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2016

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Hoeben, E. M. (2016). *Hangin'g Out and Messin'g About: Elaborating On the Relationship Between Unstructured Socializing and Adolescent Delinquency*.

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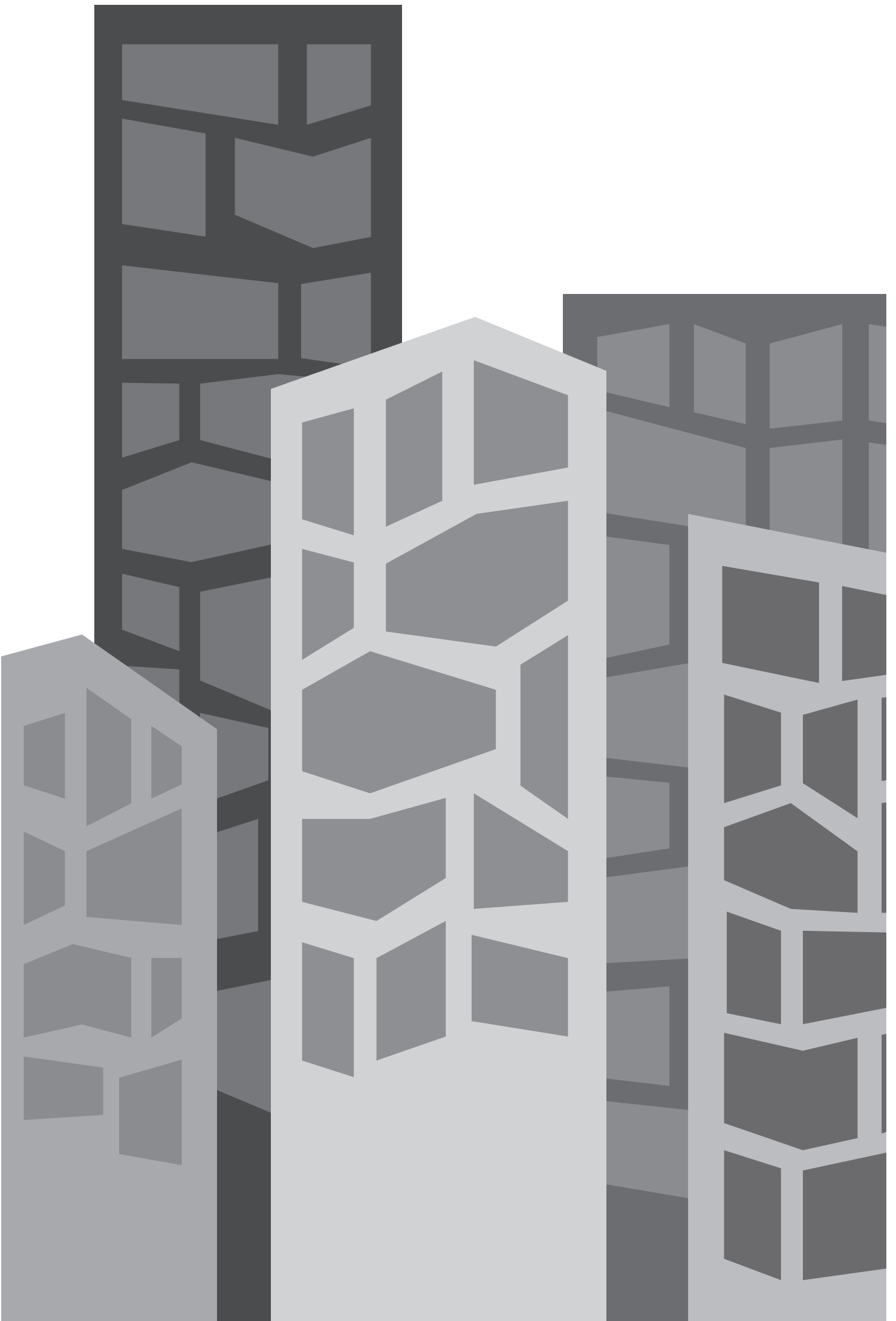
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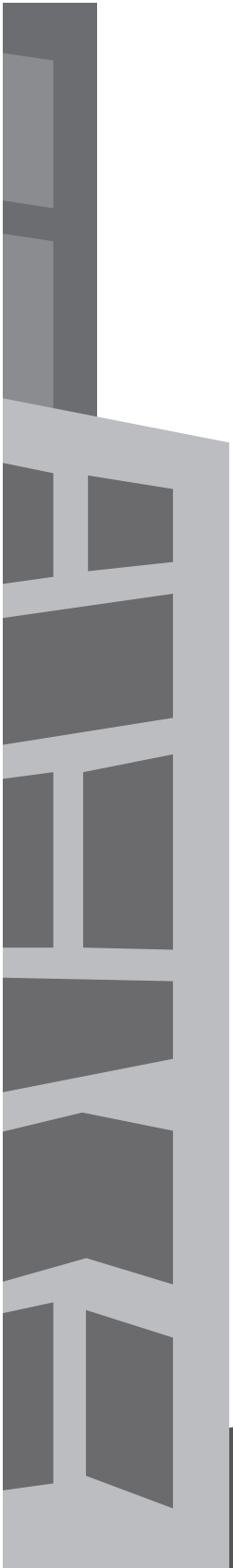
Unstructured Socializing
and Delinquency





Chapter One.

Aims and Context



Aims and Context

A group of adolescents hanging out, chatting, not doing anything in particular is a familiar sight of all times and all cultures. Writings from as early as the Middle Ages mention youths who find joy in trotting around on the streets until late in the evening, “dancing, singing, cursing and soiling” and recommend to parents to keep their kids at home at night (Den Heussen, 1657: 15, 76, literature study from Exalto, 2004). This phenomenon of adolescents hanging out is also referred to as *unstructured socializing*. A recent large cross-national study in Europe, USA, and Latin America showed that 75 percent of the adolescents spent time in unstructured socializing at least once a week (Junger-Tas et al., 2012), illustrating the widespread and popular nature of the activity. Adolescents’ focus on peers and their desire to meet friends away from parental supervision is part of a developmental process toward adulthood, where they distantiate from their parents, discover their own identities and develop social skills, such as reconciliation management and tolerance (Allen and Antonishak, 2008; Giordano, 2003; Vitaro, Boivin, and Bukowski, 2009). Despite these developmental advantages, the phenomenon of teenagers hanging out continues to attract societal concern. Unsupervised youths hanging out may cause nuisance for residents and induce fear in passers-by. Youths who spend a lot of their time hanging out also evoke concern from their parents, teachers, and other involved adults because idle leisure activity is generally connoted with substance use, ‘wrong’ friends, low academic achievement, and poor life choices. Furthermore, involvement in unstructured socializing is associated with increased risks for vandalism, shoplifting, and other forms of delinquency.

