

dealing, robbery, and battery, the rationale being that understanding the perceived sources of neighborhood disorder is an important precursor to understanding how offenders interpret neighborhood disorder in reference to undertaking their criminal activities.

Chapter 5 explains how drug dealers interpret neighborhood disorder and understand the effects of collective efficacy on their business decisions. The chapter highlights the various ways that the information both supports and contradicts the claims of broken windows and collective efficacy theories, and how ecological disadvantage extends each theory. Implications of the findings are presented in subsequent chapters. The reader will be introduced to offenders such as Icepick, Throat, Swift, and Razor, who were very generous in their explanations of how street drug dealing functions. The same procedure is followed in chapter 6, which focuses on robbers' interpretations of neighborhood disorder and reactions to collective efficacy.

The battery chapter (chapter 7) indicates that it is sometimes quite appropriate to think of "people as hotspots," because the presence of disruptive families has a major influence on which blocks experience the highest number of batteries. Regardless of where they reside and congregate, members of disruptive families frequently assault each other, their friends, and their acquaintances. Alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and a tremendous amount of idle time are common factors in this process. The effects of those factors are explained in the ethnographies. The concept of ecological advantage is used to explain why disruptive families are more likely to be situated on some blocks than on others.

Chapter 8, the final chapter, summarizes the major findings of the research and outlines the implications for theory, methods, and policy. It shows that there is considerable potential for both broken windows theory and collective efficacy theory. However, these theories and their policy implications will be better understood when they account for the independent factors associated with ecological disadvantage.

Appendix A, the Methodological Appendix, outlines the crime hotspots as they were tabulated from the 1999–2000 crime statistics obtained from the Chicago Police Department and cross-checked against a neighborhood survey. The spatial distributions of neighborhood disorder and collective efficacy are also outlined and discussed. The appendix is mainly statistical and presents many of the puzzles that are explained in the qualitative chapters where offenders who commit crimes like drug dealing, robbery, and battery explain in detail how those crimes are committed, and the relevance of neighborhood disorder and collective efficacy in the process.

(TWO)

## Explaining Crime Hotspots

### *Overview and Extensions of Broken Windows and Collective Efficacy Theories*

#### Introduction

Over the last seven years, broken windows theory and collective efficacy theory have received increased attention from researchers and policymakers who seek to understand and address crime problems in society. The purpose of this chapter is not to provide a comprehensive review of such research. Appendix B and Appendix C offer a summary of recent trends in literature on broken windows and collective efficacy, respectively. In this chapter, I discuss the fundamental logics of these two theories as they relate to the subject at hand: namely, why crimes occur more frequently in certain neighborhood locations as opposed to others. I explain the various ways that data from the Wentworth Area Neighborhood Study (WANS) support, explain, and challenge the fundamental claims of each theory. I also propose the concept of *ecological disadvantage* to extend each theory by resolving problems posed by their limitations and oversights.

One of the major findings of this research is that physical disorder—one core component of broken windows theory—does not matter (statistically or substantively) for any of the three crimes analyzed (narcotic violations, robberies, or batteries). However, while social disorder (a second component of broken windows theory) and collective

efficacy both have statistical and substantive significance in reference to those crimes, they were both observed as necessary but insufficient conditions. More specifically, statistical analyses (see Appendix A) indicate that when social disorder was low, all selected crimes were also generally low. However, when social disorder was high, all crimes were almost equally likely to be high or low. Similarly, when collective efficacy was high, all crimes were generally low, but when collective efficacy was low, crimes were almost equally likely to be high or low. In subsequent chapters I present interview, ethnographic, and mapping data to show that those quantitative findings are further supported by the qualitative data, which are then used to explain the puzzles found during analysis of the statistical data. The qualitative data show that the ecological positioning of a particular street block, in terms of what is within and around it, has a profound influence on the logic motivated offenders use to select perceived advantageous spaces for their crime-related activities. These factors require much more theoretical consideration than is offered in broken windows and collective efficacy theories.

Both broken windows theory and collective efficacy theory focus on the *reactive* rather than the *proactive* aspects associated with offending. They portray offenders as reacting to neighborhood conditions—whether such conditions are signs of neighborhood disorder in the physical and social environment, or of levels of collective efficacy, capacities for collective action among the opposing law-abiding population. This study shows that the *proactive aspects of offending*, such as assessment of the ecologically advantageous factors offenders actively seek in their efforts at committing crimes, require greater attention.

The tendency of research has also been to portray offenders as relatively strange and unintelligent people who act on their wicked impulses and who succeed because of something that law-abiding people fail to do. Whether these failures are not fixing broken windows or not developing adequate trust and cohesion in order to create public goods such as safer neighborhoods, the presence of crime is attributed by conventional theories to the failure of others, not to the successful strategies of offenders.

The data in this book show that most offenders, especially crime entrepreneurs such as drug dealers and robbers, are quite proactive in their crime-related ambitions. They capitalize on various advantages locations offer by virtue of the sort of broader space within which they are embedded, notwithstanding levels of neighborhood disorder or collective efficacy. I refer to these space-specific (dis)advantages to criminal

opportunity as *ecological (dis)advantage*<sup>1</sup> and use this concept to extend both broken windows and collective efficacy theories.

### The Logic of Broken Windows Theory

Broken windows theory operates on the commonsensical logic that *a stitch in time saves nine*. The general idea is that if small problems are left unresolved, bigger problems will inevitably follow, especially in neighborhoods near the tipping point, “where a window is likely to be broken at any time and must quickly be fixed if all are not to be shattered” (Wilson 1985, 88). The theory posits that, from the law-abiding residents’ perspective, disorder is *indirectly* linked to serious crime through the process of weakened social control that is fueled by citizens’ fear of crime. These realities create “the conditions in which crime can flourish” (Bratton and Kelling 2006, 2).

However, from the offenders’ point of view, the link between disorder and crime is more *direct*. Offenders interpret disorder as a signal that no one cares about the neighborhood, and that therefore they can commit crimes there with relative impunity. This assumption of broken windows theory has not been directly tested by empirical research focused on offenders’ interpretations and reaction to neighborhood disorder. That gap in research is the focus of this book.

To date, scholarly responses to broken windows theory have mainly focused on two factors: (1) the association between neighborhood disorder and various crimes,<sup>2</sup>—which is the focus here; and (2) broken windows policing, which is an attempt to reduce serious crimes through aggressive police enforcement of minor misdemeanors and offenses of disorderly conduct.<sup>3</sup> This is the focus that has received the most attention and stimulated the most controversy, especially based on research conducted by Robert J. Sampson and his colleagues, who have published numerous major journal articles that challenge broken windows hypotheses as well as broken windows policing. By publishing his research

1. I admit that the term “ecological disadvantage” may appear relatively biased, favoring conditions that create safer neighborhoods rather than those that enable offenders to do better in their criminal pursuits. In other words, those ecological conditions are advantageous to offenders, but disadvantageous for the pursuit of crime reduction.

2. Harcourt 2001; Sampson and Raudenbush 1999; Skogan 1987, 1990; Taylor 2001.

3. Corman and Mocar 2002; Decker and Kohfeld 1985; Funk and Kugler 2003; Giacopassi and Forde 2000; Golub et al. 2003; Harcourt 1998, 2001; Herbert 2001; Jacob and Rich 1981; Kelling and Coles 1996; Kelling and Bratton 1998; Roberts 1999; Sampson and Cohen 1988; Wilson 1968, 1975, 1981; Wilson and Boland 1978; Whittaker et al. 1985.

in journal articles and in a recent book, *Illusions of Disorder*, Bernard Harcourt has registered his own attacks on broken windows policing (see Appendix B). However, two advocates of broken windows theory, William Bratton<sup>4</sup> and George Kelling,<sup>5</sup> have not responded kindly to those scholarly criticisms. They protest that “Ideological academics are trying to undermine a perfectly good idea” (Bratton and Kelling 2006, 1). Academics, they argue, many of whom have not spent much time conducting field research, continue to misrepresent broken windows theory as assuming a direct link between disorder and serious crime. Bratton and Kelling further lament that some academics who attempt to debunk broken windows theory have been very selective in their interpretation of data and have omitted from their accounts research that has found support for broken windows theory (Bratton and Kelling 2006).

My intention in setting out on this research was neither to support nor to refute broken windows theory. Instead, I have mainly sought to understand and explain the relevance of the theory to offenders in their everyday deliberations with crime and neighborhood life. It is important to disclose here that I was the last student to receive his Ph.D. under the chief supervision of Robert J. Sampson before Sampson left the University of Chicago’s Department of Sociology in 2002. (Sampson is currently the chair of the Sociology Department at Harvard University.) At no time have I felt influenced by Sampson’s work to initiate my own attacks on broken windows theory, or to be more sympathetic toward collective efficacy theory. Instead, I have taken on both theories in plain view to assess their relevance to street crimes, especially from the perspective of offenders—a viewpoint that is currently missing in the debate between these two theoretical perspectives. At the end, the chips will fall where they may.

The third main focus of research on broken windows theory has been on the effects of neighborhood disorder on individual psychological dimensions such as stress, powerlessness,<sup>6</sup> and neighborhood attachment.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to reiterate that this book does not focus on verifying the idea that “when police pay attention to minor offenses—such as prostitution, graffiti, aggressive panhandling—they can reduce fear, strengthen communities, and prevent serious crime” (Bratton and Kel-

4. The current chief of the Los Angeles Police Department.

5. A professor of criminal justice at Rutgers University.

6. Gels and Ross 1998), fear of crime (Perkins and Taylor 1990; Taylor, Gottfredson, and Brower 1985; Taylor and Shumaker 1990).

7. Taylor 1996; Taylor, Shumaker, and Gottfredson 1985

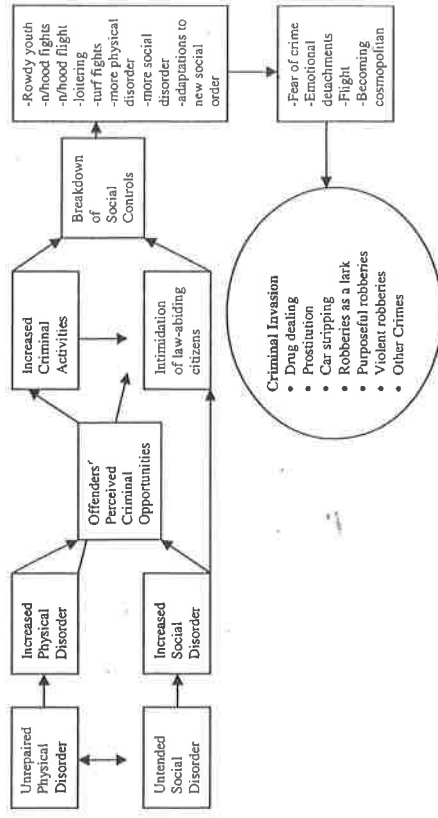


Figure 2.1. Broken windows model.

ling 2006, 1). The ethnographic investigation of this claim is one focus of my ongoing work within the Buffalo Area Neighborhood Study (BANS). BANS builds on some of the findings from the Wentworth Area Neighborhood Study (WANS) upon which this book is based. The task here is to explain, mainly from the perspective of offenders, the social meanings of neighborhood disorder and how these meanings influence offenders’ criminal decisions and actions.

The foundational assumption of broken windows theory that is most relevant to this book is that offenders interpret neighborhood disorder as a sign that nobody cares about the neighborhood, and that, therefore, their chances of apprehension are significantly reduced in disorderly neighborhoods.<sup>8</sup> Based on this interpretation, offenders will commit crimes in disorderly neighborhoods because they anticipate little or no cost for their actions. A chain of events then ensues in affected neighborhoods: First, disorder will continue to accumulate. Second, law-abiding citizens will perceive that violent crime is on the increase and will then become more fearful of crime. Third, as a result of that fear, they will refrain from intervening in the neighborhood and will avoid the use of public spaces. Fourth, they will then move out of the neighborhood, only to be replaced by less attached citizens. Finally, and almost inevitably, serious crime will follow (Skogan 1990; Wilson 1975; Wilson and Kelling 1982; Wilson 1985).

8. Wilson and Kelling 1982.

There are two types of neighborhood disorder invoked by broken windows theory: physical and social. Physical disorder refers to the dilapidated or unkempt conditions of the physical neighborhood environment. This includes the condition of buildings, of properties around buildings, and of vacant lots that have become eyesores. Social disorder refers to patterns of social activities and interactions that are visible to the public eye and are viewed to be deviant or distasteful to most citizens.

### *Physical Disorder*

At the community level, disorder and crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence. Social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. This is as true in nice neighborhoods as in rundown ones. Window-breaking does not necessarily occur on a large scale because some areas are inhabited by determined window-breakers whereas others are populated by window-lovers; rather, one unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing. (It has always been fun.) (Wilson and Kelling 1982, 31)

Physical disorder is assumed to be a cue to wayward people, both petty and serious offenders, that they can get away with doing whatever they please in that space; it is further assumed that law-abiding citizens will become afraid of perceived crime, retreat behind their curtains, avoid intervening, and then eventually move out of the neighborhood (Wilson and Kelling 1982, 30–32; Kahan 1997, 370–71). Social disorder is assumed to have a similar effect.

### *Social Disorder*

Signs of social disorder include the presence of “not violent people, nor, necessarily, criminal, but disreputable or obstreperous or unpredictable people: panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers, the mentally disturbed” (Wilson and Kelling 1982, 30). However, among all these categories of people, the panhandler holds a special place:

The unchecked panhandler is in effect the first broken window. Muggers and robbers, whether opportunistic or professional, believe they reduce their chances of being caught or ever identified if they operate on streets where potential victims are already intimidated by prevailing conditions. If a neighborhood cannot keep bothersome panhandlers from annoying passersby, the thief may reason, it is even less

likely to call the police to identify a potential mugger or to interfere if the mugging actually takes place. (Ibid., 34)

Wilson and Kelling speculate about the process that most likely leads to the entry of panhandlers and more serious law breakers. They believe that just as physical neglect of a neighborhood is an invitation to wrongdoing, ignoring certain forms of social interaction leads to more problematic behavior and crime:

We suggest that “untended” behavior also leads to the breakdown of community controls. A stable neighborhood of families who care for their homes, mind each other’s children, and confidently frown on unwanted intruders can change, in a few years or even a few months, to an inhospitable and frightening jungle. A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children; the children, emboldened, become more rowdy. Families move out, unattached adults move in. Teenagers gather in front of the corner store. The merchant asks them to move; they refuse. Fights occur. Litter accumulates. People start drinking in front of the grocery; in time, an inebriate slumps to the sidewalk and is allowed to sleep it off. Pedestrians are approached by panhandlers. (Ibid., 31–32)

The presence of this first panhandler and the developments that follow are presumed to trigger an important turning point in the neighborhood: increased fear of crime.

