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Community Organizations and Crime

ABSTRACT

Community organizations that have crime problems on their agendas are common across the country. They originate as an anticipatory response to crime or as a consequence of local criminal activity; none endure, however, by focusing exclusively on crime problems. Participation in anticrime groups is based on awareness of local problems and is linked to socioeconomic status and class-linked attitudes. One approach to fighting crime is for community organizations to request more and better policing. Another is to focus on the fundamental social and economic issues that are root causes of crime. Individual measures often emphasize preventing victimization and minimizing losses, while collective action involves efforts to defend or reform neighborhoods. Evaluations have not produced clear-cut evidence that prevention programs are effective. Organizations also attempt to control crime and disorder through intervention and by changing people's social behavior. Crime-prevention organizations can be implanted in new areas either by encouraging existing organizations to add crime problems to their agendas or by encouraging the formation of such community organizations.

This essay examines the role of community organizations in crime prevention. During the 1980s, there has been increased interest in the role that voluntary efforts can play in dealing with crime problems. In earlier decades, hiring more police officers seemed the obvious answer to mounting crime, but by the late 1970s municipal and federal budget

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constraints made that a less viable approach. The emergence of "community crime-prevention theory" at about this time presented an intellectual foundation for experimenting with a new, "off-budget" approach to crime control rooted in local voluntary organization (Lewis 1979; Lewis and Salem 1981; Lavrakas 1985). Unfortunately, it appears that such organizations can play only a limited role in crime prevention.

The community approach to crime prevention emphasizes collaboration between the criminal justice system and community organizations. It assumes that the police and other elements of the criminal justice system cannot effectively deal with crime and fear on their own. In this view, voluntary, organized community efforts to control crime and alleviate excessive levels of fear must parallel government action if safety is to be achieved within realistic budgetary constraints and without sacrificing civil liberties.

The community approach assumes that contemporary crime problems reflect the decline of the traditional structure of urban neighborhoods. While in the past people were poor and illiterate, and levels of cyclical unemployment were often extreme, crime rates remained low because the traditional agents of social control were strong: families, churches, schools, ethnic solidarity, and traditional values. Crime problems now are vastly worse because those agents have lost their hold on many of today's youths. Many urban neighborhoods are disorganized because the informal control they once exerted has largely disappeared. If disorganization is the root of the crime problem, organization is the solution. We are now more secular and individualistic and perhaps more skeptical about the capacities of government, so in today's world the best vehicle for neighborhood reorganizing sometimes seems to be community organizing around crime problems.

Those organizing efforts stress a number of different tactics for preventing crime. They range from narrow, technical approaches to prevention to broader, social change strategies for rebuilding communities. Some efforts involve collective action (activities carried out by groups), while others call for individual initiative, which can also be encouraged and facilitated by groups. Some programs aim at reducing opportunities for crime; they encourage people to install window bars and alarms and stronger doors and locks. Groups also offer escort services to senior citizens, and produce and distribute newsletters identifying actions that individuals can take to protect themselves from harm. Other programs focus on collective surveillance and crime reporting. Groups attempt to mobilize neighbors to watch one another's homes, to be alert for suspi-

cious circumstances, and to call the police when problems arise. Thoroughgoing surveillance programs can also involve active citizen patrols, which are frequently tied together by citizen's band (CB) radios. Organizations also push for the sanctioning of offenders through crime-tip hotlines that help to identify troublemakers and by court watch programs that attempt to ensure that offenders get tough treatment from judges. Finally, organizations mount programs aimed at attacking the causes of crime. What these causes are perceived to be varies from area to area, but the programs frequently involve recreational activities for youths, antidrug and antigang efforts, and campaigns to improve neighborhood conditions and foster youth employment.

The focus of most of this effort is, of course, crime prevention. However, this approach to community problem solving promises a wider set of benefits. An additional target of these organizing efforts is fear of crime. A growing body of research suggests that fear and related concerns are overstated. This may have important consequences, for the same research indicates that fear is linked to despair rather than positive action, and to a desire to move out of troubled areas (Skogan and Maxfield 1981). It is often assumed that, through organized efforts, worry about neighborhood crime can be reduced to more realistic levels and harnessed to positive actions to prevent crime.

Following a decade of organizing, national surveys point to modest levels of participation in these efforts. In 1981, 12 percent of the adult population claimed membership in a neighborhood group or organization that was involved in crime prevention (O'Keefe and Mendelsohn 1984). A national survey conducted in 1984 found that 7 percent of adults had joined a Neighborhood Watch group, one of the most common forms of collective activity (Whitaker 1986). This kind of participation (but not individual or household prevention measures, which are more uniformly adopted) is about twice as high in central cities as in nonmetropolitan areas.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, community approaches to crime prevention attracted the attention of politicians, who found diverse reasons for supporting it. It emphasized voluntarism and had smaller budgetary implications than most alternatives for dealing with crime, and it diverted attention from what some thought to be the root causes of crime—poverty, functional illiteracy, and racism. This suited conservatives. On the other hand, it promised to support organizing efforts in poor neighborhoods and to provide money for established community organizations, which suited many liberals.