This book addresses the relationship between adolescents’ involvement in unstructured socializing (‘hanging out’) and their involvement in delinquency. This relationship has long been recognized in sociology and criminology (e.g., Agnew and Petersen, 1989; Felson and Gottfredson, 1984; Hirschi, 1969; West and Farrington, 1977) but was brought to a broader attention with the publication of Osgood and colleagues in 1996. In their

routine activity theory of general deviance, the authors adopt a situational perspective on individual delinquency, recognizing that minor deviant acts committed by teenagers are often not planned ahead or necessarily the result of criminal dispositions. Rather, these acts occur in the spur of the moment, out of boredom, in search of excitement, or to express toughness in front of peers (Briar and Piliavin, 1965; Matza, 1964; Warr, 2002). Activities rich of opportunities and situational inducements for deviance, which are thus particularly crime conducive, were termed ‘unstructured socializing’.

In this study, I build on the theory and empirical work of Osgood et al. (1996) and the stock of literature that has been published since on the relationship between unstructured socializing and delinquency (e.g., Bernasco et al., 2013b; Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2001; Haynie and Osgood, 2005; Maimon and Browning, 2010). The aim of this study is to elaborate on the relationship between unstructured socializing and delinquency theoretically, methodologically, and empirically. To pursue this aim, I will examine the *underlying processes* that explain the relationship, improve upon the *operationalization* of the concept of unstructured socializing and specify *situational conditions* that amplify or diminish the relationship. This first chapter provides the theoretical background of the unstructured socializing perspective of Osgood et al. (1996) and an empirical background of prior research into the relationship between unstructured socializing and delinquency¹. I will then briefly outline the contributions of the current study, discuss the applied data and methods, and provide an overview of the remaining chapters.

Unstructured socializing and adolescent delinquency

Prior to the publication of Osgood et al. in 1996, criminologists drew “on virtually every major theory in the field” to contextualize the relationship between unstructured socializing and adolescent delinquency (Agnew and Petersen, 1989: 333). For example, studies applied social control theory, arguing that involvement in conventional activities strengthens an individual’s

¹ Sections of this chapter have been incorporated in a broader review article on peer influence and delinquency (Meldrum et al., 2016).

bond to society, provides attractive alternatives to delinquency, and fosters conventional beliefs by exposing adolescents to conventional role models (Hawdon, 1996; Hirschi, 1969). Thus, unconventional leisure activities were posited to weaken bonds and provide opportunities for delinquency. Other studies have drawn on subcultural deviance theory and argued that participation in unstructured activities such as hanging out, going to parties and dances, or driving around in a car shows subcultural preferences associated with a party subculture that values idleness and disdain for school and exposes adolescents to delinquent individuals, increasing their own risk for involvement in delinquency (Hagan, 1991). Principles from strain theory have been adapted to argue that certain leisure activities provide individuals ways to channel frustration and need for excitement in socially acceptable ways. A lack of such alternatives could result in delinquent behavior (Agnew, 1992; Roberts, 1985). Several studies discuss the relationship between 'unsupervised time with peers' and antisocial behavior under the guise of after-school care arrangements (Flannery, Williams, and Vazsonyi, 1999; Galambos and Maggs, 1991; Pettit et al., 1999). Finally, some scholars have applied routine activity theory to argue that leisure activities cause adolescents to spend time further away from home, thereby decreasing opportunities for parental supervision and thus increasing the risk of delinquency (Felson and Gottfredson, 1984; Felson, 1986; Riley, 1987).

In a now widely cited publication, Osgood et al. (1996) adapted the routine activity theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979) and lifestyle theory (Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo, 1978) to an individual level perspective on deviance. Their unstructured socializing perspective, or routine activity theory of general deviance, aimed to explain the association between daily activities and individual patterns of delinquency. Essential to the unstructured socializing perspective are two arguments. First, some individual routine activities are more conducive to deviance than others. Second, individuals who spend more time in such 'deviance conducive' routine activities should engage in greater deviance.

For the first argument, Osgood et al. (1996) theorized that three features increase the risk of deviance for a given activity: The presence of peers, the absence of authority figures, and lack of a structure. The *presence of peers* during an activity should promote deviance because peers can serve as resources in fostering delinquency by providing practical help (e.g., serving as back-up

or look-out) and by making deviance more rewarding by conferring status and reputation to individuals; peers can provide an ‘appreciative audience’. The absence of *authority figures* decreases the risk of getting caught, thereby reducing the potential consequences of deviant behavior and increasing the perception that a deviant act can successfully be completed. Osgood et al. (1996) distinguished from the distinction between handlers, guardians, and place managers (Felson, 1995), and argued that the social control function of the authority figures resides in their role obligations in the setting and not in their bond with the potential offender, victim, or location. The concept generally refers to conventional authority figures, such as parents or teachers, rather than other non-conventional authority figures such as gang leaders. A *lack of structured activity*² further enables engagement in deviance because “greater structure means that more time will be spent in designated ways, and that this time will not be available for deviance” (Osgood et al., 1996: 641). Organized activities are also more likely than unstructured activities to confer responsibilities for social control to one or more of the present individuals. Hence, individuals engaging in unstructured activities will have less social control exerted over them. Based on these assertions, Osgood et al. (1996) coined the term unstructured socializing to represent an activity with peers conducted in the absence of authority figures and without any structure.

With regard to the second argument, Osgood et al. (1996) argued that most adolescents are open to the idea of deviance because the motivation for delinquency can be inherent in the situation as opposed to within the individual (following Briar and Piliavin, 1965), and because most adolescents are open to deviant values. This does not mean that adolescents reject conventional values; subterranean values that can be linked to delinquency, such as a search for excitement and approval of recklessness and toughness, can exist alongside conventional values (Matza and Sykes, 1961). Although Osgood et al. (1996) did not assume that all adolescents are equally likely to respond to opportunities for delinquency, they argued that “most people have the potential for at least occasionally succumbing to an opportunity for deviant behavior” (Osgood et al., 1996: 639). In summary, the theory developed by Osgood et al. (1996) posits that unstructured socializing with

2 Unstructured activities, according to Osgood et al. (1996: 640), are activities that “carry no agenda for how time is to be spent”. More recently, Wikström et al. (2012a: 280) defined unstructured activities as activities that are not “organized or directed towards a particular end”.

peers provides individuals with socially rewarding situational opportunities for delinquency. As such, individuals who spend more time in unstructured socializing are likely to engage in more delinquency.

Since the publication of Osgood et al. in 1996, the concept of unstructured socializing has received increasing attention in sociological and criminological literature. Works that were published after 2000 on the relationship between unstructured or unsupervised activities with peers, contextualize the relationship almost exclusively³ in Osgood's extension of the routine activity theory. Efforts have been made to integrate the perspective with other theories, such as social learning theories (e.g., Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2001; Boman, 2013), social disorganization theory (Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2007; Maimon and Browning, 2010), strain theory (Op de Beeck and Pauwels, 2010), self-control theory (Hay and Forrest, 2008) and dual-systems theory on cognitive processing (Thomas and McGloin, 2013). Moreover, large datasets have incorporated items in their data collection to scrutinize the unstructured socializing concept (e.g., Add Health, PHDCN). Unstructured socializing is increasingly recognized as having its own effect on adolescent delinquency, independent of the effect of having delinquent friends (Haynie and Osgood, 2005).