At this point it is not inevitable that serious crime will flourish or violent attacks on strangers will occur. But many residents will think that crime, especially violent crime, is on the rise, and they will modify their behavior accordingly. They will use the streets less often, and when on the streets will stay apart from their fellows, moving with averted eyes, silent lips, and hurried steps. “Don’t get involved.” For some residents, this growing atomization will matter little, because the neighborhood is not their “home” but “the place where they live.” Their interests are elsewhere; they are cosmopolitans. But it will matter greatly to other people, whose lives derive meaning and satisfaction from local attachments rather than worldly involvement; for them, the neighborhood will cease to exist except for a few reliable friends whom they arrange to meet.

This new fear of crime and emotional detachment from the neighborhood will lead to a breakdown in social control, which will eventually lead to actual increases in crime:

Such an area is vulnerable to criminal invasion. Though it is not inevitable, it is more likely that here, rather than in places where people are confident they can regulate

public behavior by informal controls, drugs will change hands, prostitutes will solicit, and cars will be stripped. That the drunks will be robbed by boys who do it as a lark, and the prostitutes' customers will be robbed by men who do it purposefully and perhaps violently. That muggings will occur. (*Ibid.*, 32)

Referencing broken windows theory, researchers and policy makers have suggested that neighborhood disorder must be aggressively suppressed to prevent serious criminal invasions. For instance, broken windows theorists have been credited for providing the conceptual framework used in New York in the 1990s by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Police Commissioner William Bratton to reduce crime.<sup>9</sup> The assumption that unpleasant neighborhood appearances lead offenders to commit crimes with expectations of little to no costs continues to be the main impetus of community policing programs in the United States and elsewhere—despite the fact that little effort has been made to examine empirically some of the key assumptions of this theory, which begins with offenders' interpretations of neighborhood disorder.

However, as Harcourt (2001, 109–21) observes, much is still unknown about the social meaning of disorder, which is the fundamental assumption upon which broken windows theory is based. Harcourt (2001, 120) identifies the need for more “in-depth interviews of informants, participatory observation, and other investigatory or experimental techniques that probe the structure of meaning.” He argues that such research is important because disorder may mean different things to different people, and this reality needs further exploration (2001, 15–17). This book is a response to that call.

### Extending Broken Windows Theory

While the claims of broken windows theory appear intuitive, and indeed some research has found empirical support for its predictions,<sup>10</sup> some obvious limitations require attention. Let us first examine the overall logic of the theory. Few reasonable people disagree with the notion that if small problems are left unchecked, they will develop into larger, more serious ones. Since this appears to be true with issues such as the timely stitching of an open wound, the timely sewing of torn pants, the timely

changing of motor oil in an automobile, and the swift correction of children, it seems quite logical that timely response to petty crimes and disorderly conduct can deter more serious crimes. But is that really the case, and if so, how exactly is that deterrence achieved? What are the exact processes through which heavy enforcement of disorderly conduct and petty crimes such as panhandling, loitering, and public drinking prevent murders, rapes, and robberies?

It seems logical that if an open wound on one leg is stitched promptly, such action will likely save that leg, not the other one, from amputation; timely sewing of a torn shirt will save that same shirt from ruin; timely oil changes on an automobile engine will save that same engine from seizing; and swift correction of a child will help deter that same child from getting into further trouble.<sup>11</sup> But how can the arrest of the loiterer, panhandler, or public drinker prevent murders, rapes, and robberies?<sup>12</sup> One way might be if the same petty offenders were about to become perpetrators, accessories, or victims of the more serious crimes in question. However, in the many instances when participants in disorderly conduct are not perpetrators, accessories, or victims of more serious crimes, how will their arrests deter other, more serious offenders from committing mayhem on society? For instance, how will the arrest of the elderly and middle-aged panhandlers or public drinkers I introduce in chapter 4 deter young men such as those under the age of twenty-five years from killing each other over drug deals or from robbing and assaulting their peers? How will the arrests of those senior residents deter habitual offenders such as those interviewed in this book, who are often below the age of thirty, from robbing strangers, friends, and family members alike? Moreover, how will such arrests deter assaults and homicides that occur behind closed doors among romantic partners?

The fundamental question is, however, if a heavy enforcement effort directed at minor offenses deters more serious crimes, how exactly does that work in everyday life? The broken windows response to this question is that offenders perceive small signs of disorder to mean that no one cares about the neighborhood and that there is no significant cost to committing crimes there. Therefore, in this study, I have focused on this claim by attempting to find answers through direct interactions with the offenders themselves and with other participants in neighbor-

11. Additionally, any other benefits are side effects of effectively confronting the direct cause.

12. I fully acknowledge that “fixing” social problems is much more complex than simply stitching wounds, sewing pants, and changing engine oil—in response to objects that are not engaged in social interaction.

9. Barnes 1998; Bernstein 1998; Conklin 2003; Harcourt 2001; Jones 1997; Kelling and Bratton 1998; Kelling and Coles 1996; Nifong 1997; Rosen 2000; Witkin 1998.

10. Kelling and Coles 1996; Corman and Mocan 2002; Funk and Kugler 2003; Golub et al. 2003; Skogan 1990.

hood life. The findings reveal the complexities associated with localized interpretations of such measures of neighborhood disorder.

First, the presence of trash, graffiti, panhandlers, and other publicly visible signs of neighborhood disorder receive different interpretations on different blocks; some of these interpretations are unrelated to the costs of committing crime. Although the data do not completely support this claim, let us assume that offenders are really more likely to commit crimes in locations where they believe no one cares. Do they really interpret neighborhood disorder as the primary cue that no one cares? As the discussions will show, offenders such as drug dealers and robbers will frequently continue to operate in places where they constantly face opposition from neighborhood reformers, even their own relatives who they know care greatly about the neighborhood. Why? Because, regardless of the level of resistance they face, offenders remain interested in particular locations that offer them certain advantages, and they are not willing to easily abandon those locations. These ecological advantages are explained in upcoming sections.

Regarding the interpretation of neighborhood disorder, broken windows theory assumes a universal meaning. It does not acknowledge, for example, that insiders and outsiders to a particular neighborhood may have different interpretations of the conditions of the physical and social environment. If indeed cues of disorder are important signposts for motivated offenders to select locations for crime, and if it is also true (as ethnographic data suggest) that insiders and outsiders to a neighborhood have different interpretations of disorder, it follows that offenders who are insiders and outsiders to a neighborhood will not have the same interpretations of disorder. Therefore the broken windows thesis has erred in assuming a fixed set of responses to the physical and social conditions of neighborhoods.

Second, the broken windows thesis views disorder through the bias of a middle-class lens. To that perspective, the *absence* of trash, graffiti, panhandlers, abandoned buildings, boarded-up buildings, and the like suggests that everyone cares about the neighborhood. Therefore, the presence of any of those conditions suggests not that people cannot afford to conduct repairs, or that they are under severe social distress, but that no one cares. Many persons who reside under conditions of concentrated disadvantage have different interpretations of neighborhood disorder. To them, it does not suggest that no one cares, but rather that the city's government does not care about the neighborhood. To many Wentworth residents, the presence of trash on the street often means the absence of sufficient trash cans in an area, or the sporadic services

provided by the city's streets and sanitation department. Graffiti often signals the marking of gang turf, or the lack of availability of organized programs where youths can vent frustrations through display of their artistic talents. Finally, the presence of panhandlers often means the representation of the unemployable underclass, or yet another informal economy in the city. Therefore, it is important to provide ethnographic representations of the multiple meanings of neighborhood disorder. Such representations are offered in this study in the various chapters that discuss drug dealing, robberies, and batteries.

Third, broken windows theory wrongly assumes that neighborhood disorder is the most salient condition offenders consider in their quests to commit crimes. The ethnographic data suggest otherwise. When seeking cues for a place conducive to their questionable activities, most motivated offenders such as drug dealers, robbers, car thieves, and burglars do not pay much (if any) attention to certain signs of neighborhood disorder. When selecting places where they can easily "get away" with their questionable activities,<sup>13</sup> most motivated offenders select places based on conditions of (1) *ecological advantage*<sup>14</sup> and (2) their knowledge of the capacities for action within local social networks. In other words, to many motivated offenders, the direct indication of where they can get away with committing crimes is more related to *something* about where the place itself is located<sup>15</sup> and to concrete knowledge about the capacities for intervention within social networks in and around that place.

Chapter 5 shows that although drug dealers are not completely oblivious to neighborhood disorder, they report that the relationship between neighborhood disorder and street drug dealing is not as simple, straightforward, and linear as broken windows theory suggests. The findings

13. Keeping in mind that many times, and depending on the nature of the crime or disorderly act in question, motivated offenders perform crime-related activities simply in the areas where they live, spaces "given" to them (for example, spaces allocated by drug bosses to subordinate dealers), or in other spaces that they stumble upon after a previous space becomes unavailable.

14. This relates to the extent to which a location makes concealment of activities or escape from the police or capable guardians easy to accomplish. For example, many drug dealers indicate that it is easier to deal in intersections where they can "spot" the police approaching from any angle or where it is easy to locate "look-out men" around strategic corners or within buildings, and where it is easy to conceal drugs in the home or car of a sympathetic relative or friend. Thieves reveal that it is easier to snatch purses close to the train station, or at a check-cashing outlet located near an intersection rather than in the middle of the block. Furthermore, some places for theft, robbery, and drug dealing are selected simply because they have had a reputation for producing "good hits."

15. Recall that as the concept of *ecological challenge* suggests, since urban space is unevenly developed, and different offenders seek different *ecological advantages* out of preferred locations, some spaces are by default more attractive to offenders than others, regardless of the levels of broken windows or collective efficacy.



show that drug dealers interpret widespread neighborhood disorder in a large section of the city as denoting that the area is depressed, that there is high demand for illegal drugs, and that there is a willing and available army of young men desperately seeking employment opportunities, for whom drug dealing would be an attractive alternative to legitimate employment. Yet, when selecting a micro neighborhood location such as a street corner on which to conduct sales, drug dealers pay little attention to neighborhood disorder, especially physical disorder. Street-corner congregations are sometimes used by drug dealers as an opportunity to blend into the crowd to avoid detection. However, these congregations are not all instances of social disorder, since they also include instances when law-abiding people are standing at bus stops awaiting transportation and traveling back and forth to local businesses. Chapter 5 also illustrates that in many instances, depending on who is involved in instances of loitering and public drinking, drug dealing is deterred rather than encouraged.

Fourth, the broken windows theory erroneously assumes an almost inevitable sequence of events that begins with offenders' interpretation of neighborhood disorder as an invitation to commit crimes, then leads to neighborhood decline, increased fear of crime, the flight of law-abiding citizens, criminal invasion, and maximized dangerousness. It does not acknowledge that in many instances signs of neighborhood disorder are precursors to reestablishment of neighborhood vitality. Neighborhood disorder is often perceived by committed residents as a call to action rather than an alarm indicating that they should flee the neighborhood before "things get worse." Thus, broken windows theory does not sufficiently acknowledge the various ways disorder is interpreted by different categories of residents. It ignores the interpretations of some who are already invested and active in the local milieu.

Fifth, broken windows theory does not acknowledge that interpretations of neighborhood disorder are considerably conditioned by acknowledgment of the sort of broader space within which the particular location being observed is situated. In American society, interpretations of social phenomena are considerably affected by presumptions about race, class, and gender. An abandoned or boarded-up building will be interpreted in one way in the poor black or Hispanic side of town, and in quite another on the white side of town.

Within the black metropolis itself, broken windows of buildings situated on the corner of a busy intersection are interpreted differently from those in a remote corner. Interpretations also vary if the properties are owned privately or by the city; if they are within a predominantly

commercial, residential, or mixed zone; or are public or private housing. Properties that are city-owned are often interpreted to mean that, for the moment, the city does not care so much about that section of Chicago. Furthermore, high neighborhood disorder is a reminder that one has arrived in the "hood"—the most disadvantaged section of the city. When buildings are privately owned, their dilapidated conditions are often associated with redlining, absentee landlords, or the inability of owners to make repairs because of financial constraints that may result from unemployment, underemployment, or insufficient retirement income. Street congregations of young men are subject to different types of scrutiny than those by young boys. Young girls are viewed as needing help and protection, while boys are often perceived as needing discipline and punishment.

Finally, broken windows theory pays no attention to what motivates people to commit various crimes in the first place. It assumes that serious crimes result when minor offenses do not receive aggressive response. However, without acknowledgment of the conditions that cause both petty and serious crimes to occur, in its current form broken windows theory is not prepared to offer long-term solutions to neighborhood crime problems.

It is important to reinforce, however, that according to broken windows theory, this downward neighborhood spiral begins with offenders' interpretations of neighborhood disorder. Therefore, I contend that one good way of testing this theory is to seek concrete evidence that offenders do in fact interpret neighborhood disorder in this manner, and that residents mainly react in accordance with the predictions of that theory. The need for such data has been identified as a crucial step to further determine the utility of broken windows theory.<sup>16</sup>

### The Logic of Collective Efficacy Theory

Collective efficacy theory is an offshoot of social disorganization theory that relates the prevalence of social problems to the capacity of groups to realize common values and maintain effective social control (Sampson 2004a). Collective efficacy is defined as a "link of cohesion and trust with shared expectations for intervening in support of neighborhood social control" (Sampson and Raudenbush 2001, 2). Social control is the

16. For an extensive review of findings relevant to broken windows theory see Harcourt 2001.

capacity of a group to regulate itself according to desired principles and values (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999; Janowitz 1975).

Since 1997, collective efficacy researchers have produced several publications outlining research findings that contradict broken windows theory. They agree that understanding neighborhood disorder in public spaces is fundamental to understanding urban neighborhoods; however, they reject the notion that neighborhood disorder causes crime. Indeed, they argue, disorder may play an important role by affecting the perceptions of insiders and outsiders about neighborhood life. Overwhelmed by neighborhood disorder, employed, law-abiding, and tenured residents who can afford it may eventually flee the neighborhood. Potential employed residents and homeowners may be turned away by neighborhood disorder and not replace those of their kind who have fled. Those left behind will mainly be concentrated in disadvantage. In some instances, activities such as graffiti painting, loitering, and soliciting prostitution, which are considered neighborhood disorder, are indeed crimes, or ordinance violations, not precursors to more serious crimes (Sampson and Raudenbush 2001).