The community approach to crime prevention also attracted the attention of researchers. It emerged during a period of growing public militancy with respect to crime, yet it offered an alternative to hiring more police for researchers who were skeptical that affordable increases in the level of traditional policing would have much of an effect on crime. In addition, the concurrent political exhaustion of the rehabilitative ideal had created an intellectual vacuum which the notion of empowering people to solve their own problems easily filled.

Finally, community crime prevention attracted the attention of public and private agencies with money. During the 1970s, a succession of federal agencies stepped forward to support organizing efforts around crime problems, and in the early 1980s the Ford Foundation put private support behind them as well. During the same period, federal research agencies sponsored studies of many aspects of this new, nonpolicing approach to crime prevention, which further fueled the interest of the research community.

This research suggests that the relation between community organizations and neighborhood crime problems is an uneasy one and is fraught with irony. Rather than uniting the community in outrage or common purpose, crime appears to undermine the capacity of communities to organize. Anticrime organizations are most often successful in communities that need them least. Many established organizations studiously ignore burgeoning crime problems, while others vigorously attack *other* problems (e.g., blighted housing) and call what they are doing "crime prevention." Organized responses to crime may divide communities rather than pull them together. When they are effective, crime-prevention efforts may redistribute resources in favor of those who are better off and work to the detriment of the poor.

Many kinds of organizations are involved in anticrime activities. In addition to traditional community organizations, they include condominium associations and community development corporations, consortiums of shopping strip merchants, and "umbrella" organizations that serve other organizations rather than individuals or neighborhoods. This essay does not describe them all, and most of the quantitative research on crime-prevention groups that it summarizes does not differentiate between types of organizations. However, I do distinguish throughout between organizations that are "preservationist" (Lewis, Grant, and Rosenbaum 1985) and others that are "insurgent" in orientation. By "preservationist" I mean something other than the architectural or historical preservation groups that exist in many places; as I use

the term here, preservationist groups are concerned more generally with maintenance of established local interests, customs, and values. Such groups typically arise in stable, better-off areas. They represent the interests of long-term residents, home owners, small businesses, and local institutions in preserving the status quo. Insurgent groups, by contrast, have a stake in upsetting the current distribution of status and property. Leaders of insurgent groups necessarily are critical of society's institutions.

This essay is organized in the following manner. Section I discusses why community organizations come into being, how they are distributed in geographical and social space, and how they can sustain interest in crime problems over time. Section II reviews what is known about patterns of individual participation in community organizations. Section III reviews what community organizations do in response to crime problems. Section IV examines a crucial policy-related question: Can anticrime organizations be transplanted to places where they have not emerged on their own? Section V, the conclusion, considers the question of whether community-organizing responses to crime can succeed in any meaningful way. It also suggests some important caveats regarding the potential generality of the conclusions.

I. The Origin and Maintenance of Organizations

Relatively little is known about the origins of community organizations involved in crime problems. The best documented efforts are attempts by government agencies or city-wide umbrella groups to implant organizations where none apparently existed. These efforts are considered later, in light of what is known about organizing around crime. Indigenous groups also often form in response to threats from outside the community, in the form of impending construction or demolition, or fear of racial succession (Taub et al. 1977; Emmons 1979). An important but often overlooked role is also played by big institutional actors with an investment to protect. Hospitals, universities, banks, utilities, churches, and other institutions with large and difficult-to-uproot stakes in deteriorating communities can often be found behind the scenes, supplying money and staff to support local organizing efforts (Taub et al. 1977; Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984).

It seems clear that groups do not form automatically in direct response to serious and pervasive problems with crime. Conklin (1975) and Lewis and Salem (1981) both juxtapose what they describe as the "Durkheimian" view—that crime draws communities together—with

their own, which is that crime is a divisive force. Their capsule version of the argument Durkeim presents in *The Division of Labor in Society* (1933) is that crime performs a positive social function when it strengthens community bonds. In reacting with horror to criminal events, community members seem to draw more sharply defined boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and those sharing conventional values are brought together as a result.

Durkheimian analyses are still popular. For example, in their description of the formation of Neighborhood Watch programs, Garofalo and McLeod (1986) describe the following typical developmental sequence: a rash of unusual crimes occurs in a brief period of time; residents of the afflicted area are concerned, hold a meeting, and call on the police for assistance; the local crime-prevention officer helps residents organize a Neighborhood Watch program. This vignette, though it describes an integrative reaction to crime, differs from Durkheim's story in a number of ways. One is the presence and role of the crime-prevention officer. Another (as Garofalo and McLeod note) is that this kind of reaction to crime characterizes middle-class jurisdictions inclined toward instrumental problem-solving efforts.