Empirical studies on unstructured socializing

Since the publication of Osgood et al. (1996), several empirical studies appeared that incorporated measures for unstructured socializing. To provide an empirical context for the current study, this section gives an overview of the empirical research that has been conducted on the relationship between unstructured socializing and adolescent delinquency, based on a systematic literature review. This review was not aimed at giving an exhaustive account of the literature, but at gaining insight into the current state of research and the factors that play a role in the relationship. The specifics of the literature search, the review method, and a summary of the findings from the 74 studies that met the selection criteria can be found in Appendix B at the end of this book.

3 Exceptions are a few studies on social control theory (Barnes et al., 2007; Wong, 2005), subcultural deviance theory (Thorlindsson and Bernburg, 2006), and situational action theory (Weerman et al., 2015; Wikström and Butterworth, 2006; Wikström et al., 2010; Wikström et al., 2012a).

Descriptive data of the studies and generality of the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship

To give the reader an idea of the body of literature on the relationship between unstructured socializing and delinquency, descriptive data of the studies are provided in Table 1.1. The Table displays the countries in which the studies were conducted, the age, gender, and ethnicity of the respondents, whether the study took place in an urban or rural area, and whether the design was longitudinal or cross-sectional. Table 1.2 provides an overview of the types of delinquency that have been examined in relation to unstructured socializing. Note that only a few studies reported null findings; almost all of the studies found a positive association between involvement in unstructured socializing and delinquency, regardless of the research and measurement strategy employed. This speaks to the robustness of the relationship across countries, stages of adolescence, research designs, and types of delinquency.

As can be seen in Table 1.1, the link between unstructured socializing and delinquency/substance use has been observed in a number of different cultural contexts. While the majority of studies have been based on samples of individuals from within the United States (47 studies based on 29 different research projects), a large portion was also conducted in Western European countries. Specifically, studies have been based on data collected in the Netherlands (e.g., Bernasco et al., 2013b; Junger and Wiegersma, 1995; Sentse et al., 2010; Weerman et al., 2013), Belgium (Op de Beeck and Pauwels, 2010), England (e.g., Riley, 1987; Wikström and Butterworth, 2006, Wikström et al., 2010; Wikström et al., 2012a), Scotland (Miller, 2013; Smith and Ecob, 2013), Germany (Svensson and Oberwittler, 2010), and Switzerland (Müller, Eisner, and Ribeaud, 2013). Other studies were conducted in Northern Europe, namely Iceland (Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2001; 2007; Thorlindsson and Bernburg, 2006) and Sweden (Svensson and Oberwittler, 2010), and in 'other western' countries, namely Canada (Galambos and Maggs, 1991; Hundleby, 1987; LaGrange and Silverman, 1999; Wong, 2005) and Australia (Moore and Ohtsuka, 2000). Three studies have examined and established the relationship cross-nationally (Steketee, 2012; Svensson and Oberwittler, 2010; Vazsonyi et al., 2002). Two of these studies also incorporated samples from outside of Western Europe and the USA: Vazsonyi et al. (2002) included respondents from Eastern Europe (Hungary), and Steketee et al. (2012)

included respondents from Eastern Europe (e.g., Poland, Russia), Southern Europe (e.g., Spain, Italy), and Latin America (e.g., Venezuela, Suriname).

Table 1.1. Descriptive data of studies ($N = 74$ publications)

	Research projects	Studies	Mean no. of studies per research project
Geographical location of study			
USA	29.0	47.0	1.6
Western European	12.0	19.0	1.6
Other western	7.0	9.0	1.3
Non-western	2.0	2.0	1.0
Cross-national studies	3.0	3.0	1.0
Urban background			
Urban	15.0	23.0	1.5
Suburban	5.0	5.0	1.0
Rural	3.0	4.0	1.3
Urban and rural	19.0	37.0	1.9
Unknown	9.0	9.0	1.0
Age respondents ^a			
Children (<12)	2.0	2.0	1.0
Children and adolescents (8-18)	4.0	7.0	1.8
Adolescents (11-18)	8.0	18.0	2.3
Early adolescents (11-14)	12.0	12.0	1.0
Middle adolescents (14-16)	10.0	15.0	1.5
Late adolescents (16-19)	9.0	11.0	1.2
Adolescents and young adults (11-21)	7.0	7.0	1.0
Young adults (18-25)	3.0	4.0	1.3
Adults	1.0	1.0	1.0
Other demographics			
Gender	16.0	18.0	1.1
Ethnicity	4.0	4.0	1.0
Data structure			
Cross-sectional	34.0	39.0	1.1
Longitudinal	24.0	39.0	1.6

NOTES: The numbers in the 'studies' column refer to the number of papers, the numbers in the 'research projects' column correspond to the number of different data collections on which these papers were based.

^a Studies that overlapped three or more age categories (e.g., studies that included respondents in the ages 11 to 19 years) were included in the general Adolescents category. For many studies, the ages of the respondents overlapped two age categories. Those studies were categorized using the most consistent age range of their respondents. The extreme categories were prioritized: Studies that incorporated, for example, children, early, and middle adolescents were categorized under Children and adolescents.

Most of the studies incorporated respondents from both urban and rural backgrounds (19 research projects) or from urban backgrounds only (15 research projects). Few studies were conducted among suburban samples

(Agnew and Petersen, 1989; Fleming et al., 2008; Galambos and Maggs, 1991; Greene and Banerjee, 2009; Moore and Ohtsuka, 2000) and rural samples (Junger and Wiegersma, 1995; Lam, McHale, and Crouter, 2014; Meldrum and Clark, 2015).

As expected, most studies have been based on samples of adolescents. The studies cover all stages of adolescence: Early adolescence (ages 11 to 14; e.g., Hay and Forrest, 2008), middle adolescence (ages 14 to 16; e.g., Miller, 2013), and late adolescence (ages 16 to 19; e.g., Chen et al., 2008). Two studies focused exclusively on children (McHale, Crouter, and Tucker, 2001; Posner and Vandell, 1999) and confirmed the relationship between unstructured socializing and problem behavior among samples of, 10- to 12-year-olds and 8- to 11-year olds, respectively. A few studies covered a broad age range and included children as young as eight (e.g., DiPietro and McGloin, 2012; Gardner, Roth, and Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Lam, McHale, and Crouter, 2014; Maimon and Browning, 2010; Wong, 2005). In addition, several studies found supportive evidence among samples comprised either primarily or exclusively of young adults (e.g., Boman, 2013; Hawdon, 1996; Hughes and Short, 2014; Osgood et al., 1996; Sun and Longazel, 2008; Thomas and McGloin, 2013; Wallace and Bachman, 1991). One study confirmed the relationship for adult incarcerated offenders (Felson et al., 2012).

