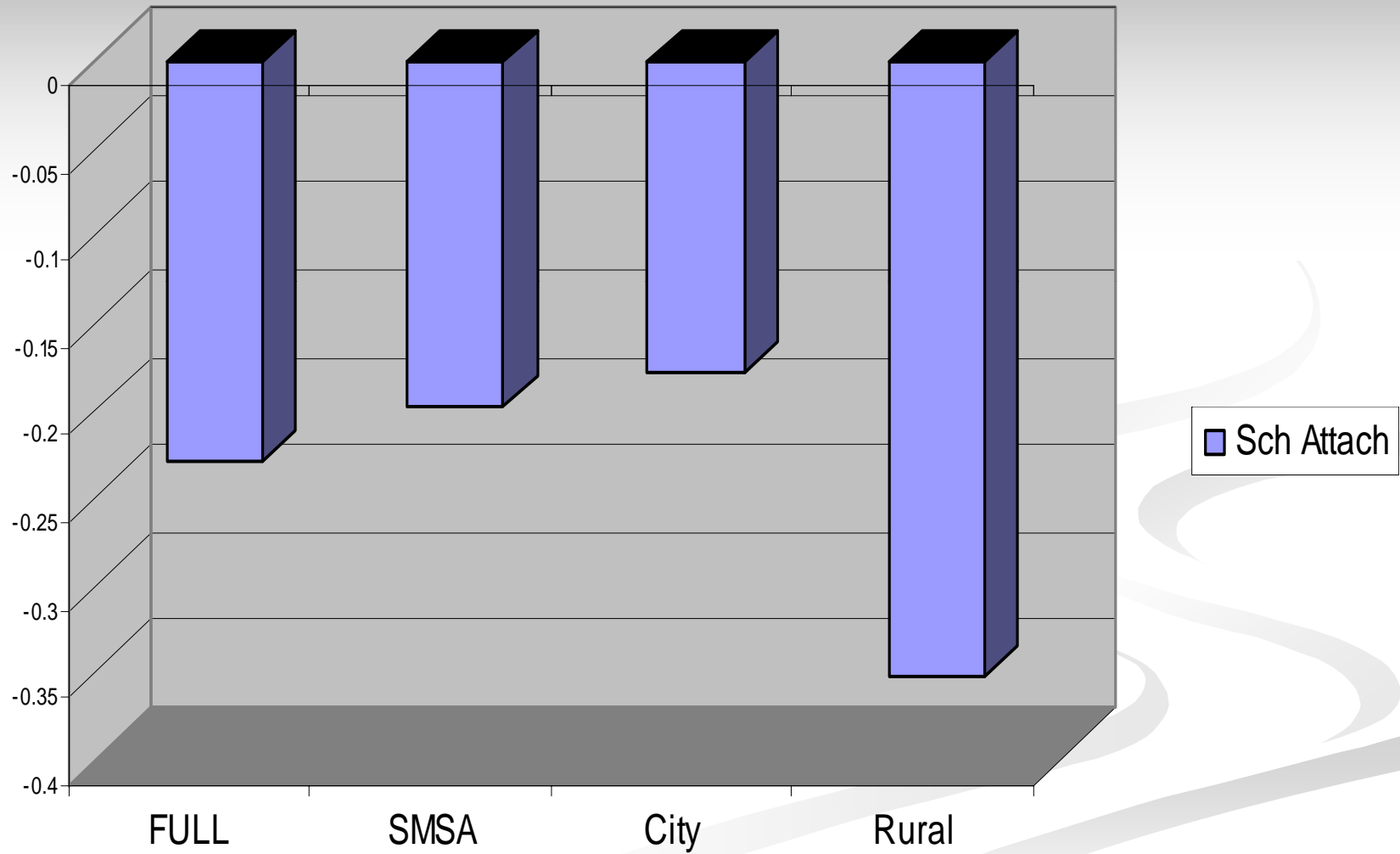
Results

- Juvenile employment is unrelated to delinquency
- Mother's employment is unrelated to delinquency
- School Attachment and grades are inversely related to delinquency
- Family poverty is positively related
- Mother's employment is positively related to school performance