However, Sampson and his colleagues have found no convincing evidence leading to the conclusion that neighborhood disorder is a direct cause of crime. Instead, they argue, "Disorder and crime have similar roots: The forces that generate disorder also generate crime. It is structural characteristics of neighborhoods, as well as neighborhood cohesion and informal social control—not levels of disorder—that most affect crime" (Sampson and Raudenbush 2001, 4). They argue further that "These two forces—structural characteristics of neighborhoods and human intervention—are interrelated, working jointly and reciprocally to affect crime and disorder" (2001, 2). See Figure 2.2.

In their 1995 study<sup>17</sup> examining the relationships among neighborhood disorder, collective efficacy, and crime, Sampson and his colleague used Systematic Social Observation (SSO) to measure neighborhood disorder directly and independently instead of deriving such measures from public perceptions. The rationale for their study was as follows:

If broken windows thesis is correct, and disorder directly causes crime, then disorder should mediate the effects of neighborhood characteristics and collective efficacy on crime. By contrast, if disorder is a manifestation of the same forces that produce

17. The Project of Human Development in Chicago's Neighborhoods (PHDCN), conducted in 1995.

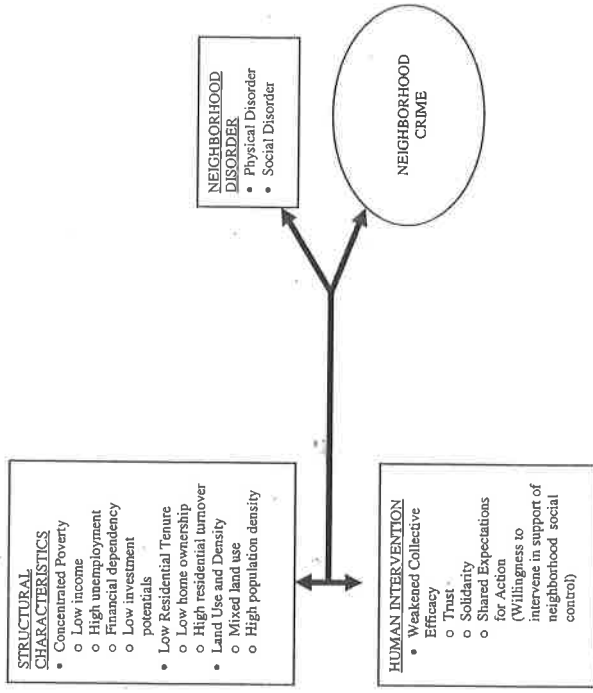


Figure 2.2. Collective efficacy model: rebuttal of broken windows model.

crime, then collective efficacy and structural characteristics should account for the relationship between disorder and crime. (Sampson and Raudenbush 2001)

Their study concluded that, except for robbery,

Overall, the findings did not support the thesis that disorder directly causes crime. First, although it is true that where survey-reported violence was high, levels of disorder detected by SSO tended to be high, the relationship was not strong. Second—and more importantly—is the finding . . . that the level of disorder varied strongly with neighborhood structural characteristics, poverty among them. Once these characteristics and collective efficacy were taken into account, the connection between disorder and crime vanished in most instances. (Sampson and Raudenbush 2001, 4)

Sampson and Raudenbush indicate further that "Concentrated disadvantage and residential instability undermine collective efficacy, in turn fostering increased crime and, by implication, public disorder" (2001, 2). This statement suggests that disorder is not so much a cause of crime



as an indication of concentrated disadvantage and weakened collective efficacy. Therefore, policies that seek to reduce crime and eliminate disorder simply by applying aggressive law enforcement tactics, as broken windows theorists recommend, are misguided (ibid.). If policy makers attempt to reduce crime by focusing exclusively on eliminating disorder, the common causes of crime and disorder, especially of the former, are left relatively unexamined. Sampson and his colleagues suggest an alternative approach:

Perhaps more effective would be an approach that focuses on how residents' efforts to stem disorder may reap unanticipated benefits in greater collective efficacy, which in turn would lower crime in the long run. Informally mobilizing a neighborhood cleanup, for example, would reduce physical disorder while building collective efficacy by creating and strengthening social ties and increasing awareness of the residents' commitment to their neighborhood. Such a mobilization might also demonstrate to participants and observers alike that neighborhood residents can be relied upon to maintain public order. By contrast, a police-led crackdown on disorder would probably produce a very different response by residents. (Sampson and Raudenbush 2001, 5)

Such different responses by residents often include feelings of alienation and resentment of police tactics. This leads to further alienation of the disadvantaged and subsequent escalations of neighborhood disruption and crime (Sampson 2004b).

These findings of collective efficacy research beg for further empirical verification of the mechanisms that link neighborhood disorder, collective efficacy, and crime. Broken windows theory posits that disorder is a direct cause of crime through offenders' interpretations of disorder as an indication that residents lack control over their environment. In rebuttal, collective efficacy theory argues that neighborhood disorder, like crime, is due to the breakdown of collective efficacy, which is reciprocally linked to the structural characteristics of neighborhood disadvantage (Figure 2.2).

Further verifications of these claims are certainly necessary. To be sure, several other studies have been conducted to further test the claims of each theory (see Appendices A and B), yet none have undertaken the task at hand in this book: utilizing intensive field research and extensive interviews with offenders and others to understand how abstract measures of neighborhood disorder and collective efficacy influence their crime-related actions in everyday life.

### Extending Collective Efficacy Theory

Although research by collective efficacy theorists has challenged the broken windows approach by demonstrating that collective efficacy and not neighborhood disorder is the active ingredient for neighborhood crime, there are some limitations to collective efficacy theory that require further attention. First, let's return to an early definition of collective efficacy: "Social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good" (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997, 918), and later, "This link of cohesion and trust with shared expectations for intervening in support of neighborhood social control" (Sampson and Raudenbush 2001, 2).

The logic of these definitions seems to be that crime will be reduced if residents organize themselves for collective action aimed at social control—that is to say, if they organize collectively to regulate themselves according to the desired principles and values associated with reducing crime in their neighborhood. Furthermore, Sampson and Raudenbush argue that this capacity for action is best fostered under conditions of cohesion and trust: "Where there is cohesion and mutual trust among neighbors, the likelihood is greater that they will share a willingness to intervene for the common good" (2001, 2). It appears clear that *collective action* against crime can very likely lead to reductions in crime. But how does the willingness to intervene, or shared expectations for action, translate to real action or action with results? The research by Sampson and his colleagues did not measure the extent to which people have intervened in the past, but rather their expressed willingness to do so in the future. Where is the guarantee?

As chapters 5 to 7 show, there are many conditions in which neighborhood people intervene *reluctantly*, while others who express a great willingness to intervene remain silent out of conflicts of interest with the issues at hand<sup>18</sup> or fear of retaliation. Collective efficacy theorists have not acknowledged the fact that, in many neighborhoods, especially those characterized by concentrated disadvantage, people are often forced to act against their will—including taking actions against those they want to protect.<sup>19</sup> To their credit, as time has progressed, Sampson (2004) has refined the definition of collective efficacy to be

18. Mainly because of close blood or other connections with the offender.

19. Especially considering the fact that taking action against crimes committed by residents often involves prosecution and potential incarceration in a criminal justice system they do not trust.

more task-specific and to reflect a reliance on *action* instead of *capacities for action* that, as I have argued, is no guarantee for action itself: “Collective efficacy is a task-specific construct that draws attention to shared expectations and *mutual engagement by residents* in local social control” (Sampson 2004a, 161; emphasis added). This focus on action has been emphasized more succinctly as “collective action for problem-solving” (2004a, 165).

Moreover, if intervention against neighborhood crime depends on conditions of mutual trust and cohesion among neighbors, does this mean that such must be cultivated before collective action against crime can be mobilized? In other words, is it true that people will not be able to organize themselves effectively for collective action against crime unless there is mutual trust and cohesion among them? Sampson and Raudenbush argue that “Where the rules of comportment are unclear and people mistrust one another, they are unlikely to take action against disorder and crime” (2001, 2). It appears clear that people will not intervene collectively if they are not sure about what they should intervene against, and when.<sup>20</sup> However, it is not clear what trust means, and why it is so important for collective action against crime that such action may not occur without it. Residents of Grand Boulevard think of trust and distrust in terms of the level of confidence one has in the integrity, ability, and judgments of others.

Data presented in the following chapters indicate that under conditions of concentrated disadvantage in Wentworth, many residents remain actively organized for collective action against crime because they *distrust* the police to do an effective job, and also distrust residents who are part of their working community policing group. They often remain active in collective action against crime through community policing with the belief that if they do not participate, the efforts will stop or take a form that does not meet with their approval. They often trust their neighbors with issues such as watching their children and returning borrowed money, but not necessarily with keeping promises to participate actively in the organized efforts necessary to reduce neighborhood crime. These efforts include being present at future meetings and completing tasks assigned to them during prior meetings. Many residents would prefer not to be active in collective neighborhood efforts but

20. This is why community policing beat meetings are so important. They provide residents, business owners, the police, politicians, and other neighborhood actors a setting through which they can comprehend what others believe is reasonable and unreasonable to do in the neighborhood.

remain active out of distrust in the integrity, work ethics, and abilities of others tasked to keep efforts sustained.

Therefore, particularly in desperate situations, distrust can be a major motivating factor for involvement in collective action. It is important to note, however, that the point here is not that distrust should be cultivated for collective action to be activated. Instead, I argue that trust is a complex issue that requires further clarification especially as it relates to collective action against crime. Also, in many situations, mistrust serves as a precursor to such actions. Therefore, trust should be viewed as a conditional rather than a global phenomenon.

Although under certain conditions mistrust serves as a catalyst for participation, I have observed that in situations where residents and others are organized under a prevailing atmosphere of mistrust, their efforts are much more stressful, sporadic, and confrontational. Meetings intended for strategic planning against crime often become group therapy sessions where participating groups and individuals who mistrust each other constantly argue over issues that appear to be petty, but require attention before real progress can be made. Meetings often revert to retelling of certain episodes of the past where people did not perform according to expectations. Examples include instances when people volunteer to assist with a neighborhood event but never show up; when they promise to make phone calls that are never completed; or, worst of all, when they misuse organizational funds or resources. Mistrust is also embedded in social networks in which residents are called upon to organize against criminal activities where the perpetrators are family members or close friends of the organizers. Group members often remain involved in collective action because they distrust the capacity of other members of the group or of the community, people who are supposed to be impartial, to act in the best interests of the neighborhood. Therefore, they “hang around” to serve as watchdogs, but otherwise remain active in the process.

Perhaps more importantly, people residing or working in this area of concentrated disadvantage have often learned, through life experiences, to trust no one—or to always remain skeptical. Their surrounding area is often used by insiders and outsiders to obtain funding that produces few deliverables. They are constantly made promises with little follow-through, and most people who make promises eventually end up being more “shady”<sup>21</sup> than they seemed in the beginning. People are

21. Pretentious.

almost always suspected of having ulterior motives. This is also because they have often had long histories of competing for scarce resources and of engaging in family feuds and other conflicts that have created divisions and deep distrust among them. However, they realize that on some level they are all affected by crime problems that require their collective attention, and they believe that it can occur notwithstanding the personal conflicts among them.

Considering these realities, it would perhaps be fruitless to focus directly on developing trust among certain neighborhood people as a precursor to collective action. Instead, trust is often earned over time as people learn more about each other through the process of collective action for problem-solving. As their bad experiences become outnumbered by more pleasant ones through the process of collaborating to achieve the common goal of a safer neighborhood, trust develops (although they remain cautiously skeptical). Working relationships based on trust have several advantages over those based on distrust.

When neighborhood collective action is undertaken based on mutual trust and admiration, it is often more emotionally rewarding, less confrontational, less convoluted, and more consistent over time. Those who have confidence in the integrity, work ethics, judgments, and abilities of others are more willing to work closely together to achieve collective goals. This is demonstrated by the fact that certain groups and individuals will only work with others whom they trust to produce results. Trust reduces many of the latent costs associated with collective action. When people already trust each other they do not have to spend time searching out enemies among them that could be better spent organizing against opposing forces. In Grand Boulevard, some of the churches and individuals also enjoy long histories of strong and healthy working relationships characterized by mutual trust and admiration. Others continue to work together and achieve results under clear conditions of distrust. It is important, therefore, to question meanings of trust as they relate to localized capacities for action. As data in subsequent chapters show, trust is manifested in different ways and has varied implications for collective action.

In the quest to critique and extend collective efficacy theory, I present statistical relationships between collective efficacy and neighborhood crime hotspots. I also question the social meanings of trust, solidarity, the willingness of residents to intervene, and the notion of neighborhood safety as a public good. These social meanings have yet to receive adequate attention from collective efficacy theorists, and this is one of the ways my research extends that theory.

For instance, this study has identified a distinction between objective<sup>22</sup> and subjective<sup>23</sup> solidarities. It argues that subjective solidarity refers to subjective social distance, which is important for the formation of trust. On the other hand, objective solidarity refers to the level of familiarity citizens have with their neighborhood, its citizens, and its history. Objective and subjective solidarity are sometimes at odds with each other.

As ethnographic data show, sometimes the longer people live in a neighborhood and the more they get to know their neighbors, the more they realize that they cannot or should not trust them—the more they realize that they cannot “do things” together. In Grand Boulevard, these divisions are most clearly reflected along religious lines and in neighborhood organizations competing for the same resources. In other instances, citizens may not know each other well, but may use certain social indicators to construct notions of trust among themselves. The clearest example is of residents who reside on blocks with well-manicured homes and who have little or no interaction with their newly-arrived busy professional neighbors. During interviews, however, these residents express deep belief that their new neighbors are trustworthy people because they

22. Objective solidarity refers to the level of familiarity neighborhood citizens have with each other. Residential tenure is one of those indicators. Other indicators are the frequency and depth with which citizens “do things” together, perceive themselves as “close-knit,” or feel, for one reason or another, that this is a neighborhood they would miss greatly if they were to stop their current residential or other affiliations with it. In my ethnographic measurements, it is an estimation of how well residents know each other, especially in terms of knowing what sorts of lifestyles others lead, what their social networks are, and how they are expected to act or react under certain circumstances, especially those that relate to placing neighborhood safety under challenge.