Although gender differences are examined relatively infrequently, studies also suggest the association between unstructured socializing and delinquency holds across both male and female samples (Barnes et al., 2007; Gage et al., 2005; Goldstein, Eccles, and Davis-Kean, 2005; Lam, McHale, and Crouter, 2014; Steketee, 2012; Weerman et al., 2015; Yin, Katims, and Zapata, 1999). However, not all studies reach this conclusion. Some studies found that unstructured socializing had a stronger effect on delinquency for males than for females (Augustyn and McGloin, 2013; Lotz and Lee, 1999; Novak and Crawford, 2010; Sentse et al., 2010), whereas outcomes of another study suggested that the relationship was stronger for females (Galambos and Maggs, 1991). The unstructured socializing-*substance use* relationship was found for both males and females (Augustyn and McGloin, 2013; Barnes et al., 2007; Gage et al., 2005; Lotz and Lee, 1999). Similarly, racial differences have rarely been considered in studies examining the unstructured socializing-delinquency/substance use link. Among those that have, there is some evidence to suggest that the association is stronger for Whites relative

to non-Whites (Barnes et al., 2007; Posner and Vandell, 1999), but other research found this may not be the case (Goldstein, Eccles, and Davis-Kean, 2005; Lotz and Lee, 1999).

From a methodological standpoint, the empirical association is found in both cross-sectional (e.g., Barnes et al., 2007; Wong, 2005) and longitudinal studies (e.g., Augustyn and McGloin, 2013; McHale, Crouter, and Tucker, 2001; Regnerus, 2002; Staff et al., 2010). Thirty-nine studies, based on twenty-four different datasets, examined and confirmed a longitudinal relationship between involvement in unstructured socializing and delinquency.

In addition, unstructured socializing is associated with a wide variety of delinquent behaviors. Table 1.2 gives an overview for the studies incorporated in this review. Most studies examined a general measure for delinquency that often included items on substance use (e.g., Haynie and Osgood, 2005; Thomas and McGloin, 2013). Others established relationships between unstructured socializing and violent behavior (e.g., DiPietro and McGloin, 2012; Miller, 2013), property offending (e.g., Anderson and Hughes, 2009; Vazsonyi et al., 2002), and substance use (e.g., Thorlindsson and Bernburg, 2006; Wallace and Bachman, 1991). However, two studies from different research projects found non-significant relationships between involvement in unstructured socializing and violence (Müller, Eisner, and Ribeaud, 2013; Mustaine and Tewksbury, 2000). Other studies reported null-findings for drug offenses (Gottfredson, Cross, and Soulé, 2007; LaGrange and Silverman, 1999) and for general delinquency (Gottfredson, Cross, and Soulé, 2007; Weerman, 2011).

In conclusion, the vast majority of studies supported the finding of Osgood et al. (1996). Greater time spent in unstructured socializing increases delinquency and substance use, regardless of the specific sample or research strategy that was used. Although not all studies have agreed with this finding (Gottfredson, Cross, and Soulé, 2007; LaGrange and Silverman, 1999; Müller, Eisner, and Ribeaud, 2013; Mustaine and Tewksbury, 2000; Weerman, 2011), the weight of the evidence supports the contention that the construct of unstructured socializing exerts substantive effects on delinquency and substance use.

In the following sections, I will turn to a discussion of how the studies have operationalized the concept of unstructured socializing, and discuss their findings regarding mediation and moderation of the unstructured socializing-delinquency/substance use relationship.

Table 1.2. Types of delinquency and substance use ($N = 74$ publications)

	Research projects	Studies	Yes ^a	No ^a
General delinquency	43.0	56.0	54.0	2.0
Violence/aggression/assault	16.0	19.0	17.0	2.0
Property/theft/vandalism	12.0	14.0	14.0	.0
Minor	5.0	5.0	5.0	.0
Serious	5.0	5.0	5.0	.0
Driving under influence	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
Dealing drugs	2.0	2.0	2.0	.0
Weapon carrying	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
Substance use general	6.0	6.0	5.0	1.0
Cigarette use	5.0	5.0	5.0	.0
Alcohol use	10.0	12.0	12.0	.0
Drugs general	5.0	5.0	4.0	1.0
Soft drugs	4.0	8.0	8.0	.0
Hard drugs	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0

NOTES: Several studies incorporated more than one dependent variable. The number of publications, therefore, does not match the number of studies discussed in this Table. The numbers in the 'studies' column refer to the number of papers in which the relationship between unstructured socializing and this variable was discussed, the numbers in the 'research projects' column correspond to the number of different data collections on which these papers were based.

^aThe numbers in the 'yes' column refer to the number of studies that found a relationship, the numbers in the 'no' column refer to the number of studies that did not find a relationship.

Operationalization of unstructured socializing

As previously discussed, the unstructured socializing concept encompasses three elements: The presence of peers, the absence of authority figures, and a lack of structure. The measurement of this concept varied considerably across the studies. In fact, most studies did not explicitly measure all three conditions that define a situation of unstructured socializing. In this section, three major approaches are distinguished that have been used for examining the association between unstructured socializing and delinquency. In the overview Table B1 in the Appendix is provided for each study under what category (1-3) its operationalization of the unstructured socializing concept was classified.

The first and most common approach is measuring unstructured socializing in such a way that at least one of the three elements is present but where at least one other element is ambiguous. Many studies use survey items that adequately refer to respondent involvement in specific unstructured activities generally assumed to occur in the presence of peers. Such

measurement strategies are often ambiguous in terms of whether authority figures are present. For example, the measures appearing in Osgood et al. (1996) asked respondents about the frequency in which they participated in the following activities: Driving around in a car (or motorcycle) just for fun, getting together with friends informally, going to parties or other social affairs, and going out for fun and recreation. Importantly, these are all unstructured activities that are likely to occur in the presence of peers; the item 'getting together with friends informally' specifically refers to the presence of peers. However, the absence of authority figures is only *implied* by these items. While many studies employ measures that are ambiguous about the presence or absence of authority figures, other studies adequately measure unsupervised time spent with peers yet are not specific about the activity being engaged in (e.g., Lam, McHale, and Crouter, 2014; Pettit et al., 1999). Also assigned to this category of studies are those which employ measures that either ask about involvement in unstructured activity, but not explicitly about whether peers are present ('How often do you hang out in the local neighborhood?', 'How often do you go to amusement arcades?' from Smith and Ecob, 2013), or that ask about time spent with friends, but not about the kind of activity ('How many times in the past week did you just hang out with friends?' from Augustyn and McGloin, 2013). Some of the operationalizations in this category included items about going to bars and nightclubs (e.g., Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2001; Miller, 2013). These items were explicitly rejected by Osgood et al. (1996) because such activities are closely associated with alcohol use and because visiting nightclubs is often prohibited for kids in early and middle adolescence. Those activities would, therefore, be deviant in themselves, which makes an established relationship with delinquency tautological.

The second approach to measuring unstructured socializing explicitly captures all three conditions articulated by Osgood et al. (1996), by asking respondents in questionnaire-format about their exposure to certain situations. Several studies (Greene and Banerjee, 2009; Higgins and Jennings, 2010; Müller, Eisner, and Ribeaud, 2013; Osgood and Anderson, 2005; Thomas and McGloin, 2013, measure from G.R.E.A.T. data) have employed measures such as the following: 'How many hours per week do you spend hanging out with friends, not doing anything in particular, where no adults are present?' This type of measurement leaves little room for ambiguity

when respondents are trying to interpret what the item specifically refers to. Such operationalizations clearly possess greater face validity as indicators of unstructured socializing than those falling under the first approach discussed above.