GPA & Delinquency



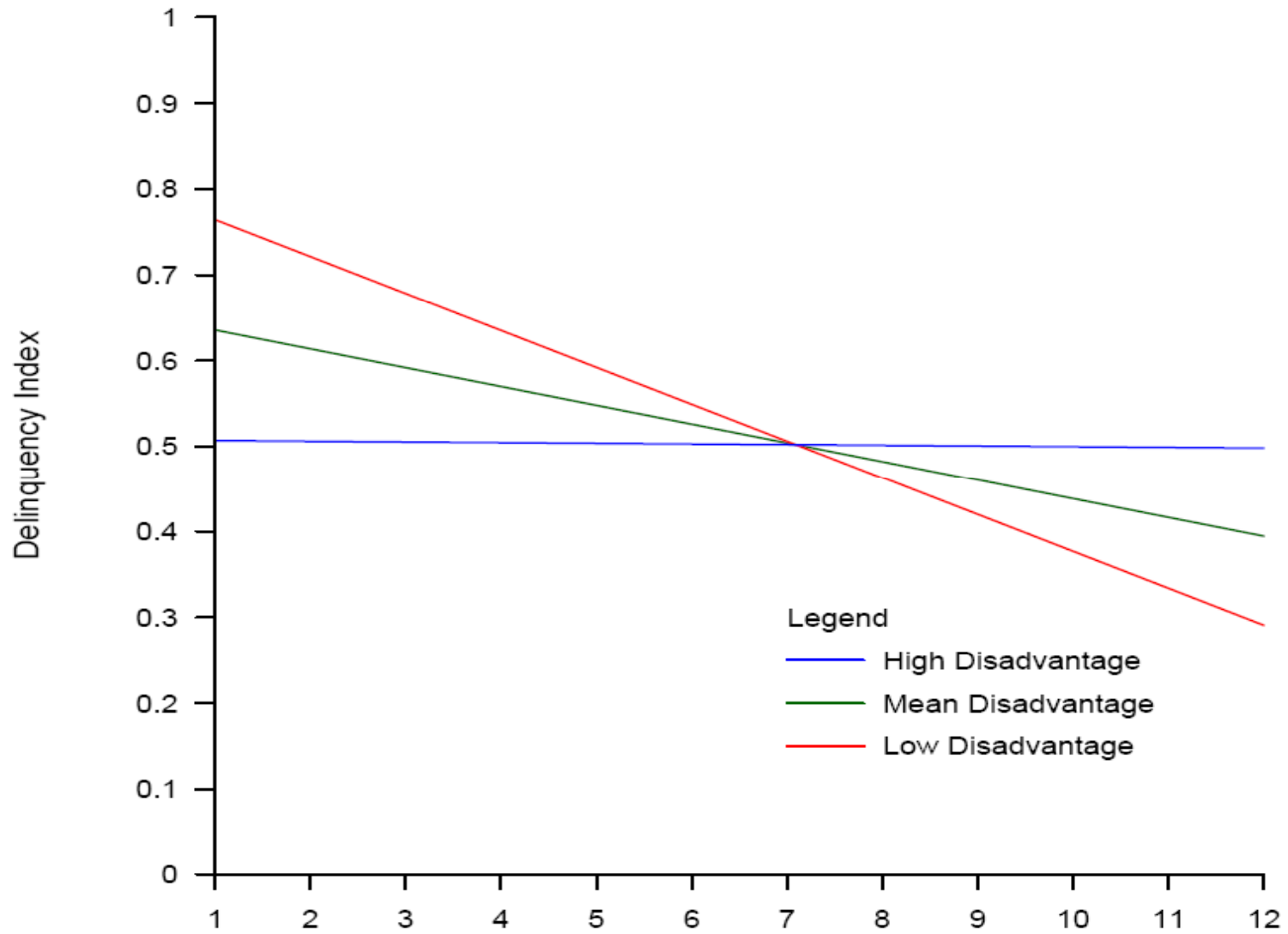
School Attachment & Delinquency



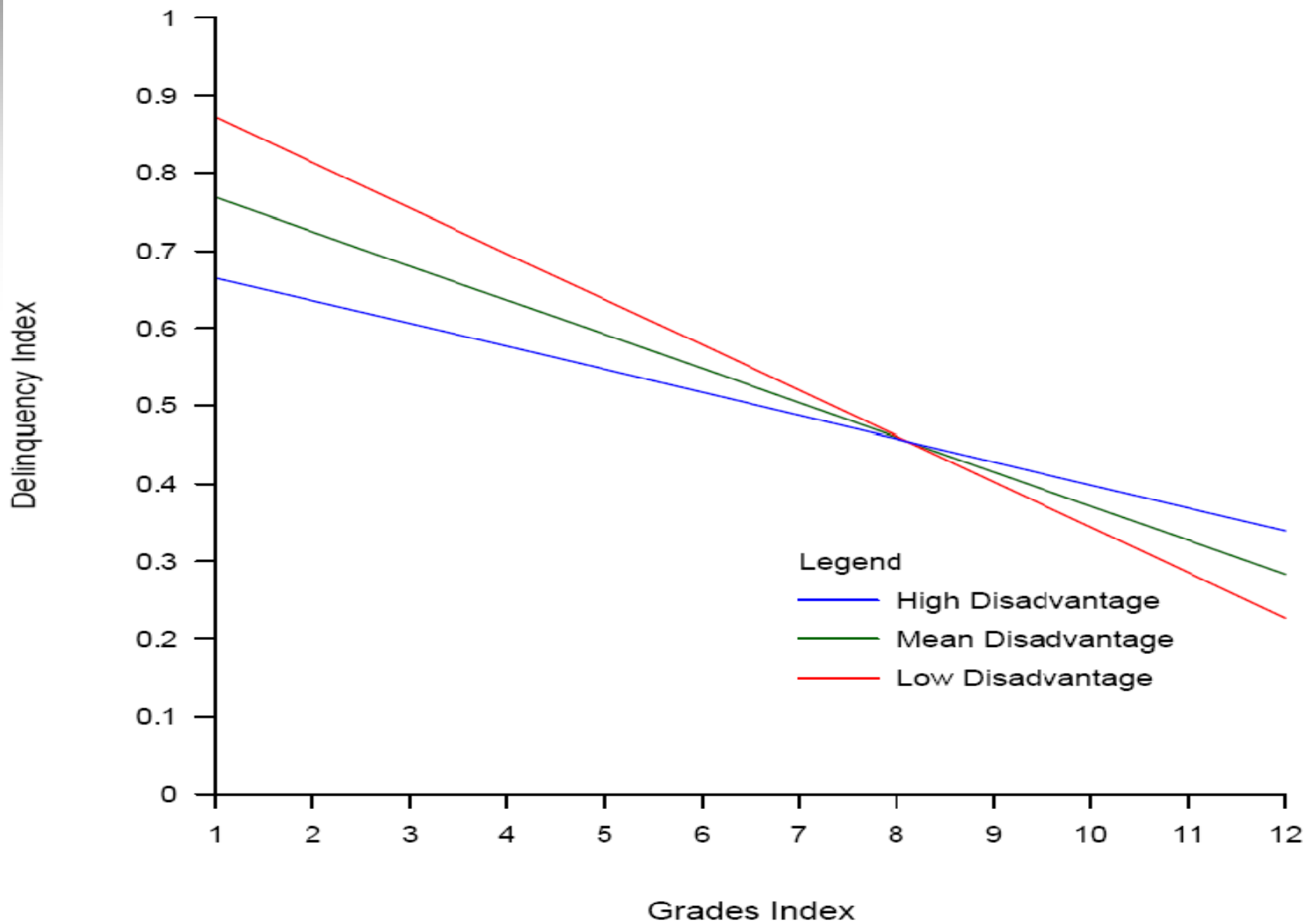
Interaction Effects

- Focus on the interaction of school performance—GPA and measures of neighborhood disadvantage
- GPA*Disadvantage
- GPA*% of Adults marginal to the labor market
- GPA*% of Adults without a high school diploma