23. Subjective solidarity is trust: a sort of positive affective disposition citizens have toward each other—the disposition that others will look after their well-being. Ethnographic data in this research have indicated that for most citizens, trust refers to the level of confidence that, in their absence or presence, another person (or persons) will look after their best interests. I have found that citizens often make statements such as, “I do not trust the people who live in the brick two-flat across the street.” When they are questioned deeply about what they really mean, they often communicate the idea that they are not confident that, in their presence or absence, the people who live in that house will not try to do something to harm them if the opportunity presents itself. Hence, they try to interact with those persons in ways that do not present them with opportunities to harm them. Avoiding interaction altogether, or as much as possible, is one way to reduce the opportunities for harm. This is often why, under conditions of low trust, concerned and able persons prefer to engage in individual as opposed to group forms of intervention. They never know when and how the persons they do not trust may find an opportunity to do something hurtful to them. It is also very apparent that while persons who trust others in one way are likely to trust them in other ways, this is not always the case. In some instances, persons may trust others to watch their children, borrow money, or even watch their house or apartment while they are out of town. However, they may not trust the same persons to withhold information from offenders—information about their active participation in interventions against the questionable activities of those offenders. This is often the case when citizens make statements such as, “I can trust them with anything except to keep their damn mouths shut.”

are quiet and take good care of their property. Without even knowing their neighbors well, they assume that they will be able to count on them to help intervene against crime on the block, because, after all, the new neighbors will want to protect their investment. These more seasoned residents have been very surprised when the trusted newcomers and some neighborhood veterans respond with indifference about intervention against crime, indicating that this is why they pay taxes—for the police, not themselves, to assume the responsibility of crime prevention. In most instances, however, a small body of residents repeatedly joins their neighbors in collective action against crime.

Often, the realization that the police are not very reliable creates a demand for collective efficacy, forcing residents to know their neighbors and to be more active in locally initiated collective action against crime. Indeed, distrust among offending and law-abiding neighbors is another strong catalyst that calls residents to action. Their involvement in collective action against crime is not driven by trust among them per se, but rather by a desire to protect themselves and the neighborhood from the wrongful actions of their own neighbors. Sometimes there is considerable tension among those involved in the collective action, but they are forced to put these differences aside to work together against the crime problems that affect them all. Newcomers to the neighborhood often join neighborhood groups such as block clubs that are organized against crime because they view this setting as an opportunity to know each other better and to participate in activities that can help protect their existing or planned investments in real estate.

This reality, the potential inconsistencies between objective solidarity and trust (or subjective solidarity) in reference to collective action against crime, requires more clarification and theoretical attention. Such attention is provided in subsequent chapters, which also include discussions about different types of trust, such as trust with information and trust with property. Thus, this study concludes that although the data offer qualified support for collective efficacy theory, there is a great need for more clarification as to how its key components actually work together in everyday life. In the concluding chapter I suggest ways this can be achieved.

The research also shows that several conditions challenge the expectation that high collective efficacy causes low crime and high crime is a result of low collective efficacy. This study indicates that neighborhoods have certain ecological features and reputations that make them differentially useful or attractive to offenders, especially crime entrepreneurs such as drug dealers, prostitutes, thieves, and burglars.

Therefore, although law-abiding citizens<sup>24</sup> may seek to reside in neighborhoods perceived to be of high collective efficacy, offenders do not explicitly seek out crime locales because they are low on collective efficacy.

However, once offenders are established in an area, the level of collective efficacy can have considerable influence on their decisions to exit the neighborhood or to stay and fight back. For instance, depending on the location occupied, street drug dealers will engage in different levels of resistance against neighborhood intervention. They are more likely to resist intervention in areas that have proven to be financially profitable to them. Urban spaces become of interest to different actors at the same time. The question is, what really makes a place of interest to certain offenders, and why? The answer goes far beyond the presence or absence of certain forms of collective action against them.

Offenders are often more proactive than reactive in developing their interest in a particular space. Such interest relates to how *ecologically advantageous* the space in question is to them—such as how close a block is to their residence, the highway, the bus stop, the elevated train, or the boundary of another beat or jurisdiction. Other ecological features may also offer advantages: for instance, the presence of liquor stores, grocery stores, fast-food locations, and check cashing outlets that cause people to congregate in specific locations and otherwise give offenders a legitimate reason for being there. A particular location's reputation as a congenial venue for crime-related activities is another part of the ecological advantage it offers to offenders; at the same time, it poses *ecological challenges* to other neighborhood actors. This ecological challenge has major implications for collective efficacy as it determines the *demand* for collective efficacy,<sup>25</sup> and the *format*,<sup>26</sup> *impact*,<sup>27</sup> and *costs* of collective efficacy.<sup>28</sup>

Residents of different locations do not receive the same level of benefit for similar levels of collective action against crime. These returns are conditioned not only by the actions of the people within the location in question, but also by those around them. Furthermore, such returns are also conditioned by ecological challenge: the sort of space within which the location in question is embedded, and what is going on around it.

24. And even certain offenders such as successful drug dealers.

25. The extent to which neighbors will be called upon to intervene against crime.

26. What type of efforts they will be required to undertake against crime.

27. How effective collective action will be against crime.

28. The level and form of resistance that will be encountered from offenders, and the type of personal sacrifices, even threats to life, they will be forced to endure as a result of their participation in collective efficacy.



Although collective efficacy theorists are leaders in demonstrating the impact of "spatial (dis)advantage" and "spatial dependency" (Sampson and Morenoff 2004) on homicide rates in Chicago, they have not applied these concepts to collective efficacy. I do this here by invoking the notion of ecological challenge.

The concept of social dependence indicates that, contrary to what is proposed by the urban village model, neighborhoods are not intact social systems that function as islands unto themselves. Instead, they are affected by the wider sociodynamics of the city. For example, interpersonal crimes such as homicide are based on social interaction and are affected by factors such as concentrated disadvantage and acts of retaliation in surrounding neighborhoods. Homicides are also shown to be affected by levels of collective efficacy not only within the location in question, but also in locations around it (Sampson and Morenoff 2004).

The WANS data indicate that conditions of collective efficacy are also affected by ecological factors. The demand for collective efficacy and its form, benefits, and returns are all affected by what is within and around a neighborhood location, even one as small as a street block. Neighborhood blocks in or adjacent to commercial or mixed land use blocks face a greater ecological challenge than those situated within strictly residential areas. Similarly, owners of private homes on blocks that are closest to public housing complexes are under greater challenge to organize against crime than those embedded among other privately owned homes. The presence of adjoining grocery stores, liquor stores, check-cashing outlets, busy street intersections, and bus or nearby train stops also place more challenge on neighborhood blocks, and in turn affect the demand, form, benefits, and costs of collective efficacy.

Since urban and other areas are developed unequally, and since offenders prefer certain neighborhood features over others, locations are differentially at risk for criminal invasion, notwithstanding their levels of collective efficacy and neighborhood disorder. These levels of risk determine the demand, format, potential impact, and costs of collective efficacy. These risk factors vary on different neighborhood levels; it is more likely that blocks near liquor stores, grocery stores, check-cashing services, and busy intersections in Grand Boulevard will be at greater risk of hosting drug dealing and robbery than those in Hyde Park. However, in Grand Boulevard itself, certain blocks, by virtue of what is next to and around them, are at greater risk for those crimes. Blocks that are at greater risk for drug dealing and robbery stimulate a higher demand for collective action against crime. On such blocks, residents are

constantly challenged to organize against those crimes, and they continue to face repeated infractions even while their efforts are in progress. Consequently, because they are situated in lucrative drug dealing and robbery locations, they encounter more resistance from offenders and suffer higher costs, such as retaliation, for their participation in collective action against those crimes. Therefore, residents on such blocks, although more organized, sometimes express more reluctance to intervene, although they have reluctantly intervened on several occasions in the past and may do so again in the future.

By contrast, residents on blocks with less ecological disadvantage—that are less attractive to drug dealers and robbers—because such blocks are "out of the way," will be presented with less challenge for collective action against crime. Whenever residents on those blocks are faced with crime challenges, they can often displace offenders with relatively little effort, because the offenders already do not consider such blocks lucrative enough to be worth their trouble. Such residents will enjoy high returns on small efforts against crime. They will also encounter lower costs for intervention. However, this is not because of higher levels of trust, cohesion, and willingness to intervene against crime. Instead, it is because they are fortunate to reside in locations robbers and drug dealers consider ecologically inconvenient for business. These blocks are, consequently, under less criminal challenge.

Residents of blocks that are under less criminal challenge often express greater willingness to intervene against crime. Since they are called upon to do so less frequently, the interventions are often brief; they encounter little resistance, and therefore, experience low costs. Their willingness to intervene, therefore, is not based on mutual trust and cohesion among them, but rather on the low level of challenge they face on their block by virtue of its positioning—in reference to the ecological advantages that some offenders are actively seeking. Based on the location of their block, they will have enjoyed tranquility and experienced little cost in maintaining it in the past, and will anticipate the same for the future.

By contrast, residents of more ecologically disadvantaged blocks, having experienced greater costs associated with intervention in the past, are more likely to express reluctance to intervene—notwithstanding levels of trust and cohesion among them. In fact, trust and cohesion are less likely to develop among residents on blocks with greater ecological disadvantage because, unlike those on the low-challenge blocks, they are frequently called upon to intervene against their own neighbors. This complicates the issue by imposing greater conflict of interests and

less willingness to intervene against relatives or close friends. This is especially the case when residents already distrust the criminal justice system to return such persons to the neighborhoods as better individuals than when they left. This also shows that reluctance to intervene is not always associated with anticipated retaliation from offenders. It is also often related to the anticipated loss of friends and close associates who may be prosecuted as a result of localized actions against crime. These factors require considerable attention if the potentials for collective efficacy are to be fully realized. The narratives in chapters 5 to 7 provide up-close accounts of how these processes occur on the ground and serve as extensions to collective efficacy theory.

{ THREE }

## Here's the Neighborhood

### *A Video Ethnographic Tour of Grand Boulevard, 2000*

This chapter provides a video ethnographic description of Beat 213, which includes all of Grand Boulevard<sup>1</sup> and the east side of Calumet Avenue between 39th and 43rd Streets. The words Grand Boulevard and Beat 213 are used interchangeably to describe the same area. Video ethnography is a component of Systematic Social Observation (SSO), a research method used to document aspects of neighborhood life as they occur and in a manner that can be replayed or reexamined. In this instance, SSO data were gathered using a slow-moving vehicle with cameras mounted on each side of the interior, to simultaneously produce video images of both sides of each neighborhood street.

Video ethnography is the procedure through which video images are carefully reviewed and described in print to help explain social phenomena of concern. The SSO data also include recordings of the verbal descriptions of what the crew observed while driving through the streets. This includes descriptions of images and patterns of interaction that were not visible to the cameras. Video ethnography can also include written headnotes if, as was true in this case, the researcher preparing the notes was also a member

1. The official boundaries of Grand Boulevard are 39th Street and King Drive at the northwest corner, 39th Street and Cottage Grove at the northeast, Cottage Grove and 43rd Street at the southeast, and 43rd Street and King Drive at the southwest.



resulted in escalation of conflict. Therefore, the issue is not whether people intervene, but what form of intervention they employ and whom they are called upon to intervene against. Since many disruptive families frequently change residences, it is not easy to trace their violent and abusive behaviors to low levels of collective efficacy in earlier stages of their lives. If disruptive families are absent or only a minor presence on a block, low levels of collective efficacy will not be sufficient to produce high incidence of batteries. However, once such families are present, depending on the particular form it takes, collective action against crime can help resolve personal conflicts before they escalate into batteries.

{ EIGHT }

## What This All Means

### *Summary, Conclusions, and Implications*

#### Summary and Conclusions

This book began by questioning how well, when taken directly into the world of hardened offenders, broken windows and collective efficacy theories would explain why some city blocks experience considerably more crime<sup>1</sup> than others. The research found some support for both broken windows and collective efficacy theories. However, it also found data indicating that, by themselves, the conditions proposed by both theories are insufficient to explain high levels of drug dealing, robbery, and battery on neighborhood street blocks. Consequently, I have introduced the concept of *ecological disadvantage* and have used it to extend both theories.

In response to critiques of broken windows theory, Bratton and Kelling (2006) stress that the theory is often misrepresented by scholars who insist that it assumes a *direct* link between neighborhood disorder and serious crime. To the contrary, they posit that the relationship is *indirect*. Disorder causes fear of crime, and leads to weakened social controls, "creating the conditions in which crimes can flourish" (Bratton and Kelling 2006, 2). However, the focus of this book has been on how disorder influences neighborhood crime not from the law-abiding citizen's perspective,

1. The crimes of narcotics violations (drug dealing), robbery, and battery that were reported to the Chicago Police Department as having occurred in Beat 213 during 1999 and 2000 were analyzed.

but rather from the offenders' point of view. A close reading of the logic of broken windows theory presented in chapter 2 indicated that the link between neighborhood disorder and crime is more direct from the perspective of offenders than from that of law-abiding residents. From the offenders' perspective, neighborhood disorder is more directly linked to crime because it signals to offenders that people do not care about their neighborhoods, and that therefore there are little or no costs for committing crime there (Wilson and Kelling 1982). This book has focused more specifically on that claim. Neighborhood disorder exists in both physical and social forms. Physical disorder refers to unpleasant neighborhood characteristics created by abandoned buildings, boarded-up windows, broken windows, overgrown lawns, and trash. Social disorder is the unpleasant and potentially intimidating interactions among people in public space—such as loitering, panhandling, and public drinking. As disorder increases, criminal activities will also increase, and a series of events such as fear of crime and the exodus of law-abiding citizens will ensue, leading to further problems and criminal invasion (*ibid.*).

Collective efficacy theorists, by contrast, argue that neighborhood disorder and crime are linked because both come from the same source: the concentration of disadvantage and weakened collective efficacy. The concentration of disadvantage refers to poverty and the paucity of resources that often accompanies it—such as unemployment, underemployment, financial dependency, lack of investment potential, low home ownership, high residential turnover, density, and mixed land use (Sampson and Raudenbush 2001, 2). However, while the structural constraints of concentrated disadvantage are working to produce both crime and disorder, human intervention, characterized by collective efficacy, is a force working to inhibit them (*ibid.*). Collective efficacy theorists contend, therefore, that collective efficacy also mediates the impact that concentrated disadvantage has on both crime and disorder. Collective efficacy is defined as mutual trust and solidarity among neighbors along with their willingness to intervene on behalf of social control (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997; Sampson and Raudenbush 1999).