A third, but relatively scarce approach to measuring unstructured socializing relies on the use of time diary data (Bernasco et al., 2013b; Janssen et al., 2015; Posner and Vandell, 1999; Riley, 1987; Weerman et al., 2013; Wikström and Butterworth, 2006; Wikström et al., 2010; Wikström et al., 2012a⁴). Time diaries systematically record respondents' allocation of time over activities by questioning respondents about daily activities in small time units (e.g., ten minutes or one hour), where the activities took place, and who else was present during each activity. The information gleaned from these instruments can be applied to specify respondents' exposure to very specific situations; they can combine information about the activity (whether it was structured or unstructured) with information about whether peers were present and whether parents or other adults were present. Thus, studies based on the use of time diaries enable a detailed and accurate operationalization of unstructured socializing.

Mediation of the relationship

Identifying mediating factors would enhance our understanding about why involvement in unstructured socializing increases delinquency and substance use, which is why one of the aims of the systematic literature review was to explore relevant mediators. The review showed that, although a few studies had indeed investigated mediation of the unstructured socializing-delinquency/substance use relationship (Agnew and Petersen, 1989; Bernasco et al., 2013b; Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2001; Boman, 2013; Greene and Banerjee, 2009; Hawdon, 1996; Hughes and Short, 2014; Regnerus, 2002; Riley, 1987; Wong, 2005), these studies generally did not scrutinize the effects of separate variables. Instead, these studies added several variables to models simultaneously, making it difficult to identify unique mediating effects. For example, Bernburg and Thorlindsson (2001)

4 Lam, McHale, and Crouter (2014) and Pettit et al. (1999) also applied time diary data but did not specify whether activities were unstructured.

found that the effect of routine activities (unstructured peer interaction) on property offending and violent behavior decreased, but remained significant, once ‘deviant peers’ and ‘definitions favorable to offending’ were added to the model. Studies that did distinguish between independent indirect effects, found that association with deviant friends (Boman, 2013; Greene and Banerjee, 2009; Wong, 2005), alcohol use (Bernasco et al., 2013b), peer group commitment (Riley, 1987), and provocative social interactions (‘signifying’: Hughes and Short, 2014) offered potential explanations for why involvement in unstructured socializing is related to delinquency.

Moderation of the relationship

To explore what factors might amplify or diminish the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship, I searched for studies that examined potential moderating factors and situations. Results of the review are summarized in Table 1.3 and will be briefly discussed in this section.

First, researchers have focused attention on the potential interaction between unstructured socializing and *individual traits*. For example, multiple studies have investigated whether unstructured socializing interacts with self-control or closely related concepts. In this regard, the evidence supporting an interactive effect is weak and often mixed. Most studies that have investigated self-control or impulsivity did not find a significant interaction with unstructured socializing in predicting delinquency (LaGrange and Silverman, 1999; Maimon and Browning, 2010; Thomas and McGloin, 2013). Still, some studies offer partial support for moderation. For example, LaGrange and Silverman (1999) found positive interactions between risk-seeking and unstructured socializing when predicting violence but not for property offenses and drug offenses. They also reported null findings for moderation by most of the other indicators for self-control (temper, carelessness, present oriented), although they did find that ‘carelessness’ interacted with ‘time spent driving around with friends’ in their effect on drug offenses. The study of Hay and Forrest (2008) provides somewhat more convincing, but nevertheless mixed, evidence for the interaction between unstructured socializing and self-control in predicting general crime. Other individual traits have also been examined as potential moderators of the association between unstructured socializing and delinquency. Among these

studies, support has been found for an amplifying effect of unstructured socializing on delinquency among individuals holding definitions more favorable to delinquency (Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2001) and for a diminishing effect of unstructured socializing on delinquency among individuals scoring higher on composite scales of morality and self-control (Wikström and Butterworth, 2006; Wikström et al., 2010; Wikström et al., 2012a).

Second, studies were concerned with the potential interaction between unstructured socializing on the one hand and community characteristics and individual *background variables connoted with disadvantage* on the other hand. With regard to community characteristics, unstructured socializing was found to be more strongly related to delinquency among adolescents enrolled in schools with higher levels of instability (i.e., residential mobility and family disruption; Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2007); more strongly related to violence among adolescents who reside in neighborhoods with lower levels of collective efficacy (Maimon, 2009; Maimon and Browning, 2010); and more strongly related to externalizing behavior for adolescents who reside in neighborhoods that were rated as unsafe (Gage et al., 2005; Pettit et al., 1999). On the other hand, Anderson (2003) did not find interactions with density and dilapidation in the residential neighborhood. Other investigated background characteristics seem to be of less relevance to the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship: There is limited evidence that the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship is moderated by immigrant generational status (DiPietro and McGloin, 2012) and no evidence that the relationship is moderated by socioeconomic status (Barnes et al., 2007).

Table 1.3. Moderation of the relationship between unstructured socializing and delinquency/substance use ($N = 74$ publications)

	Research projects	Studies	Yes ^a	No ^a
Crime propensity	2.0	3.0	3.0	.0
Attitudes/beliefs	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
Self-control/impulsivity	6.0	7.0	2.0	5.0
Risk taking	1.0	3.0	2.0	1.0
Temper	1.0	2.0	.0	2.0
Carelessness	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
Present oriented	1.0	2.0	.0	2.0
Disadvantaged background				
Structural community characteristics	2.0	4.0	1.0	3.0
Cultural community characteristics	3.0	4.0	4.0	.0
Safe/unsafe neighborhood	2.0	2.0	2.0	.0
Immigrant generational status	1.0	1.0	.0	1.0
Socioeconomic status	3.0	8.0	2.0	6.0
Social bonds				
Peers				
Peers' deviant behavior	7.0	9.0	7.0	2.0
Peers' attitudes	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
Peer group gender composition	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
Parents				
Time with parents	1.0	2.0	.0	2.0
Parent-child relationship	4.0	4.0	3.0	1.0
Parental monitoring	2.0	2.0	2.0	.0
Parental involvement in school	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
School				
School bond	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
Situational conditions				
Functional locations	2.0	2.0	2.0	.0
Collective efficacy in the area	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
Evening/during the day	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
Other				
Family strain	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
School strain	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0
Extracurricular activity	1.0	1.0	1.0	.0

NOTES: Several studies incorporated more than one dependent variable or investigated more than one moderator. The number of publications, therefore, does not match the number of studies discussed in this Table. The numbers in the 'studies' column refer to the number of papers in which this variable was discussed as moderator, the numbers in the 'research projects' column correspond to the number of different data collections on which these papers were based.

^a The numbers in the 'yes' column refer to the number of studies that found this variable to moderate the relationship, the numbers in the 'no' column refer to the number of studies that did not find this variable to moderate the relationship.