By contrast, modern studies of high-crime neighborhoods find that crime and fear undermine support for law enforcement, stimulate withdrawal from community life, and at best favor individualistic, self-protective actions (Conklin 1975; Skogan 1986). In the face of decades of serious, life-threatening crime problems, residents are more typically distrustful of one another and have a negative view of their community and its potential.

Early organization around nascent crime problems is probably most typical of preservationist groups and may be the most common pattern. Interviews with participants in anticrime groups in the Chicago area indicate that about two-thirds of the groups were formed in anticipation of crime problems rather than in reaction to them (Lavrakas and Herz 1982). Interviews indicated that groups that formed to anticipate crime problems were concentrated in better-off areas. Reactive reasons for group formation were more often reported by residents of higher-crime, low-income, densely populated, minority neighborhoods.

A. The Distribution of Organizations

There have been several systematic studies of the geographic distribution of community organizations. Some used surveys to identify groups and then found and interviewed their leaders (Podolefsky and

DuBow 1981) or mailed them questionnaires (Lavrakas, Herz, and Salem 1981; Garofalo and McLeod 1986). Others categorized and counted organizations on lists gleaned from official sources or from newspaper stories and telephone directories (Henig 1978, 1984; Kohfeld, Salert, and Schoenberg 1983). The general conclusion to be drawn from these studies is that community organizations, and especially those concerned with crime, are least common where they appear to be most needed—in low-income, heterogeneous, deteriorated, renting, high-turnover, high-crime areas.

Community organizations are more common in better-off urban neighborhoods. The working hypothesis, advanced by Podolefsky and DuBow (1981), is that the relation between the density of local voluntary associations and the indicators of social and economic stability is curvilinear. Local organizational life is at its low point in poor, crime-ridden areas.[1] Residents of these areas typically are deeply suspicious of one another, report only a weak sense of community, have low levels of personal influence on neighborhood events (which goes along with a typically high external locus of control), and feel that it is their neighbors, not outsiders, whom they must watch carefully (Greenberg 1983; Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams 1985). Crime-prevention activities that require frequent contact and cooperation are less likely to be found in poor areas and in areas with high levels of fear, fatalism, and despair (Greenberg and Rohe 1983; Garofalo and McLeod 1986).

Local organizations are also less frequently encountered in the most stable and tightly knit (usually working-class) areas. There, high-density, informal networks substitute for the more formalized channels of communication required in other areas. Residents know one another and are frequently linked by church and family to many others in the immediate neighborhood (Crenson 1978). Life in these areas can resemble an "urban village." This is not necessarily to the advantage of residents. In modern society, tight-knit, cohesive neighborhoods like those described by Gans (1962) can persist only in isolated nooks and crannies of the city, and are measured in size by blocks rather than miles. As their environment changes around them, they maintain their identity by shrinking their self-defined jurisdiction to a smaller and

[1] An exception is church participation, which has demographic correlates different from all other common forms of local community activity. In research on local voluntary associations and crime, however, there is no mention of church-based anticrime activity. Parish churches were active in Saul Alinsky's original community-organizing efforts in Chicago, and in many poor neighborhoods they are a significant political force.

smaller area (Lewis, Grant, and Rosenbaum 1985). The community in effect is redefined by the threat of invasion by others (Suttles 1972). Within a small area, residents may still be able to identify "strangers," and quasi-vigilante activity by local youths may preserve their isolation, but they remain very vulnerable to larger political and social forces (Emmons 1979).

It is moderately cohesive areas that need organizations to bring people together and that at the same time support participation in voluntary associations. They may be the most typical urban neighborhoods. They are stable working- and middle-class neighborhoods where relatively prosperous home-owning residents live, but few strong local social and familial ties exist. In the absence of close ties, residents of these areas require some mechanism to bring them together to deal with local problems. They may succeed, because they are familiar with using organizations for instrumental problem solving (Crenson 1983).

Another empirically based generalization is that successful neighborhood organizations are more common in homogeneous areas. Neighborhoods featuring a mix of life-styles may need organizations in order to identify residents' common interests, but more frequently they do not have them (Henig 1982; Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams 1985). As Podolefsky (1983, p. 136) noted in his description of an ethnically and economically heterogeneous area of Chicago, "While many community organizations and social service groups can be found in Wicker Park, there is no single cohesive organization with which the entire community can identify. Community groups are either almost exclusively white or almost exclusively Latino. None is composed of an ethnic mixture which replicates the population of the neighborhood. The concerns to which the white and Latino groups address themselves are frequently different." In heterogeneous areas, the best that often happens is that preservationists unite against "bad elements" of their own community and *their* organizations, and thus opportunities for participation remain fragmented and exclusionary.