The research utilized multiple sources of data that include crime statistics, a survey of neighborhood experts, systematic social observation, field research, and interviews with offenders. Data gathering was conducted from 1997 through 2002 in Grand Boulevard (Beat 213), a subsection of Wentworth Police District, which has historically had one of the highest rates of violent and predatory crime in Chicago, Illinois. The crimes of narcotics violations, robbery, and battery reported to the police in 1999 and 2000 were analyzed and cross-validated with results from

the neighborhood experts' survey and my field observations to identify the blocks that were hotspots for the various crimes. These three types of crime were selected because as examples of entrepreneurial, predatory, and grievance crimes, they provide an opportunity to examine closely how different types of crimes function in terms of the claims of broken windows and collective efficacy theories. Only 1999 and 2000 crimes were selected because at the time of the study, they were the only years for which detailed block-level crime data were available from the Chicago Police Department.

Quantitative analyses indicated that in both 1999 and 2000, there were weak (insignificant) positive associations between physical disorder and all three types of crime. For each year (except for 1999 batteries and collective efficacy) there were statistically significant relationships between social disorder, collective efficacy, and all three types of crime (see Table A.5). Moreover, it was observed that while low social disorder was primarily matched with low crime, high social disorder was not predominantly matched with high crime (see Tables A.12–A.17). This led to the conclusion that low social disorder may be among the important conditions for low crime, but that high social disorder was not sufficient to produce high crime.

Also, high collective efficacy blocks were predominantly matched with low crime, but low collective efficacy blocks were observed to be almost equally crime hotspots and coldspots (see Tables A.18–A.23). These puzzling results of the analysis of the statistical data were further supported by field observations. GIS maps were then used to display the spatial positioning of crime hotspots in reference to the different levels of physical disorder, social disorder, and collective efficacy. The maps allowed for a better understanding of where the crime hotspots were spatially distributed in the research site.

Figure 8.1 shows that the crime hotspots were mainly at or near the northwestern and southeastern corners, at the intersections of Pershing Road and King Drive, and Cottage Grove and 43rd Street, respectively. These are the busiest intersections in Grand Boulevard, with the most frequent public bus transportation, and they are the sites of a majority of the business outlets that include grocery stores, liquor stores, check-cashing outlets, and take-out restaurants. Interviews with drug dealers and robbers indicate that such blocks are attractive mainly because the businesses within them bring different people together—people who can be clandestine clients of drug dealers, or easy targets for robbers. The chapter on batteries showed that such busy intersections also bring together people with longstanding and/or unresolved conflicts, people

## Neighborhood Disorder, Collective Efficacy, and Street Crimes, per Face Block, 1999-2000

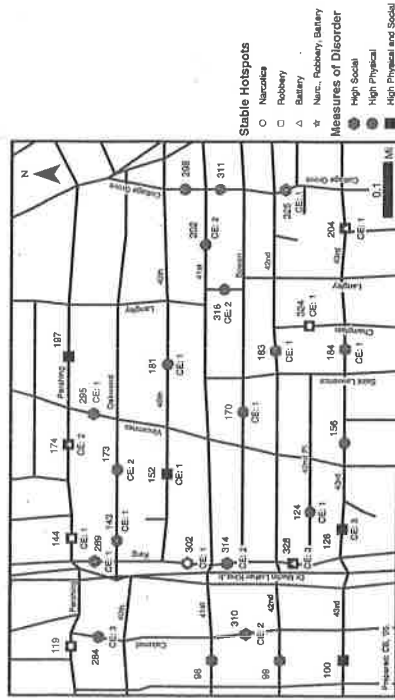


Figure 8.1. Neighborhood disorder, collective efficacy, and street crimes, per face block (1999-2000).

who sometimes spontaneously fight with and injure each other. These locations are also nearby the residence of disruptive families and their acquaintances, people who frequently, in public and private spaces, resolve outstanding conflicts by recourse to physical violence. Figure 8.1 also demonstrates how various crime hotspots were spatially distributed in reference to different levels of physical disorder, social disorder, and collective efficacy (CE).<sup>2</sup>

The observations that (1) neighborhood spaces are unevenly zoned, used, and developed, and (2) offenders habitually commit crimes in locations that offer them particular spatial advantages have led to the introduction of the term *ecological disadvantage*, which I use to extend both broken windows and collective efficacy theories. The logic of *ecological disadvantage* is that the particular space where a location of interest is situated independently contributes to criminal opportunities, and this must be considered before analyzing potential impacts of additional factors such as neighborhood disorder and collective efficacy.

Indeed, ecological disadvantage impacts the interpretations and uses of neighborhood disorder and conditions the demands and returns of collective efficacy. For instance, as can be observed in Figure 8.1, several

2. In Figure 8.1, CE: 1 = low collective efficacy, CE: 2 = midrange collective efficacy, and CE: 3 = high collective efficacy.

blocks located in the interior of Grand Boulevard are high on neighborhood disorder but are low on narcotic violations and robberies. This is mainly because they are not situated along the busy mixed-use and commercial intersections where drug dealers and robbers primarily go to service clients or to find prey. Disorder in busy mixed-use street intersections and business areas is interpreted by offenders as a public issue—failure of the city's government and local businesses to develop the area—whereas disorder in remote private residential spaces is interpreted as evidence of personal struggles associated with inadequate income. In neither case is disorder interpreted by offenders to mean that residents do not care about their neighborhood.

Collective efficacy is also conditioned by ecological disadvantage because collective action is not undertaken without a challenge. Ecological disadvantage provides challenges that activate the need for collective action. For instance, persons residing near busy intersections or mixed-use areas (like blocks 143, 144, 174, 204, and 126) that are of interest to offenders are challenged to organize themselves to act collectively against crime. By contrast, residents of blocks in remote and exclusively residential sections of the area (like blocks 152, 181, and 170) are challenged less because crime entrepreneurs such as drug dealers and robbers do not consider their block geographically advantageous for business.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, they may enjoy a life of low crime even under conditions of low collective efficacy.

### Physical Disorder and Narcotic Violations

Interviews with drug dealers, their clients, law-abiding residents, and police officers indicated that physical disorder is not of primary importance for street drug dealing, for several reasons. First, contrary to the belief of broken windows theorists, street drug dealers do not interpret physical disorder as an invitation to conduct business in the location because people do not care about their neighborhood. Instead, drug dealers view high levels of physical disorder as a sign that the city's government does not consider that section of town as a priority, and allows deterioration to take place—often as an early stage of gentrification. Drug dealers consider high drug demand, high supply of bulk drugs, high availability of unemployed youths, and high exchange opportunities as most important for their business to flourish.

3. Keeping in mind that sometimes drug dealers capitalize on sales wherever they are at the moment, and robbers capitalize on spontaneous opportunities.

Street drug dealers provided different interpretations of physical disorder on the macro and micro neighborhood levels. They consider a large dilapidated section of the city—such as a 20- to 60-block radius—to be a depressed area because of governmental neglect and other factors associated with poverty and unemployment. Such areas are expected to contain a considerable number of residents and visitors who self-medicate with illegal drugs in order to deal with the pressures of everyday life. Such areas are expected by drug dealers to contain a high availability of young persons who are willing to peddle street drugs as a source of income. However, when street drug dealers select micro neighborhood locations such as street corners to sell drugs, they pay little attention to physical disorder. Instead, they select locations based on the easy availability of exchange opportunities: secure transactions, deniability, and the presence of enablers.<sup>4</sup>

Second, to drug dealers and their customers, place matters most. However, what matters most about place is not its appearance, but where it is situated and what sorts of activities occur within it. Therefore, to motivated narcotics offenders, knowledge about how the space functions is much more important than its appearance. This knowledge includes an understanding of the place's reputation in reference to particular criminal opportunities. As some of them indicated in chapter 5, drug dealers often stumble upon places and gradually "build up the spot" until it becomes popular with their customers. After drugs are successfully sold in that place for an extended period of time, the reputation of the place as a lucrative drug location becomes crystallized. Once that reputation is crystallized, drug dealers are more likely to retaliate against efforts to remove them from that location. Before the reputation is crystallized, drug dealers are more likely to flee in the face of collective action against their activities. When certain locations gain a reputation as "problem narcotic areas," they often become "dumping grounds" to which residents from neighboring locations attempt to push the drug problems that occur on their blocks. Furthermore, problems of neighborhood decline, including rising physical disorder, sometimes occur as drug dealing flourishes on a neighborhood block. Therefore, when physical disorder and street drug dealing are present in the same micro neighborhood location such as a street corner, their coexistence is not based on the expectations of broken windows theory—that dealers have interpreted disorder to mean that no one cares about the neighborhood and that therefore there are little or no costs to their actions.

4. See chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of these factors.

Third, there is a very weak association between physical disorder and narcotic violations partly because most of the blocks that rank highest on physical disorder contain abandoned properties in remote locations that are of no interest to drug dealers. As was explained in chapter 5, some abandoned properties are of interest to drug dealers, but not simply because of the way the place looks—rather, the important consideration is where it is situated and what other activities occur in and around it.

### *Physical Disorder and Robberies*

Reasons for the very weak association between physical disorder and robberies are quite similar to those that explain the association between narcotics violations and physical disorder. Ethnographic data indicate that robbers do not select targets based on levels of physical disorder. Instead, target selection is based on spontaneous access, predictable access, and predictable escape. Chapter 6 indicated that in this research site, robbers most frequently monitor strategic locations and spontaneously select their target when they "see the money." The places that robbers primarily monitor for suitable targets are selected based on what activities occur there. As statements from robbers indicate, they mostly monitor locations that are near transit stops, check-cashing establishments, grocery stores, hair salons, fast-food restaurants, and other businesses where most persons are likely to have cash in their possession. Victims are then spontaneously selected when they act in ways the robbers consider to be vulnerable and when easy escape seems quite possible. As one active robber articulated, and this was supported by narratives from other robbers, "I want it, I see it, I take it" is the mode of street robbers in this area.

### *Physical Disorder and Batteries*

As was discussed in chapter 7, the very weak association between physical disorder and batteries is explained mainly by the finding that most batteries result from domestic conflicts among disruptive family members who reside mainly on more densely populated blocks in the beat. The blocks that ranked highest on physical disorder were dominated by abandoned properties, many of which, therefore, had no residents to be victims or perpetrators of domestic batteries. Furthermore, most nondomestic batteries are less likely to occur in such abandoned areas of high physical disorder unless they host business establishments such as fast-food restaurants, grocery stores, hair salons, laundromats, and

certain types of liquor outlets. These business establishments are located in buildings characterized by varying levels of physical disorder, and they bring together many idlers and persons with longstanding and/or unresolved conflicts who sometimes batter each other at those locations.

#### *Social Disorder and Narcotics Violations*

While physical disorder was not found to have significant associations with narcotics violations, robberies, and batteries, the reverse was found for the association between those crimes and social disorder. However, when these significant associations were closely examined both statistically and qualitatively, it was determined that the relationships were quite complex. For each of these three crimes, the significant association was mostly due to the observation that those crimes do not flourish in the absence of social disorder; but high social disorder was insufficient to produce high crime rates.

The overall explanation for this puzzle is that social disorder matters generally, but the particular aspects of social disorder that matter most are (1) the location where the social disorder is present, and (2) the identity of the key actors involved in the social disorder episodes. If social disorder is in a location that is attractive to drug dealers because of the ecological advantages the place offers and its established reputation as a lucrative location for narcotics sales, some drug dealers will use that social disorder to help disguise their activities by "blending in" with the crowd. However, depending on who the key actors are in the social disorder episodes, drug dealers who attempt to blend in may be chased away or otherwise made to feel unwelcome among that group. However, even if social disorder is high in a particular location and participants in the social disorder episodes are welcoming, drug dealers will not be interested in operating their business among that crowd if the location is not a geographically convenient one. This mainly explains why spaces that are high on social disorder are almost equally likely to be high or low on narcotics violations—because drug dealers are more interested in where a place is located than in the presence or absence of social disorder.

Narcotics violations did not flourish on blocks characterized by low social disorder mainly because most areas of low social disorder are not situated in the strategic locations many drug dealers consider to be convenient. Furthermore, as stated earlier, social disorder is sometimes important for street drug dealing, but it must be in a strategic location

and executed by a group of actors who are sympathetic to drug dealing or to the socioeconomic plight of particular drug dealers. In several instances, drug dealing itself brings about street-corner congregations that are considered loitering. Dealers sometimes congregate on street corners awaiting clients. In other instances, clients are known to await the arrival of their dealers. Therefore, sometimes social disorder is not a precursor to drug dealing, but rather, drug dealing in progress.

Drug dealers and their clients also utilize particular forms of social disorder in strategic locations to conduct business; and except when drugs are quietly and swiftly sold behind closed doors, drug sales are frequently accompanied by social disorder. Junkies frequently "hang out" and "hustle" in locations near drug supplies so that they can access drug dealers as soon as they obtain money to purchase substances for their next fix. Drug dealing, therefore, is sometimes an enabling condition for social disorder.

The data suggest that there is often a reciprocal relationship between social disorder and narcotics violations. Certain forms of social disorder can be useful conditions for drug dealing; on other occasions, drug dealing leads to social disorder because certain clients loiter, beg, and hustle while they await their next fix. This partly explains why, in public spaces, few narcotic violations are observed in locations characterized by low social disorder.

#### *Social Disorder and Robberies*

The positive and significant association between social disorder and robberies is also complex. For instance, in 1999 only one of the 25 blocks that ranked low on social disorder was a robbery hotspot. In 2002, none of those 25 blocks were robbery hotspots (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14). However, for both years, among the 23 blocks that ranked high on social disorder, more were coldspots than were hotspots. There are very few robberies in locations of low social disorder because the robberies that occur most frequently in that area are conducted at or near business establishments such as grocery stores, fast-food restaurants, check cashers, and liquor stores. Such locations are not low on social disorder. High social disorder is insufficient for high robberies because, as with narcotics violations, what matters most to the offender is not the level of social disorder, but where the acts of social disorder are located and who the actors are that are involved in the episodes. Robbers are often selective about who they target because they need some assurance that the victims will have money in their possession. Therefore, even though

social disorder is high in a particular location, if the people there are known or believed to have little or no cash, they will be of little use to the motivated robber. Thus, they are less likely to become targets. Furthermore, not all locations that are high on social disorder are necessarily suitable spots for robberies because, as explained in the earlier chapters, some of the participants in social disorder episodes are themselves guardians against crimes such as robbery, theft, and child molestation. Thus, robbers do not select their targets on the basis of high levels of social disorder. However, as stated in the robbery chapter, when victims are selected, they are frequently in strategic neighborhood locations where they are distracted, with money in their possession. Such areas of distraction are frequently at or near business establishments. In this research site, most blocks on which business establishments are situated are observed to be at least midrange on levels of social disorder.