Third, several studies have examined whether the effect of unstructured socializing on delinquency is moderated by *peer variables*, particularly peer delinquency. Findings have been mixed. Some studies have found that peer delinquency amplifies the effect of unstructured socializing on delinquency (Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2001; Sentse et al., 2010; Svensson and Oberwittler, 2010; Wikström et al., 2012a) and substance use (Thorlindsson and Bernburg, 2006), whereas other did not find support for an interactive effect (Agnew, 1991; Haynie and Osgood, 2005) or found a diminishing effect (McGloin and Shermer, 2009). Relatedly, Thorlindsson and Bernburg (2006) found that the unstructured socializing-substance use relationship was amplified for adolescents who thought their peers would respond positively to substance use. The studies that found interaction effects generally did not take into account the skewed distribution of dependent variables. Also, these studies did not examine the friends with whom adolescents engaged in unstructured socializing, but instead looked into general reports about peers' delinquency or attitudes. One exception is the study of Lam, McHale, and Crouter (2014). They found that unstructured socializing was only significantly related to problem behavior if it occurred in context of a mixed-sex peer group but not if it occurred in the context of a same-sex peer group.

Fourth, researchers have focused on how *parenting-related variables* moderate the effect of unstructured socializing on delinquency. For example, Bernburg and Thorlindsson (2001) found that the effect of unstructured peer interaction on violence and property offending was weaker for adolescents who had a stronger bond with their parents. These same researchers later reported that the influence of unstructured socializing was diminished for adolescents whose parents knew their friends and the parents of their friends (Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2007). Similarly, studies have found that the relationship between unstructured socializing and delinquency was diminished among adolescents who experience greater parental acceptance (Galambos and Maggs, 1991), who find it easy to talk to their parents about bothersome issues (Gage et al., 2005), whose parents are involved with school (Gage et al., 2005), and who experience more parental monitoring (Galambos and Maggs, 1991; Pettit et al., 1999). On the other hand, some studies report null findings with regard to moderation between unstructured socializing and family-related variables. Specifically, Barnes et al. (2007) found no evidence that the effect of unstructured socializing on delinquency

and substance use was moderated by time spent with parents. Likewise, Galambos and Maggs (1991) reported null findings for the potential interaction between unstructured socializing and parent-child conflict.

Fifth, *situational conditions* have been found that strengthen or weaken the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship, although this line of research is still in an early stage; only a few publications have appeared on this topic in the past years. In particular, Weerman et al. (2013) found that time spent with peers was only related to delinquency when it was combined with at least two of the following conditions: Just socializing, being in public, and being unsupervised. This provides some support that public location is a moderating factor. Relatedly, Wikström et al. (2012a) found that crime rates per 1000 person-hours were higher for unstructured peer-oriented activities in local centers than in city centers and higher on the streets and in parks than while 'moving around'. They also found that crime rates per 1000 person-hours were higher for unstructured peer-oriented activities in areas with medium levels of collective efficacy than in other areas. Additionally, Wikström et al. (2012a) found that the reported crime rates per 1000 person-hours were higher for unstructured peer-oriented activities during the evenings as opposed to the middle of the day.

Finally, *other variables* that have been studied as potential moderators of the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship are school bonds, extracurricular activities, and experienced strain. With regard to school bonds, Bernburg and Thorlindsson (2001) found that the influence of unstructured socializing on violence and property offending was diminished for adolescents with stronger bonding to school. With regard to extracurricular activity, Gage et al. (2005) found that the association between unstructured socializing and problem behavior was stronger for girls who spent less than one day a week in extracurricular activities. With regard to experienced strain, Op de Beeck and Pauwels (2010) found that the links between family strain (e.g., divorce), school strain (e.g., poor study results, repeating a grade), and offending were stronger for youths who were not involved in unstructured socializing, findings that contradicted their expectations.

Limitations of existing literature

The conducted systematic literature review suggested that the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship is fairly robust across research designs, countries, types of delinquency, stages of adolescence, and urban background of respondents. Nevertheless, it also showed that our understanding of the relationship is in need of further investigation on at least three matters. First of all, there is room for improvement of the operationalization of the concept of unstructured socializing. Most studies did not explicitly measure all three conditions of the concept (presence of peers, absence of authority figures, and unstructured activity), which hampers the interpretation of their findings with regard to the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship. Specifically, as Osgood et al. (1996) mentioned, the current operationalizations should be improved by expanding the list of unstructured activities and by better specifying whether authority figures are present.

Second, the research on mediation of the relationship is scarce and as such, we know little about factors that might explain why involvement in unstructured socializing is related to adolescent delinquency. It is particularly necessary to further investigate the independent contribution of different mediators. Previous studies generally did not examine the mediating factors separately, which makes it difficult to determine what factors are most relevant in explaining the relationship.

Finally, although there have been several studies that investigated *moderation* of the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship, our understanding of *situational* moderators is still rudimentary. For example, we know little about the extent to which it matters, in regard to their risk of delinquency, *where* adolescents spend their time in unstructured socializing, or *with whom* they are engaged in those activities. The current study aims at addressing each of these limitations.

Current study

Particularly, the aim of the current study is to theoretically, methodologically, and empirically elaborate on the relationship between unstructured socializing and adolescent delinquency. In doing so, the study will contribute

to the existing literature in at least three important ways. First, the study will *examine the underlying processes* that explain the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship. As we have seen previously, not many studies have identified independent mediators for the relationship. Second, the study will expand on research about moderation and *specify situational conditions that strengthen and weaken the relationship*. Thus, the study will scrutinize under what conditions unstructured socializing is, and is not, related to adolescent delinquency. These first two objectives are addressed by integrating, and thereby theoretically elaborating on, the unstructured socializing perspective with a variety of other theoretical perspectives, such as social learning theory (Chapter 2), situational peer influence approaches (Chapters 2 and 7), the responsibilities of places classification (Chapter 5), social disorganization theory, and broken window theory (both Chapter 6).

Third, this study *improves the operationalization of unstructured socializing* and more specified versions of criminogenic behavior settings by applying a time diary method. This method enables me to accurately define and measure the activities, people present, and locations within the concept, thereby allowing an empirically better test for the unstructured socializing perspective. Furthermore, the study combines the time diary data with data derived from other methods (such as systematic social observation and community surveys) to measure characteristics of the broader context in which unstructured socializing takes place. Two methods are discussed in detail: The space-time budget method (Chapter 3) and systematic social observation (Chapter 4).

Data and methods

Data were used from the NSCR Study of Peers Activities and Neighborhoods (SPAN). The SPAN project is a longitudinal study of adolescents, developed to gain more insight into the associations between delinquency, daily activity patterns, personal traits (such as self-control and morality), and bonds of adolescents with their peers, parents, school, and neighborhood. The SPAN data are exceptionally suitable for answering my research questions because they include time diary data (from now on referred to as space-time budget data) that allow for an improved operationalization of unstructured

socializing. Furthermore, the SPAN data incorporate several other data sources that can be combined with the space-time budget information, such as questionnaires on adolescents' self-reported involvement in delinquency and community surveys and systematic social observations on characteristics of the areas in which adolescents spend their time in unstructured socializing.