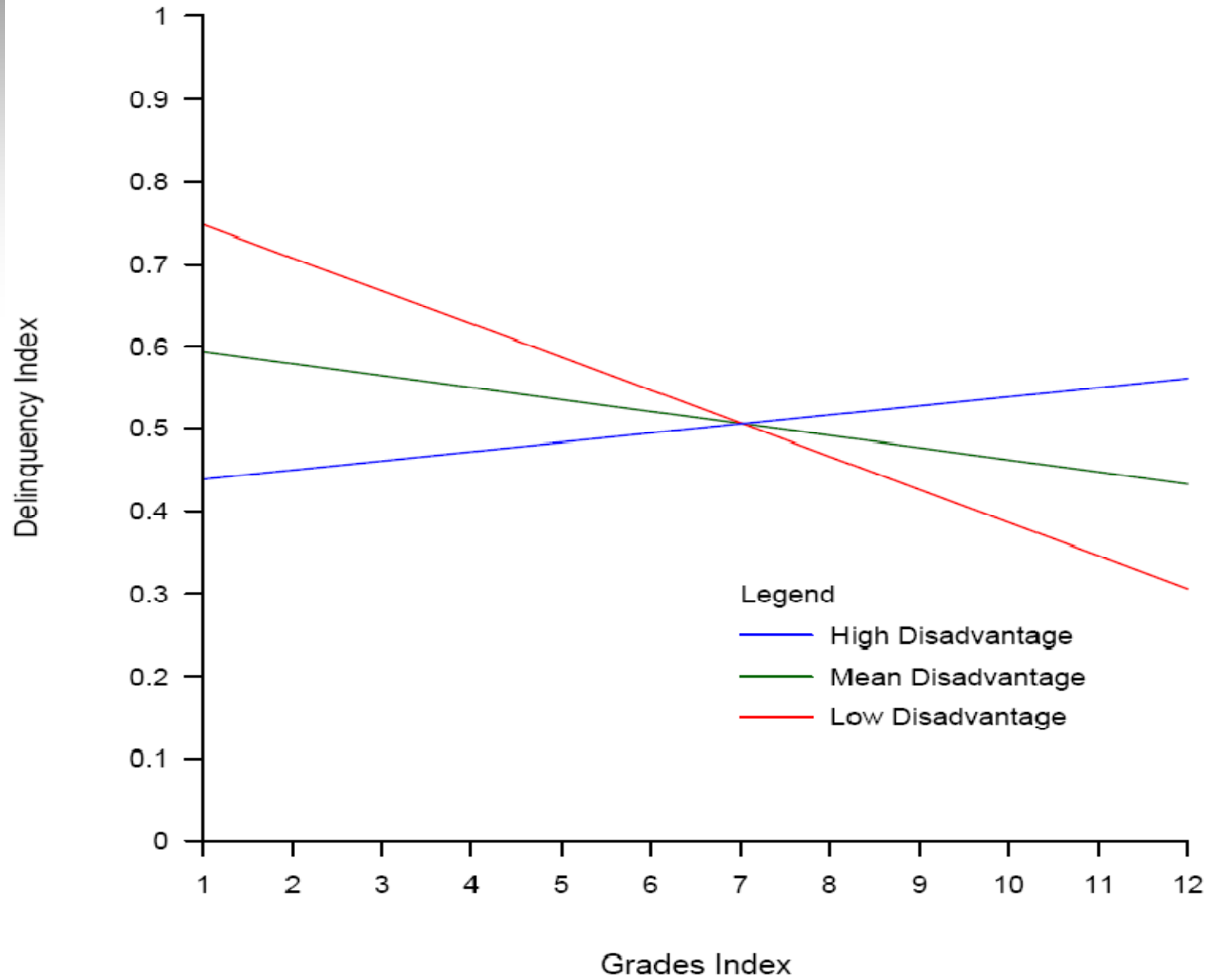
Interaction of Grades and Disadvantage: Whole Sample