#### *Social Disorder and Batteries*

The positive and significant association between social disorder and batteries is chiefly explained by the finding that blocks that rank low on social disorder are mostly battery coldspots (68 percent in 1999 and 52 percent in 2000); however, blocks that rank high on social disorder are as likely to rank high as to rank low on batteries.<sup>5</sup> In chapter 7, ethnographic data indicated that batteries were most common on blocks dominated by the presence of disruptive family members who frequently engaged in domestic and other conflicts. In this research site, very few known members of disruptive families reside on the blocks observed to be low on social disorder. Blocks observed to be low on social disorder are often predominantly occupied by single-family homes or the area's more expensive condominiums and apartments. Most known members of disruptive families are either unemployed or underemployed. Therefore, disruptive family members, who are known to be from lower-income backgrounds, cannot afford access to those more expensive properties that characterize most of the blocks that are lower on social disorder. Known members of disruptive families typically occupy lower properties, many of which are on or close to blocks with business establishments. Blocks with business establishments usually rank higher in social disorder than other blocks. Furthermore, being frequently unemployed, many members of disruptive families often engage in acts of social disorder at or near their place of residence. Either way, very few

5. See Tables A.17 and A.18.

members of disruptive families that frequently commit batteries reside on blocks that are low on social disorder. This mostly explains why there are very few known batteries on blocks that are low on social disorder. The rule appears to be, fewer disruptive family members results in fewer batteries.

Why are blocks that rank high in social disorder as likely to be battery hotspots as coldspots? Ethnographic data indicate that most members of disruptive families in the area are clustered in lower-rent buildings (on blocks that are often closer to business establishments) that are also high in social disorder. However, nondisruptive family members also occupy many blocks that are high in social disorder. Even if a block is high in social disorder, it is likely to have a low incidence of battery if members of nondisruptive families predominantly occupy it. In other words, blocks that are high in social disorder and are also dominated by members of disruptive families have a higher incidence of batteries, while blocks that are high in social disorder but are home to predominantly nondisruptive family members are observed to be low on batteries. Therefore, the salient factor in the relationship of high social disorder and high batteries is the presence of disruptive family members.

#### *Collective Efficacy and Street Drug Dealing*

The findings also indicated that there were significant negative associations between collective efficacy and all three selected crimes (narcotics violations, robberies, and batteries). However, as was the case with social disorder, the relationships between collective efficacy and those three crimes were found to be quite complex.

The significant associations between collective efficacy and these crimes were explained mainly by the finding that very few crime hotspots were observed under conditions of high collective efficacy. For instance, for each year, among the sixteen high collective efficacy blocks, no more than three blocks (19 percent)<sup>6</sup> emerged as crime hotspots. However, low collective efficacy was insufficient to result in high levels of narcotics violations, robberies, or batteries. For instance, with the exception of robberies and batteries in 2000, among the seventeen blocks that ranked low on collective efficacy, more were crime coldspots than hotspots.<sup>7</sup>

Ethnographic data indicated that low levels of drug dealing are observed under conditions of high collective efficacy mainly because of

6. 1999 batteries and collective efficacy—see Table A.22.

7. See Tables A.18–A.23.



a reciprocal effect—low drug dealing encourages high levels of collective efficacy, and high collective efficacy diminishes neighborhood drug dealing. In chapter 5, there were several instances when collective action by residents resulted in a decline in narcotics sales on a particular street block. However, as was explained earlier in this book, drug dealers become attracted to locations not primarily because of levels of neighborhood disorder or collective efficacy, but based on the ecological advantages that are available to them. Thus, under conditions of low narcotics violations, residents are more likely to report a greater willingness to intervene. This is because their willingness to intervene is seldom placed under challenge, and they perceive the cost of intervention to be quite low. Therefore, they are more likely to perceive higher levels of trust, solidarity, and others' willingness to intervene when something wrong is in progress on their block.

On several occasions, persons (especially newcomers) who reside on blocks with very low crime indicated to me that they trusted their neighbors very much, felt as if they were the same type of people, and thought that their neighbors would be very willing to intervene should something "wrong" unfold on their block. However, I was often astonished to discover that many of those residents did not know their neighbors very well. They were sometimes unable to tell the names and number of adults and children in the neighboring households, the occupation of their neighbors, and how actively they had seen those neighbors intervene against "something wrong" in the last year. These instances led me to question whether people can really develop high trust of persons they do not know well, and whether they can genuinely feel that persons they do not know well are "like themselves." Furthermore, how can residents who have not seen their neighbors actively intervene against "something wrong" be confident that those neighbors will do so if something wrong actually occurs in the future?

I have concluded that the high levels of trust and solidarity such residents expressed toward their neighbors were not due to the fact that they knew them well; rather, residents assumed certain things about their neighbors because they live together on a quiet block. Newcomers to quiet blocks often believe that the low crime rate is because residents actively "do something" about crime-related problems. They are often surprised to learn later that there are no block clubs, and that residents often do not know each other very well or spend much time in the neighborhood. Their sense of trust, solidarity, and shared expectations for action is frequently based not on what they know about their neighbors, but on their observation that very few crimes occur on their block.

Residents sometimes deduce that since it appears that certain crimes are low or almost nonexistent on their block, their neighbors must be trustworthy; these neighbors are most likely people with whom residents can bond; and that they are most likely willing to intervene to help the neighborhood maintain its quiet status.

For example, in several instances, after observing that very few or no crimes were reported from particular blocks, I proceeded to question residents about their knowledge of crimes and why they believed so few crimes occurred there. While some residents pointed to concrete examples of collective guardianship that indicated their trust for and personal knowledge of each other, as well as their intervention against troublemakers in the past, others argued, "we are just lucky," "I guess they have not gotten to us yet," "I guess they are busy someplace else," and "I really don't know."

To the researcher, these statements and other observations mean that motivated offenders do not challenge each block on the beat equally. Therefore, many blocks are low on crime for reasons other than the active participation of residents. When crime is low on a block, many residents are likely to feel a sense of security that leads them to assume high levels of trust, solidarity, and the willingness of their neighbors to intervene on behalf of the common good, even without concrete knowledge. In many instances, residents actually point to low crime on their block as one reason that they trust their neighbors, perceive their neighbors as like themselves, and think their neighbors are willing to intervene to keep the block safe. Therefore, there is a reciprocal relationship between high collective efficacy and low rates of such crimes as narcotics violations.

The data also indicate that for both 1999 and 2000, blocks on which collective efficacy was low were more likely to be drug-dealing coldspots than hotspots.<sup>8</sup> This means that many blocks that are low on collective efficacy are missing a characteristic needed to result in high rates of narcotics violations. As was indicated in chapter 5, this characteristic is ecological disadvantage: where the block is located, what is in and around it, and the reputation it has gained over time. Depending on where a block is situated in reference to the broader neighborhood, and depending on the type of commercial activities conducted within it, the same level of collective efficacy might yield significantly different returns in terms of reduction of narcotics violations. Blocks that drug dealers consider to be lucrative for business will see less results for the same level of collective

8. See Tables A.18 and A.19.

efficacy than will blocks that are of little interest to drug dealers and their clients. This means that ecological disadvantage conditions the demands for collective efficacy and its likely returns.

Furthermore, under certain neighborhood conditions, collective efficacy is used as a private good in the form of aiding and abetting the sale of narcotics, rather than as a public good such as suppressing those sales. This observation highlights the need to determine under what conditions collective efficacy will be used to produce a private as opposed to a public good. The broader socioeconomic conditions under which the place and its actors function must be given serious consideration. Under strained conditions of concentrated disadvantage, and being positioned in certain kinship and friendship networks with chronic motivated offenders, residents are more likely to use collective action, a form of social capital, as a resource toward certain private benefits<sup>9</sup> than as a public good such as neighborhood safety—a dynamic suggested by several examples in chapter 5.

#### *Collective Efficacy and Robberies*

The association between collective efficacy and robberies is also an interesting one. Out of the sixteen high collective efficacy blocks, only two (13 percent) were battery hotspots in 1999, and none were hotspots in 2000. As with the relationship between high collective efficacy and drug dealing, there is a reciprocal association between robberies and high collective efficacy. High collective efficacy conditions lower the incidence of robberies because watchful neighbors and other capable guardians sometimes serve as effective constraints against neighborhood robberies. Robbers have admitted that watchful eyes have a deterrent effect on the timing of their activities. When neighbors trust each other, they estimate lower costs of retaliation in the belief that others will support them if the perpetrators retaliate. When neighbors know each other well and believe that others are like themselves,<sup>10</sup> they are more likely to estimate low costs associated with their actions against crime and are more likely to intervene. Thus, unless they expect payoffs

9. Such as profiting financially from drug deals, or “purchasing” personal security and other social favors from motivated offenders by turning a blind eye to their actions even though they are perceived to be “bad” for the neighborhood in general. Residents may also reap private benefits by not being perceived as the “rat.” There can be other perceived private benefits as well.

10. Depending on who they perceive themselves to be. When they believe that others are like themselves, they are more likely to feel confident that they can anticipate how others will act under given circumstances.

to be very high, robbers often avoid operating in locations where they perceive that there is high trust<sup>11</sup> among neighbors who are willing to intervene to prevent robberies, to interrupt robberies that are in progress, or to provide incriminating evidence after witnessing robberies.

However, low collective efficacy is an insufficient condition to produce robbery hotspots. This is because place matters most to robbers. Certain low collective efficacy locations are not of interest to robbers because they are not frequented by vulnerable persons with cash in their possession. Robbers, typically preferring the path of least resistance, select their victims based mainly on spontaneous opportunities. When suitable victims are encountered in strategic neighborhood locations and payoffs appear to be high, robbers pay little attention to what scholars perceive to be levels of collective efficacy. “I want it, I see it, I take it” is the most common logic used by robbers who find prey within the research site. Therefore, to most robbers, low levels of collective efficacy mean nothing unless they are matched with spontaneous opportunities in strategic neighborhood locations.

#### *Collective Efficacy and Batteries*

Among the sixteen high collective efficacy blocks, respectively, only three were considered battery hotspots in 1999, and only one in 2000. However, among the seventeen low collective efficacy blocks, eight were battery coldspots in 1999 and only one in 2000; six were battery hotspots in both 1999 and 2000.<sup>12</sup> Few batteries were observed under conditions of high collective efficacy. Moreover, in 2000, most batteries were observed under conditions of low collective efficacy. This suggests that low collective efficacy is also insufficient for high levels of battery. Discussions in chapter 7 indicated that the presence of disruptive family members is the key variable in the relationship between low collective efficacy and high incidence of battery.

Chapter 5 also indicated that trust, solidarity, and the willingness of residents to intervene sometimes serve as a useful motivation for cooperation and a measure to prevent conflicts from escalating to the point where they result in violent physical exchanges. On some occasions, trust, solidarity, and the willingness of residents to intervene serve to prevent physical conflicts from continuing over time.

11. Observations suggest that high trust is high assurance of protection imbedded in social relations. When neighborhood actors speak about trust, they often refer to levels of assurance that, in their presence or absence, others will not cause them harm.

12. See Tables A.22 and A.23.

However, as was illustrated in chapter 7, certain forms of intervention in interpersonal conflicts can make matters worse, even over time. Members of disruptive families, and sometime others, frequently intervene by taking sides and throwing punches themselves. This often results in a series of retaliatory combative episodes that sometimes lead to severe injury or even death. Therefore, the important issue is not simply whether neighbors are willing to intervene, but what forms of intervention they are willing and able to employ. This is important because some forms of intervention actually make matters worse, while others may reduce batteries over time. Domestic disputes that occur behind closed doors are often beyond the scope of intervention by neighbors. Residents often consider domestic violence to be a private matter. Collective action to reduce domestic violence may be more effective when it takes the form of awareness and prevention than when it surfaces as intervention during heated moments.

### Theoretical Implications

Several theoretical implications can be derived from this study. First, the study advances knowledge about crime and place by challenging conventional wisdom that tends to discuss large high-crime neighborhoods as if all of their sub-neighborhood units are about equally dangerous. This study reveals that like the broader city, high crime areas show considerable variation in concentrations of crime across micro-locations. Therefore, socioeconomic and race variables are inadequate to explain variations in concentration of crime over place and time. There is a need to look at this phenomenon over multiple cities and sub-areas to further examine this observation.

Second, this study further supports the need to look at neighborhoods, and at particular places within them, as units of analysis in their own rights. A place is a commodified space—a location of specific connotation value to various neighborhood actors. However, the value of place is not arbitrary; rather, it is dependent on its context, on what is going on in and around it, and on the reputation it has gained over time. Like legitimate business entrepreneurs, when considering opportunities for lucrative business transactions, crime entrepreneurs such as drug dealers, prostitutes,<sup>13</sup> and robbers pay close attention to the ecological

13. Although not discussed at length in this book.

advantages places offer them. Simply by virtue of their close proximity to transit stops and certain business establishments, some places offer crime entrepreneurs spatial opportunities for easy access to customers or victims, quick escape from police, and an ability to deny that they are present in the area solely for illegal activities. To robbers, place matters greatly because different spaces do not equally attract and socialize suitable targets. Members of disruptive families who frequently engage in domestic and acquaintance violence often find housing in less desirable sections of the neighborhood where the rent is lower.

The reputation a place has gained over time is also an important component of its ecological advantage or disadvantage, because this assigns the place a certain profile and value in reference to other spaces around it. On most occasions, the place acquires a particular reputation because of repeated actions that occur there over time. Again, certain actions are more likely to occur in places because of their location than because of what they look like. Therefore, the ecology of place has an independent effect on providing opportunities for certain crimes to flourish.

Third, the independent effect of place has considerable impact on the relationships between broken windows and collective efficacy variables and crimes. As the preceding discussions indicated, there are other significant factors besides simply what a place looks like, how much disorderly conduct is visible within it, and the sense of community among its residents. Location matters considerably; knowledge of the key actors in social disorder is important too. It is also crucial to determine the purpose to which collective efficacy is directed. That is to say, one must seek to comprehend what communities are organized for, how, and in what ways the very location within which they are imbedded influences the demand for particular forms of collective action. Therefore, future research concerned with physical disorder, social disorder, and collective efficacy should pay specific attention to the independent effects of the ecological advantages and disadvantages of place.