Sample

For the SPAN data collection, 40 secondary schools in the city of The Hague and surrounding municipalities (the Netherlands) were approached, of which ten schools participated. Primary reasons for declining participation were that schools were already engaged in other research projects, or had concerns about disturbing lessons. In the ten participating secondary schools, all first graders (aged 12 to 13 years) and fourth graders (aged 15 to 16 years) were asked to join the study. The study thus incorporated two age cohorts. Students were offered vouchers for the movies if they participated, and they could participate during school hours. Parents were informed about the study and could refuse participation. Of the 942 adolescents who were initially approached, 843 participated in the study during the first wave of the data collection (in the school year 2008-2009)⁵. A second wave of data collection was conducted two years later (school year 2010-2011), in which 615 of the respondents participated again (a response rate of 73 percent). Main reasons for attrition were a lack of time or willingness to participate. The dropout rate was higher among the respondents from the older age cohort, as most of these had to participate outside of school hours. Dropouts were also slightly more often involved in unstructured socializing, but they did not differ significantly from the participants in their self-reported delinquency.

For most of the studies described in this book, those 615 respondents were included who participated in both waves of the data collection. This two-wave sample consists of approximately 53 percent boys and 47 percent girls. As the dropout rate was somewhat higher among the older respondents, the two-wave sample consists of slightly more respondents from the youngest age cohort (57 percent) than the older age cohort (43 percent). The mean

5 Of the 942 adolescents who were approached, 2.9 percent could not be reached, 1.6 percent was withdrawn from the study by parents, 1.3 percent did not show up at the appointment, 0.6 percent had moved, and 0.3 percent was ill at the time of the data collection (Bernasco et al., 2013b).

age was 14.4 years in the first wave and 16.5 years in the second. The data collection covered several months, and the time-lag between the two waves, therefore, differed for the respondents. For most of the respondents (99.4 percent), the time-lag was between 1.6 and 2.6 years. The SPAN sample is over representative for adolescents from a non-Dutch background and for respondents from lower forms of education. Of the entire sample, 45 percent of the respondents were from non-native Dutch descent, following the definition of Statistics Netherlands (stating that a person is from native Dutch descent if both of his or her parents are born in the Netherlands); 9 percent of the respondents had a Turkish background; 7 percent a Moroccan background; 7 percent were Surinamese; and 22 percent were from another ethnic background. A relatively large portion of the sample was engaged in lower forms of secondary education at the time of the first interview: 18 percent were engaged in the lowest level (Dutch: *praktijkschool*); 48 percent were engaged in preparatory secondary education (Dutch: *VMBO*); 11 percent were engaged in a medium level of education (Dutch: *HAVO*); and 24 percent were engaged in pre-academic education (Dutch: *VWO*). Furthermore, as the data collection took place in the city and surroundings of The Hague, the third largest city in the Netherlands with 486,000 inhabitants in 2009, most of the respondents lived in a highly urbanized region. Of all respondents, 93.6 percent lived in a ‘very strongly urban’ or ‘strongly urban’ neighborhood, as classified by Statistics Netherlands. The sample was, therefore, not representative of Dutch youth but varied in ethnicity and had a focus on lower educated adolescents from a highly urbanized area in the Netherlands.

Space-time budget data

The *space-time budget instrument*, as proposed by P-O. Wikström (Wikström and Butterworth, 2006; Wikström et al., 2010; Wikström et al., 2012a), was piloted in the Peterborough Youth Study (PYS) and further refined in the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study (PADS+). The instrument applies a time diary method in which respondents are questioned retrospectively about their hourly activities and whereabouts in four days prior to the interview, including one Friday, one Saturday, and two other recent weekdays. The respondents were asked, per hour, about the

nature of their activities, who else was present (e.g., friends, siblings or other peers, parents or other adults), and the functional and geographical location of these activities. The space-time budget interviews were conducted in face-to-face conversations between one research assistant and one respondent.

The space-time budget data are applied to operationalize involvement in unstructured socializing. As mentioned earlier, the time diary method is a scarcely applied, but increasingly popular, method that enables the explicit measurement of all three conditions of unstructured socializing (presence of peers, absence of authority figures, unstructured activity) and thereby allows for a more accurate operationalization of the concept. The current study thereby improves upon previous studies on the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship by allowing for a better empirical test. The method further captured the whereabouts of respondents per hour on a detailed geographical level and also measured the function of those locations (e.g., at home, at school, on a street corner). This information allows for specification of the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship by location. Appendix A provides a list of the activities that were included as 'unstructured' and lists of peers, family members, and other adults that were used to specify whether peers and authority figures were present in the situation.

Compatible data sources

Apart from the space-time budgets, the SPAN data also incorporated information of regular questionnaires derived from the respondents. The questionnaire mirrored the instrument developed for the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study of Wikström et al. (2012a), except that it was translated to Dutch and extended with scales on peer reinforcement and parental monitoring. In these questionnaires, the respondents were asked about a wide range of topics, including their involvement in delinquency, their attitudes toward delinquency, their level of self-control, and their relationship with peers, parents, and school. They completed the questionnaires, in written form, themselves, under supervision of a research assistant. Data from these questionnaires was used to operationalize adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviors. Respondents were asked whether and how often they had engaged in 20

specific offenses over the past year (e.g., threatening someone, stealing something worth more than five Euros, damaging things that belonged to someone else).

The information on the whereabouts of the adolescents derived with the space-time budget interview was compatible with information from several data sources, all incorporated in the SPAN data: Systematic social observations of, for example, signs of physical and social disorder, community surveys among residents of The Hague, and census data on, for example, the average socioeconomic status in neighborhoods. *Systematic social observations* were conducted at 1422 street segments of 100 meters, distributed across the city and surroundings of The Hague. The *community surveys* were held among 3575 residents of The Hague. These surveys were based on a similar instrument in the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study of Wikström et al. (2012a) and questioned, for example, about the social cohesion and informal control that the residents experienced in their neighborhood. *Census data* of the local government of The Hague was publicly available from municipal databases. Census data used for this study contained information about population density, socioeconomic status, residential mobility, family disruption, high-rise buildings, and ethnic heterogeneity in neighborhoods of The Hague.

PROSPER data

For one of the studies in this book (discussed in Chapter 7), I relied on data from the PROSPER Peers project (Promoting School-Community-University Partnership to Enhance Resilience). This project collected social network data on how often respondents spent time in unstructured socializing with their nominated friends, which offered unique information about characteristics of the friends with whom adolescents were *actually* engaged in unstructured socializing. Such information was not available in the SPAN data. The data collection for the PROSPER project took place in 28 rural public school districts in Iowa and Pennsylvania (USA). Information was used from the first five waves of the data collection (collected between 2002 and 2007) that included 16,284 respondents (aged 10 to 17). The PROSPER sample differs in several aspects from the SPAN sample, amongst other things because the respondents predominantly had a rural backgrounds (as opposed to the SPAN

respondents who lived in highly urbanized areas) and were mostly Caucasian. As these data were used for only one of the studies in this book, the interested reader is referred to Chapter 7 for a more thorough description.