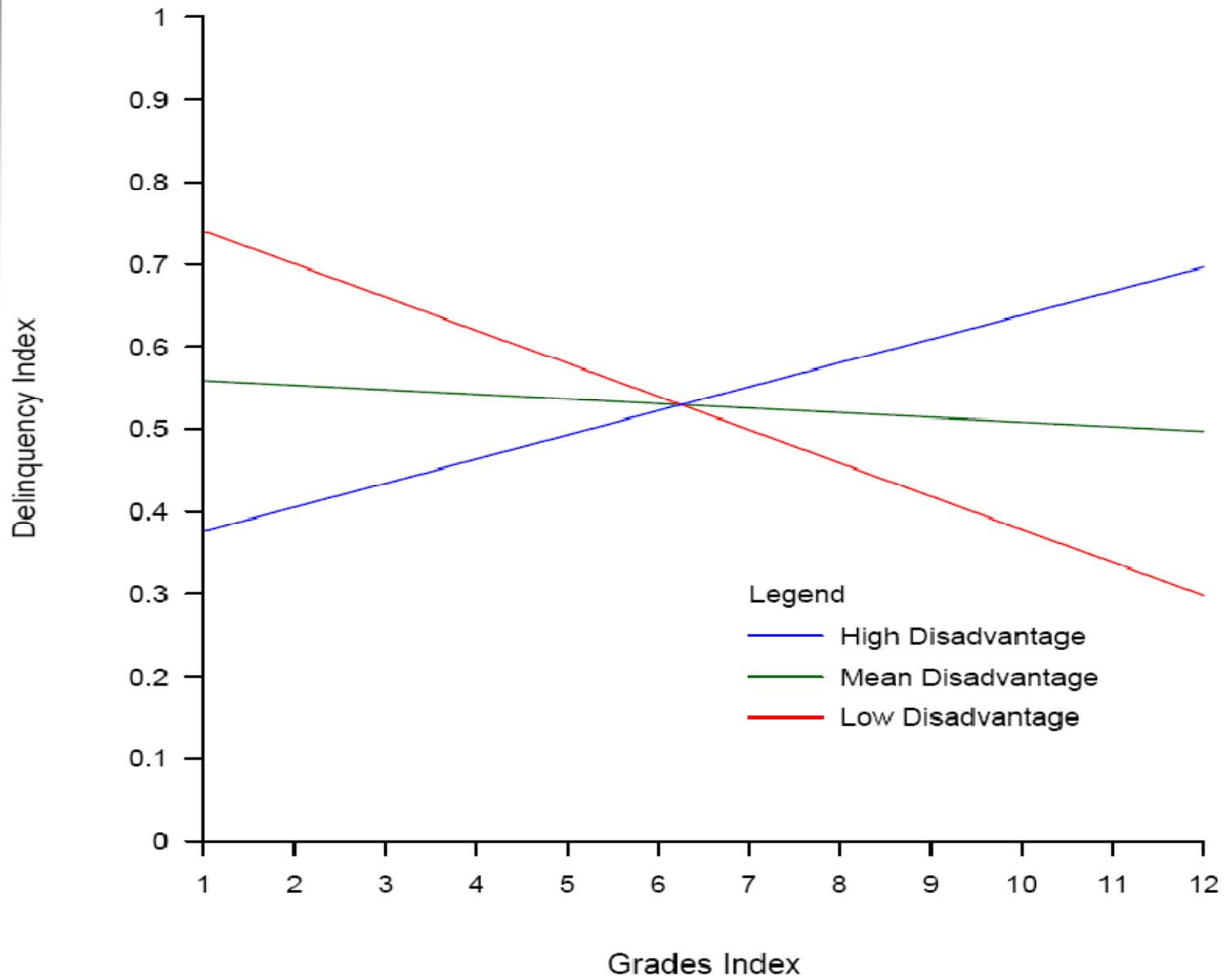
Interaction of Grades and Disadvantage: Not In SMSA (Rural) Sample



Interaction of Grades and Disadvantage: In SMSA Sample



Interaction of Grades and Disadvantage: Central City Sample



Summary or Results

- Living in disadvantaged neighborhoods tempers good grades as a protective factor
- Those with low grades and living in disadvantage are considerably more likely to be delinquent—“aggravated inequality”
- The same is true where more adults are marginal to the labor market and without a high school diploma

So What?

- Children in disadvantaged neighborhoods suffer because of what their parents cannot provide
- The quality of their schools is generally lower
- Those schools reproduce inequality
- Juveniles there are more likely to become involved in crime
- That subsequent crime leads to poorer life chances

Interpreting the interaction effect

NEIGHBORHOOD DISADVANTAGE

<u>GRADES</u> (1=A, 12=F)	High (0.9)	Mean (0.23)	Low (0.1)
High (GPA = 1)	0.90	0.23	0.10
Mean (GPA = 4.84)	4.36	1.11	0.48
Low (GPA = 12)	10.80	2.76	1.20

**Regression of Delinquency Index on Respondent, Parent,
Neighborhood, and the Interaction of Grades and Disadvantage –
Mothers and Children of the NLSY,
1998 Wave: Standardized & Unstandardized Coefficients., & St Errors**

	Full Sample N=1497	In SMSA N=1167	Central City N=475	Rural N=330
Family Poverty	.080** .166 (.054)	.063* .124 (.059)	.069 .132 (.091)	.161** .432 (.146)
Attachment to School	-.182*** -.225 (.032)	-.156*** -.194 (.037)	-.133** -.174 (.062)	-.284*** -.351 (.068)
Grades	.077** .027 (.009)	.058^ .019 (.010)	.074 .026 (.018)	.124* .050 (.023)
Neighborhood Disadvantage	.181* .117 (.050)	.225* .135 (.053)	.328* .173 (.075)	.098 .089 (.159)
Interaction Term- -GPA*Disadvan.	-.158** -.020 (.009)	-.197* -.023 (.009)	-.258* -.026 (.013)	-.095 -.018 (.028)