Fourth, future research on collective efficacy needs to pay close attention to the reciprocal relationship between high collective efficacy and low crime rates. It is evident that some neighborhoods experience low levels of crime partly because of collective action toward intervention. Those acts of intervention are frequently made possible by substantial trust and subjective solidarity among neighbors. Yet, under conditions of low crime, neighbors are quite likely to report high estimates of trust and solidarity among themselves, and of the willingness of others to

intervene. An important question is whether the perceived willingness to intervene will actually translate into active intervention when the neighborhood is faced with a crime challenge. How will we know that?<sup>14</sup> Or is the willingness to intervene alone a deterrent to motivated offenders? If so, how do motivated offenders come to know what residents are willing to do or what they are actually *able* to do? Often, motivated offenders become aware of what other residents are willing to do because there has been a history of confrontations between them. Quite often, such confrontations are the genesis of collective efficacy because they expose neighbors to opportunities for knowing who they can trust in certain ways, who has values similar to theirs, and who is willing to intervene in particular ways on behalf of a safer neighborhood for all.

In most situations, residents do not build a strong sense of community unless they have been faced with a common external enemy. They are often ambivalent about whether they and their neighbors trust each other, how well they know and identify with each other, and what they are willing to do on behalf of the common good until they are faced with crime or other threatening problems. These challenges force them to look within, and to discover, evaluate, and develop their capacities for action. Therefore, if some micro neighborhoods are seldom placed under direct challenge, often because of where they are located, how can perceptions of collective efficacy in these areas be clearly ascertained? Future research needs to consider this question.

#### *Toward Improving Collective Efficacy Measures: Questioning the Reliability of Global Trust*

These findings raise some important questions about the real-world implications for variables used to measure collective efficacy. It was observed that a global measure of trust may be problematic because there are different types of trust that sometimes function in contradictory ways in relation to crime. For example, in this study, trust was divided into trust with property and trust with information. Trust with property questioned the extent to which residents trusted their neighbors to look after their residence while they were away and to return borrowed items. Trust with information related to the extent to which neighbors trusted each other with information about themselves that could be used to

harm them (i.e., personal secrets). Trust with property had a significant negative association with all three crimes; this was not the case, however, for trust with information. Therefore, future studies should find ways to inquire about and measure the relationships between specific types of trust and various crimes.

#### *Toward Improving Collective Efficacy Measures: Questioning the Willingness to Intervene as a Predictor for Action*

The findings of this study also question whether the willingness to intervene is a reliable predictor of what residents will actually do if faced with a challenge that compromises neighborhood safety. Many residents who reported low willingness to intervene were frequently observed engaging in direct acts of intervention aimed at increasing safety in their neighborhood. This was rather puzzling until field notes revealed many statements made by those residents indicating that they intervene reluctantly. Because of high expectations about the costs of retaliation, many residents are not willing to intervene on behalf of neighborhood safety. However, faced with the daily challenges posed by crime problems in the neighborhood, the same residents were observed engaging in several spontaneous acts of active intervention. On other occasions, residents who expressed strong willingness to intervene did not engage in active intervention because of the network ties they shared with perpetrators. These perpetrators were often their children, parents, siblings, or other close relatives, or friends with whom they felt they could not afford suffering the break in affective affiliation that would entail from a direct intervention. Having high willingness to intervene, but not having what is perceived as the opportunity or leverage to do so, such residents become empathetic or afraid and allow their troublemaking associates to continue their wrongful actions with impunity.

Lack of confidence in the criminal justice system is one key reason residents gave for reluctance to engage in collective action against criminal activities. They expressed concerns about engaging in acts of intervention that would lead to young persons, such as drug dealers, going to prison. Although they do not want drug dealing in their neighborhoods, they are concerned that many young persons who are incarcerated return to their neighborhoods in worse psychological and social condition than before they went to prison. Often, the people neighbors are called upon to intervene against are their close relatives or friends who have returned home after serving time in prison. Incarceration has major impacts on local capacities for social control; since inmates are seldom

14. These questions arose frequently during the author's communications with Robert J. Sampson while the research was in progress and we were both at the University of Chicago's Department of Sociology.

rehabilitated, residents wonder if it is productive to engage in acts of intervention that may cause others to serve time in prison. They develop *bonds of sympathy* with many local offenders. Meanwhile, offenders interpret this lack of intervention to mean that residents either approve of their behavior or fear them, so they continue with their illegal activities. This observation suggests that future research on collective efficacy should consider the impact of mass incarceration on local social control, and should find ways to resolve this tension by formulating measures that can more directly determine what residents will actually do if faced with the complex challenges that often threaten neighborhood tranquility and capacities for collective action.

One possibility is to gather information about how residents have actually responded in the past and to use this information as a predictor of what they may do in the future, in similar circumstances. Considerable emphasis needs to be placed on determining the conditions under which residents would be willing to compromise affective personal ties or other perceived personal benefits in order to produce a safer neighborhood. The paradox in this regard is that many residents feel that their involvement in neighborhood safety efforts comes at great personal cost, which will increase others' safety but jeopardize their own. Therefore, residents will be more willing to intervene when the situation in which they are called upon to act does not jeopardize their affective ties and other perceived private benefits or further compromise their personal safety. This implies that the willingness to act is not a sufficient condition for action. Other conditions determine the extent to which such willingness will actually translate into action.

Residents need the opportunity to act in ways that are not perceived to have high personal or group costs. The perceived level of personal cost is often contingent on the affective and other ties the actors have with those they are called to intervene against. In this area of concentrated disadvantage, many residents use personal ties to obtain help, supplies, and favors, and to meet other wants and needs. They are constantly faced with compromising individual or small-group personal interests for the common good. Stripped from those intense networks of dependency, they may have more leverage and opportunities to act and follow up on behalf of the common good. It is important for future research to determine how residents construct perceptions of the common good and how it can be attained. Furthermore, under what conditions will the common good be perceived as a concurrent personal good of about the same magnitude? Involvement in neighborhood block clubs often

presents situations where private and public goods are realized concurrently. For instance, residents engage in developing local flower gardens and clean-up campaigns that yield personal benefits in the form of stabilized real estate values and sense of neighborhood attachment as well as the public good of creating a clean and pleasing environment for all to enjoy. Collective action against crime also concurrently yields private and public goods when many block club members are seriously involved in the effort. The private benefit is often attained when certain offenders are chased away from the block, and the public good is the safer neighborhood that results when residents on adjacent blocks do the same. However, if the intervention is not well coordinated by groups, offenders will retaliate against those who were most actively involved in the intervention. Larger coordinated group interventions, such as those often undertaken by neighborhood block clubs, seem to reduce the personal costs incurred by individual residents.

#### *Toward Improving Collective Efficacy Measures: Subjective versus Objective Solidarity*

The measure of solidarity among neighbors also requires some attention. This study made a distinction between objective and subjective solidarity, and found that there are notable differences in their association with crime. Subjective solidarity referred to the extent to which residents believed that others on their blocks were "like them." By contrast, objective solidarity referred to the length of time persons resided on the block. The measure of subjective solidarity showed a stronger association with all three types of crime. As explained in chapters 5 through 7, there were also substantive differences in the ways these forms of solidarity related to trust among neighbors and their willingness to intervene. Some residents reported that the longer they lived among some neighbors, the better they got to know them, but the less they trusted them. In addition, under certain conditions, some residents showed considerable reluctance to intervene against others with whom they felt subjective solidarity, and instead found ways to excuse their wrongful behavior and sometimes even aid and abet their criminal activities. Under what conditions do stronger bonds develop among neighbors over time, and under what conditions don't they? When bonds do develop, what determines whether they will be used to produce lower crime neighborhoods as a public good? It is important for future research on collective efficacy to test these questions.



### Methodological Implications

This study serves as an example of how multiple data gathering techniques can be harmoniously used to study neighborhood issues. The quantitative, ethnographic, survey, mapping, and Systematic Social Observation (SSO) data all served as cross-validations of each other. An important question in the mind of all field researchers should be, "how will I know if I am wrong?" The use of multiple methods to gather diverse sources of data is one way of guarding against collecting data that cannot be cross-validated for accuracy. Official statistics were cross-referenced against neighborhood experts' survey and ethnographic data to determine whether they provided a reliable portrait of the spatial distribution of crime hotspots. Dialogues were then conducted among the quantitative, ethnographic, map, and SSO data to scrutinize and explain the relationships among social disorder, physical disorder, and collective efficacy variables. This book also advances the technique of SSO by creating a movie from the data that was then used during field interviews with offenders. The SSO movie was also used to provide a video ethnographic account of Beat 213. These procedures have several implications for the future of neighborhood context research.

### Policy and Programmatic Implications

One major finding of this book in reference to policy implications is that even within a high crime area only a few micro locations such as street blocks may be crime hotspots—habitual crime locales.<sup>15</sup> This is partly because urban and other spaces are not evenly zoned and developed, providing different structures of criminal opportunities to different offenders who capitalize on spatial (dis)advantages. For instance, among the 58 blocks analyzed, only 10 (1 percent) were hotspots for at least one of the three types of crime in both 1999 and 2000. Among these 10 blocks, only 3 were stable hotspots for all three types of crime; the other 7 blocks were stable hotspots for only one type of crime. Stated otherwise, among the 58 blocks in the beat, only 3 (5 percent)<sup>16</sup> were stable hotspots for all three types of crime analyzed by this study. Detailed explanations were provided as to why these blocks and not others were higher crime locales.

15. Keeping in mind that the equation used to tabulate crime hotspots will also influence the raw number of crimes that will be required for a location to be considered a hotspot, and how many hotspots there will be.

16. Blocks 143, 289, and 325.

Most of the blocks in high-crime areas are likely to have low crime rates, and the few blocks that have high crime rates are likely to remain that way over time. Therefore, one policy implication is that even in high crime areas, it is important to avoid employing one overall crime reduction strategy for all micro neighborhood units such as blocks. It would be more useful to categorize and understand blocks in terms of hotspots, warmspots, and coldspots, paying close attention to the factors that make them similarly vulnerable, and to devise strategies accordingly. In other words, variation in concentrations of crime over place and time will demand diverse strategies to address neighborhood crime problems effectively. This means that although a general neighborhood anti-crime strategy may be developed, in order to be effective it must consider multiple strategies to be used across different micro neighborhood units. Since each micro neighborhood will not be faced with the same crime challenges, strategies should be employed that are specifically sensitive to the challenges of certain types of blocks. This does not necessarily mean that each block requires its own special program. After all, only a few places will be major problems; others will be either midrange or low problem areas for particular types of crime.

The few high crime areas need special attention to determine if they all require the same or similar sorts of intervention. Many blocks are midrange in crime, and they are vulnerable to becoming the *next hotspots* if efforts are not made to transform them into coldspots. Warmspots (and some coldspots) sometimes offer the same ecological advantages as hotspots. However, as ironic as this may seem, there are not enough active motivated offenders to capitalize on every ecological and other opportunity that exists. For narcotics violations, for example, there are considerably more potentially lucrative spots than are being utilized at any given time. Active drug dealers easily identify locations perceived to be on hold as the "next spot" in the event that the older lucrative location becomes no longer available. These potential "next spots" will likely require different strategies than the current hotspots.

Coldspots should not be forgotten, because they too can later emerge as hotspots. When older hotspots decline, motivated offenders may capitalize on some of the ecological advantages offered by certain coldspots, thereby transforming them into hotspots. Efforts must be made, then, to preserve whatever is responsible for the persistence of low-crime micro neighborhoods. The study indicates that it is unlikely that a block will be a hotspot one year and a coldspot the next, and vice versa. However, this only means that the probability was small based on recent and current conditions in the research site. Over a one-year period, a few blocks



have displayed drastic low to high shifts in their criminogenic profile. Therefore, although coldspots are more likely to remain stable than to change into hotspots, this cannot be taken for granted.

Policy and programmatic efforts should also be sensitive to the additional challenges imposed by the ecological position of the place itself. Some blocks will yield lower returns for the same level and type of intervention if they are situated in locations of greater interest to motivated offenders who will retaliate more fiercely. Crime problems in other locations will require less effort for higher returns if those locations are, because of certain ecological disadvantages,<sup>17</sup> not of great interest to certain motivated offenders. Offenders will simply move to another, more welcoming and potentially lucrative location, or retire when forced or encouraged to do so. Ecological disadvantage has considerable consequences for the relevance of physical disorder and social disorder. It also affects the demand<sup>18</sup> for, the returns<sup>19</sup> of, and the costs<sup>20</sup> of collective efficacy. Policy and programmatic efforts need to take these findings into consideration.

#### *Effects of Broad Socioeconomic Constraints on Neighborhoods*

While it is important to consider factors associated with criminal opportunities, policy and programmatic efforts need to consider equally forces such as concentrated disadvantage which influence criminal motivation. (Concentrated disadvantage influences criminal motivation by creating a milieu of extremely limited resources and networks that further compromise social values and priorities.) These factors cause many residents and businesspersons alike to remain in conflict over transforming limited resources into private goods, for strictly personal gains, instead of working together toward public goods such as safer and healthier neighborhoods.

Criminal opportunities are worth nothing if motivated offenders do not take advantage of them. Criminal opportunities outnumber motivated offenders; offenders can only take advantage of a limited number

of opportunities. The opportunities certain motivated offenders capitalize on are often within reasonable proximity to where they live or in preferred targeted locations that exist further away. Concentrated disadvantage often brings motivated offenders and criminal opportunities together, or converts what would otherwise have been a community good, such as a small business area, into a criminal opportunity.

The concentration of socioeconomic constraints such as unemployment, underemployment, and underdevelopment affect the manner in which micro neighborhood issues are perceived, prioritized, and approached. Socioeconomic constraints intensely experienced in micro neighborhoods influence the particular ways neighborhood actors<sup>21</sup> construct notions of what are actually *crime problems*. Neighborhood actors often refer to broad socioeconomic conditions when they express perceptions of which *crime issues* are worthy of attention as major *problems*<sup>22</sup> in the neighborhood. For example, although many residents express a great desire for low crime neighborhoods, they also understand that, as one neighborhood expert put it, "every man has the right to eat."<sup>23</sup> Therefore, neighborhood actors often spontaneously ponder whether or not, and how, they should respond to suspected or known criminal activities. This is especially the case with nonviolent entrepreneurial crimes such as narcotics violations, prostitution, and illegal vending. Often, in addition to perceiving the actions being observed as completely wrong because they look bad and are illegal, neighborhood actors seek more information. They often make concerted efforts to identify what is really "the problem with the problem."<sup>24</sup> These discussions are frequent in community policing beat meetings, where residents have said, for instance, "prostitution is not the problem; it is where and how they do it,"<sup>25</sup> "it is not the drug dealing I am concerned about, it is the violence," "I do not want to send them to jail; I just want help for them because I understand that they are trying to make a living," "the problem is that we have to let them know that they cannot be so bold with what they are doing," and "they need to take this someplace else."<sup>26</sup> Concentrated

21. Local residents and business persons alike.

22. A problem is often perceived as an issue that is persistent, that is of significant concern, and that cannot be eliminated or significantly reduced through human or other forms of intervention.