Outline of chapters

The aim of the current study is to elaborate on the relationship between unstructured socializing and adolescent delinquency. Objectives of the study are 1) to explain the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship by examining underlying processes, 2) to improve upon previous operationalizations of the concept of unstructured socializing by exploring promising methods of measurement, and 3) to specify situational conditions that strengthen and weaken the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship. Each of these objectives is addressed in one part of the book.

Part I. Unstructured socializing and delinquency

To address the first objective, a theoretical model that scrutinizes four processes that potentially explain the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship is proposed and empirically tested. It is argued that involvement in unstructured socializing 1) exposes adolescents to opportunities (temptations and provocations) for delinquency; 2) exposes adolescents to group processes that may result in delinquency (delinquent reinforcement and peer influence toward conformity); 3) alters adolescents' moral values toward delinquency-favorable attitudes; and 4) exposes adolescents to delinquent peers. In addition to investigating these processes independently, potential sequential effects are also considered. Particularly, three causal chains are examined: An indirect effect of exposure to delinquent peers through group processes, an indirect effect of exposure to delinquent peers through increased delinquency-tolerance, and an indirect effect of group processes through increased delinquency-tolerance. The study goes beyond existing studies by investigating the proposed processes independently, by expanding the set of explanatory processes with the inclusion of group processes and opportunity, and by considering potential sequential effects. The specifics and results of the study are discussed in Chapter 2.

Part II. Measuring the setting of unstructured socializing

The second objective is addressed in Chapters 3 and 4 by investigating the strengths and weaknesses of two methods that have been previously proposed for the operationalization of aspects of behavior settings. The first method, discussed in Chapter 3, is the *space-time budget method* (STB), proposed by P-O. Wikström (Wikström and Butterworth, 2006; Wikström et al., 2010; Wikström et al., 2012), to better capture individuals' activity patterns. The space-time budget method is an instrument to record, retrospectively, the hourly whereabouts and activities of respondents. The method is largely based on traditional time diary methods, except that it also incorporates spatial information about the locations where activities took place and information about criminologically relevant events, such as delinquency and victimization. Chapter 3 addresses, among other things, the methods' historical context, how the method should be applied, strengths and weaknesses, applications in criminology, and results of validation analyses.

The second method, discussed in Chapter 4, is *systematic social observation* (SSO), proposed by Taylor, Perkins, and colleagues (Perkins, Meeks, and Taylor, 1992; Perkins and Taylor, 1996; Taylor, Gottfredson, and Brower, 1984) to measure features of the physical environment that can be related to delinquency, particularly signs of disorder within street blocks. Systematic social observation refers to observations that are conducted systematically, in the current study by completing a checklist on disorder items and by providing detailed procedures on the unit (e.g., street segments), topic, duration, and recording of the observation (Reiss, 1971). The SSO method has a longer history in criminology than the STB method and many of the methodological issues have already been addressed. However, observer reliability issues in SSO studies have not received much attention, especially not in ecological assessments (Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999). This study, as discussed in Chapter 4, explores whether SSO enables valid and reliable measurement of disorder at both street segment level and neighborhood level. A new model is proposed that directly controls for observer bias in ecometric measures.

Part III. Beyond unstructured socializing: Specifying criminogenic behavior settings

The third objective is addressed by applying the STB method and SSO method in combination with more traditional methods, to investigate three situational conditions that potentially affect the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship: The functional location, disadvantage in the area, and characteristics of the present peers. These conditions are each addressed in a separate chapter.

Functional location refers to the public nature and function of a location (e.g., private, semi-public, and public locations). To better understand in what types of locations unstructured socializing is most crime conducive, the unstructured socializing perspective is integrated with the responsibilities of places classification of Felson (1995). This classification contains the idea that people's tendency to intervene in a situation depends on the experienced responsibility. Experienced responsibility will be strongest in private spaces and least strong in public spaces. Therefore, it is hypothesized that unstructured socializing is most strongly related to delinquency in public locations and least strongly in private locations. This idea is further investigated for specific locations: Public entertainment facilities, public transportation and other semi-public settings (the categories within the semi-public realm), and streets, shopping centers, and open spaces (as categories within the public realm). This study is the first to investigate a wide of variety of functional locations for unstructured socializing in relation to adolescent delinquency. Results of the study are discussed in Chapter 5.

The role of *areal disadvantage* in the unstructured socializing-delinquency relationship is theorized against the background of social disorganization theory (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997; Shaw and McKay, 1942) and broken windows theory (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). It is hypothesized that disorganization and disorder in the neighborhoods where adolescents spend their time in unstructured socializing strengthen the relationship between unstructured socializing and delinquency. The study considers several indicators of social disorganization and disorder (socioeconomic status, ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility, family disruption, population density, structural density, collective efficacy, and physical disorder). The study contributes to previous studies by also investigating disadvantage in the

neighborhoods where adolescents *spend their time*, whereas previous studies were mainly considered with disadvantage in *residential* neighborhoods. Specifics and results of this study are discussed in Chapter 6.

The last empirical chapter is concerned with identifying *characteristics of the friends* with whom adolescents are engaged in unstructured socializing that contribute to a deviance conducive environment. The unstructured socializing perspective is integrated theoretically with literature on peer influence and co-offending. Four characteristics are investigated: Friends' involvement in type-specific delinquency, friends' risk-seeking tendencies, friends' attitudes toward rule breaking, and age differences between friends and the target adolescents. This study is innovative in that it employs social network data combined with information on the time that respondents reported spending hanging out with their nominated friends (collected in the PROSPER Peers project). It thereby enables the study of characteristics of friends with whom adolescents are *actually* engaged in unstructured socializing, whereas previous studies examined general reports about peer delinquency. This study is discussed in Chapter 7.

Finally, the conclusion in Chapter 8 provides a summary of the findings and their main implications for theory, methodology, and policy. This chapter also addresses limitations of the study and suggestions for further research. A schematic overview of the book is provided in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4. Overview of book chapters

Chapter	Aim of study	Data
Part I.	Unstructured socializing and delinquency	
1	Providing a theoretical and empirical context	Literature review
2	Explaining the relationship a) Exposure to opportunities b) Exposure to group processes c) Increased tolerance toward delinquency d) Exposure to delinquent peers	SPAN STB and questionnaire
Part II.	Measuring the setting of unstructured socializing	
3	Methodological chapter on space-time budget method	SPAN STB and questionnaire
4	Methodological chapter on systematic social observation	SPAN SSO disorder data
Part III.	Beyond unstructured socializing	
5	Specifying the relationship with functional location a) Private spaces b) Semi-public spaces c) Public spaces	SPAN STB and questionnaire
6	Specifying the relationship with disadvantage in the area a) Disorganization b) Disorder	SPAN STB, questionnaire, SSO disorder data, community surveys, census data
7	Specifying the relationship with characteristics of the present friends a) Friends' delinquency b) Friends' risk-seeking c) Friends' attitudes d) Age difference between friend and respondent	PROSPER questionnaire
8	Discussion and conclusion	

ABBREVIATIONS: SPAN = Study of Peers Activities and Neighborhoods; STB = space-time budget interviews; SSO = systematic social observations; PROSPER = Project for Promoting School-Community-University Partnership to Enhance Resilience.