23. Many neighborhood actors, even some police officers, have made similar statements.

24. This is a direct quote that expresses an idea encountered several times during field interviews with police officers, neighborhood reformers, and motivated offenders.

25. Such as on the hoods of cars, on church steps, in alleyways, in cars on vacant lots, in parking lots, and on private driveways.

26. These are all direct quotes from police beat meetings.

17. Note that this term is relative because, for instance, an ecological "disadvantage" to the motivated offender will be considered an ecological "advantage" to the neighborhood reformer.

18. How many and what type of collective efforts are needed to eliminate or significantly reduce the crime problem in question.

19. How much headway will actually be made by activating certain forms of collective action against crime.

20. How frequently actors in collective action episodes will encounter resistance from motivated offenders, and the severity of retaliatory threats motivated offenders will make against neighborhood reformers.

disadvantage affects how neighborhood actors perceive and are likely to respond to potential crime problems.

Under conditions of concentrated disadvantage, residents often feel helpless to reduce the motivation of their neighbors to become involved in violent and predatory crimes. This is because residents frequently associate motivations to commit violent and predatory crimes with the frustrations that accompany concentrated disadvantage or other forms of socioeconomic strain. Faced with these conditions, and concurrently desiring as much peace of mind as they can muster, many neighborhood residents do not place much emphasis on actively seeking ways to completely eliminate neighborhood crime problems. They are convinced that as long as those broad socioeconomic conditions exist, the motivation for violent and predatory crimes will persist. Once such disenfranchised persons are motivated to commit crimes, they will find places to do so. The question remains, in what particular neighborhood places will motivated offenders find the best opportunities to commit crimes? As this study has indicated, criminal opportunities in a specific place vary based on the type of crime in question. Therefore, all places will not be equally attractive to, or reflective of, the actions of all types of motivated offenders.

Moreover, many residents in highly disadvantaged neighborhoods realize that although they do not have the power and resources to uproot motivations for involvement in violent and predatory criminal activities by removing these broad socioeconomic constraints, they are not completely helpless. They can have an impact on where crimes occur most frequently by reducing opportunities in some locations.

Many neighborhood residents perceive that the biggest threat of neighborhood crime is the threat of becoming a random victim. Therefore, faced with conditions of concentrated disadvantage, they attempt to control certain crimes by influencing where they occur most frequently—organizing themselves to cluster or push certain crimes into strategic neighborhood locations such as adjacent street blocks with passive residents.<sup>27</sup> In this way, they attempt to “de-randomize” crime, hoping that it will also be reduced in the process. Meanwhile, motivated offenders, especially crime entrepreneurs, go about selecting places based on the ecological and social advantages they offer. So when crimes become clustered,<sup>28</sup> motivated offenders feed off the perceived

27. This is what I refer to as consecutive displacement.

28. This is often accomplished with the assistance of well-intentioned neighborhood reformers.

advantages offered by that place and keep their activities there until they are forced to move elsewhere or to find other ways to occupy their time. These micro-level processes are repeated on intermediate neighborhood levels of organization and are further observed as macro neighborhood-level crime rates.

When neighborhoods maintain high levels of crime over an extended period, they gain a certain criminal reputation that makes eliminating or significantly reducing crime in that place even more difficult. Such persistent high crime places frequently become dumping grounds onto which police and residents of more efficacious neighborhoods push questionable behavior.<sup>29</sup> In such places, where crime reputations have become crystallized, considerably more time and effort is necessary to significantly reduce or eliminate certain types of crime.

For these reasons, intervention at early stages of criminal involvement is important. Early intervention prevents crime problems from escalating to levels where the place gains a reputation that reduces the effects of subsequent modest efforts. Early intervention also limits the investments some motivated offenders, such as drug dealers, have made in the area. When drug dealers have spent a considerable amount of time attempting to make a location such as a street corner more lucrative, they are more likely to engage in fight than in flight. When motivated offenders fight back, this reduces the active participation of residents toward producing neighborhood safety as a common good.

Early intervention can also reduce offense motivation. As the ethnographic data in this study indicate, criminal involvement often begins at an early age, when persons are very adaptable to whatever habits are introduced to them. Once those good or bad habits are imbued, they often continue through the life course. As the statements made by motivated offenders have indicated, criminal habits are very hard to break, especially when they were nourished from an early age. Many motivated offenders learn criminal behavior from close friends and relatives. For this reason, children who are socialized in certain types of disruptive families need to be exposed to alternative forms of socialization. Over time, early intervention will likely diminish both structures of opportunity in place and offense motivation among people.

So we return to the question raised at the beginning of this book—within the same broadly defined high crime area, when placed under ethnographic scrutiny, how well do broken windows and collective

29. Another form of consecutive displacement; in this instance it is organized more on the macro neighborhood level.

efficacy theories explain the formation of higher crime locales on smaller neighborhood levels such as street blocks? It is clear from the data that offenders do not unequivocally interpret disorder to mean that no one cares<sup>30</sup> about the neighborhood and that they can commit crimes there at little or no cost. However, while neighborhood disorder is not an invitation to offenders to commit crimes with impunity, it does have harmful effects on neighborhoods. Perhaps the most detrimental impact of neighborhood disorder is that it chases away potentially good and productive residents and business persons. Potential homeowners avoid making purchases in areas where property values seem to be at great risk of declining. During interviews, neighborhood disorder was often interpreted as an indication of such decline. Neighborhood disorder also causes some residents and outsiders to believe that since the area is in rapid decline, little can be done to rescue it, and that one should therefore extract as much as possible from the area before nothing is left. By the same token, other residents and outsiders interpret disorder as a call to action—those who care must work harder to turn conditions around.

Collective efficacy, or collective action for problem-solving, has been observed to possess the potential for reducing both neighborhood disorder and crime. However, this study has pointed to several complex issues worthy of attention. One of these issues is the realization that based on where they are located, neighborhoods face different ecological disadvantages that activate the need for certain forms of collective action in response to problems. Moreover, because of those ecological disadvantages, neighborhoods do not realize the same return for the same level of collective action. Therefore, efforts aimed at reducing neighborhood crime to increase quality of life should not only seek to reduce disorder, increase trust, increase solidarity, and increase the willingness of residents to intervene on behalf of social control; they should also pay attention to factors such as lopsided planning and development, collaborative surveillance among business establishments, and diminishing the constraints of concentrated disadvantage that fuel criminal motivation. Collective action for problem solving should not only be reactive to existing neighborhood problems, but also be proactive to avoid other problems in the future. I have increasingly wondered why residents expend so much energy on responding to crime problems and pay so little attention to organizing themselves to address other quality of life issues

30. Offenders often interpret disorder to mean that the city's government does not care about the area, but residents still care about their neighborhood.

such as increased employment, strengthening business communities, actively promoting moral and normative development, and advocating effective conflict management skills. In addition to improving capacities for social control, these actions will likely reduce incidence of certain crimes as well as criminal motivation.

This leaves the question of what specific policies and programs are recommended, based on the findings, to reduce neighborhood crime. I do not propose to offer any magic bullets, nor do I expect any single program to solve the majority of crime problems. I also expect that effective policies and programs can emerge from the readers' own understanding of the findings I have presented, combined with their interests and expertise. The findings in this book indicate that although multiple crimes may regularly occur on the same neighborhood blocks, they do so for different reasons. Therefore, no single strategy<sup>31</sup> is likely to result in significant reductions of all these crimes at once. The fact that multiple types of crime occur consistently on the same neighborhood blocks draws our attention to the need to consider the forces of ecological disadvantage.

It would not be appropriate to suggest that residential neighborhoods should not contain any business outlets such as grocery stores, check cashing outlets, and fast-food restaurants (i.e., to eliminate mixed-use neighborhoods). Such businesses are established for the public good but sometimes also serve as lucrative places for crime entrepreneurs and predators—mainly because they bring potential victims and perpetrators together. Zoning and land use laws may be effective in determining where such businesses can best be located, and it may be possible to design them in ways that make shared surveillance relatively easy. This does not mean that strip malls are the only solution, or that cameras should be indiscriminately installed. It is quite possible that the "mom and pop" stores that are essential to many neighborhoods can be less vulnerable to incidents of violent and predatory crime if business owners, customers, local police, and others devise strategies in response to the particular challenges at hand.

Although strategies may be similar, some variations will be needed to address crime problems effectively. Such strategies should include soliciting the input of stakeholders from all major categories: residents, customers, business owners, local and other governmental representatives, law-enforcement representatives, employment agencies, drug treatment

31. Except for demolishing an entire area, as was done to the Robert Taylor Homes and State Way Gardens on State Street in Chicago.

and rehabilitation agencies, schools, churches, block clubs and other neighborhood organizations, and offenders who are reformed or are serious about becoming reformed.<sup>32</sup> All crime reduction strategies should include two major components: one focused on reducing criminal opportunity (through shared surveillance among the business community, residential community, visitors, customers, and responsible law enforcement); and another focused on reducing criminal motivation (through increased socioeconomic opportunities<sup>33</sup> and/or moral development).<sup>34</sup> If criminal motivation is not reduced, offenders will continue to employ creative measures to capitalize on criminal opportunities. Drug dependency, thrill-seeking, severe economic strain, limited coping and conflict management skills, and lack of moral development are often at the root of criminal motivation. Criminal opportunities with little motivation produce little crime; therefore, it is important for crime reduction strategies to seek to reduce criminal motivation, and not simply assume that motivation will decrease if opportunities are diminished. These can be attained under the current organizational structure of community policing, but alternative approaches can also be utilized.

Plans for economic development of neighborhood space should also simultaneously consider the development of neighborhood people. If efforts are not made to develop people and reduce criminal motivation, business establishments intended to benefit the public will continue to serve as incubators for their criminal victimization. Crimes occur when motivated offenders find suitable opportunities in suitable locations. Suitable opportunities and locations do not produce crime if they are not engaged by motivated offenders. Most of the crimes analyzed in this study were committed by offenders who reside in close proximity to the crime locales. Therefore, if the social, economic, and moral dimensions of people who reside near business establishments are developed, neighborhood establishments will less likely become sites for criminal activities. Persons who reside near those establishments can participate in community policing or other similar efforts aimed at making their neighborhood less conducive to criminal activities and violence perpetrated by neighbors and visitors alike. All of this responsibility should

32. Thinking of reformed offenders or those who are serious about being reformed as stakeholders may seem a peculiar position. However, I have found that when such persons are included in discussions of crime prevention strategies, they add a real-world perspective stocked with insights that many law-abiding citizens overlook.

33. This is except in instances when crime is motivated more by greed than by need.

34. This is especially instances when crime is motivated more by greed than by need, and when there is clear disrespect for human life and positive social values.

not fall solely on the shoulders of residents and other informal agents; law enforcement agents also need to be actively involved in street patrols, site visits, and other forms of responsible and proactive policing.

Violent crimes were found to be closely related to the presence of disruptive families who attempt to resolve conflicts with violence. Neighborhood conflict management programs may be effective at reducing incidence of interpersonal violence. The most promising policies and programs would consider social, economic, and moral development of neighborhood persons together with improvement of the façades of public spaces. In this way, trust, solidarity, and the willingness of residents and others to intervene may be more closely aligned with producing public as opposed to private goods.

It should be clear by now that the problem of crime in urban neighborhoods is produced by a confluence of factors, and that policy and programmatic attempts to address the problem must emphasize early intervention from multiple angles, including social, economic, and moral development and uplifting neighborhood space together with neighborhood people. The multifaceted character of the problem and possible solutions is exemplified by Icepick, a former murderer, pimp, armed robber, and drug dealer who was one of the most cooperative collaborators in this study:

No more coming outside, no more sitting on your porch. We done took over. All they say is, "There is a pack of sellers out here, you know, I don't know what they fitting to do in a minute, so I only want to be out there seldom." So I go in, but now I go in, and the police come up and bust'em. Now they think I went in and called the police. So they come and see me, and give me a warning: "You better quit calling them police." "I haven't done anything." But they keep saying watch out for her because she some that try to stand hard, and as I said, if they stay out and build up, and put in time, that's what they say, it's a business; nothing personal, just business. They been here for a while. It is just business. They think this is all they know.

If I stand out there and I devote all my time and energy into this, I deserve this. For real, that's how they be thinking. I deserve this, this is mines, and I'm not moving for nobody. Yea, I'm not moving my business for nobody. My money is coming in here, you know, this is bread and butter for my family.

But you know what I'm gonna do for my family when I get the money? I'm gone move them out this neighborhood. I'm gonna move them out in the suburbs where this here ain't going on there. And I'm a come back over through here and rake everything. I'll keep peoples looking down and whatnot. But for my family, I get

tired of being over here. I gats some people now, selling my drugs, I can go in the suburbs, where it's clean and everything ain't none of this. It may be going on but you won't hear about it too much. My kids can come out and play.

I'm just like a parasite; I need a host to live on. So this is where my bread and butter comes from. I am getting fed through it. You know, I tell you, this is the way it gone be unless they get some jobs up in here and help us strengthen families. How you gone try to take what I gat to feed my family when you took away the little jobs that I once had? What did you expect? Then you call me a monster, when you are the one that done made me so from the time I was little! How can you be scared of something you done made?

## Appendix A

### METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

#### Introduction

Statistical findings regarding the relationships between neighborhood disorder (physical disorder, social disorder), collective efficacy, and the three crimes of narcotics violations, robbery, and battery for the years 1999 and 2000 are presented and discussed in this appendix.<sup>1</sup> These analyses begin with bivariate correlations that depict strengths of associations between the independent variables of physical disorder, social disorder, and collective efficacy, and the dependent variables of narcotics violations, robbery, and battery for the years 1999 and 2000. These correlations show the direction (negative or positive) and strength of these relationships; the strength measures serve as points of departure to determine whether those relationships are significant enough to be worthy of further investigation.<sup>2</sup> While they should not be interpreted as causation, these correlations serve as springboards to further inquiries intended to increase our understanding of causal relationships. The data in this study are not appropriate for advanced statistical analyses such as hierarchical linear modeling to determine causality, mainly because this study is focused on a small area of 58 blocks, and so does not offer sufficient multilevel

1. See footnotes in chapter 1 for an understanding of how physical disorder, social disorder, and collective efficacy were measured.

2. Except in the case where insignificant relationships could still warrant further investigation to determine whether suppressor variables exist.