The advantage of socioeconomically, racially, and culturally homogeneous areas is that residents share a definition of what their problems are and who is responsible for them. They share similar experiences and objective life conditions, and they have the same broad conception of their public and private responsibilities (Henig 1982). The empirical evidence (summarized in Rosenbaum [1987]) is that in homogeneous areas, residents exercise more informal control and are more likely to intervene when they see problems, more residents feel positively about

their neighbors and feel personally responsible for events and conditions in the area, and there are more active crime-prevention programs.

In multicultural areas, by contrast, there often are conflicting views of both the causes of crime and the solutions to it. Where neighborhoods are divided by race and class, concern about crime can be an expression of conflict between groups. Preservationists will identify the problem as some of the residents around and among them. Watching for "suspicious people" easily becomes defined as watching for a particular race and aggressively monitoring the circumstances under which different races come into contact. Yin et al. (1976) found that civilian patrols were most common in racially mixed areas of cities. Rather than drawing the community together, preservationist groups in these areas may selectively recruit members on the basis of their values and backgrounds, and their efforts—including crime prevention—may be divisive rather than integrative (Emmons 1979; Rosenbaum 1987).

Gentrifying neighborhoods provide a case study of the process at work. In gentrifying areas, newcomers and real estate developers form groups to promote the area and establish a middle-class environment. New residents use neighborhood redevelopment strategies to push up housing values and rents to levels that longer-term residents cannot afford. Thus, "one group's solution is likely to become another group's problem" (Lewis and Salem 1986, p. 90). Part of the redevelopment push involves attacking "undesirable" land uses (such as rooming houses, saloons, and single-room-occupancy hotels) and provoking the police to crack down on "bad elements" in the area. The newcomers often form civilian patrols or block watch groups (Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984; McDonald 1986) and attempt to use political influence to persuade police and other public officials to act against undesirables (Bottoms and Wiles 1986). In a study of one Washington, D.C., area, Henig (1984) found block-by-block differences in block watch formation and participation that reflected the spread of gentrification. Participation levels were higher and organized efforts more sustained on blocks with more home owners, fewer blacks, fewer children, and fewer elderly residents. Interestingly, gentrification appears to reduce area personal crime rates, but it does not affect levels of property crime (McDonald 1986).

The pattern of homogeneity prospering over heterogeneity may hit black Americans the hardest. Whites, who have a wider range of residential location choices, are generally more able to congregate in patterns reflecting their class, life-style, and family organization. This

leads to a wider range of shared values in many white communities and thus fewer problems concerning many forms of public misconduct, standards of property maintenance, and control of children (Taylor, Gottfredson, and Brower 1980; Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams 1982; Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984). Black neighborhoods, however, can have greater difficulty developing consensual norms because segregation in the housing market leads to greater diversity of classes, life-styles, and family organization in the same geographical areas (Erbe 1975). Faced with more limited residential choices, many blacks cannot avoid living in propinquity to others with conflicting life-styles, which redounds to their further disadvantage when nascent insurgent groups attempt to form.

B. How Do Groups Sustain Anticrime Activity?

Almost every study of local crime-prevention efforts points to a decline in participants' interest and enthusiasm over time, even in places where initial levels of program awareness and participation were high (Fowler and Mangione 1982; Garofalo and McLeod 1986; Lindsay and McGillis 1986; Rosenbaum 1987). The question of how these efforts can be kept in motion thus is an important one. Where successful organizations support crime-prevention efforts, the activity presumably is somehow institutionalized, but it is not foreordained that organizations will be interested in institutionalizing such crime-prevention efforts.

It is almost an article of faith among community organizers that crime is a no-win issue, and few would be willing to bet their organization's survival on its capacity to focus exclusively on crime, much less on its ability to succeed in doing anything about it. There are several reasons for this. First, criminals are a furtive, almost invisible enemy. One of the basic "rules for radicals" (Alinsky 1971) is that organizers should personalize their target. While groups can picket the office of a real estate developer or march on the home of a bad landlord, criminals usually remain faceless. Opportunities occasionally present themselves in the form of abandoned buildings where drug users congregate ("shooting galleries") or wherever concentrations of street prostitutes appear, and these provide organizers with targets for direct action. However, crime also is an atomizing force. Unlike a smelly landfill, it visits individuals on a house-by-house basis, and people can keep their heads down and hope to be passed over. It is also hard to win a visible victory over crime. A successful struggle over a dangerous intersection

may result in a stop sign or crossing guard for all to see, but a victory over crime involves preventing dozens or hundreds of individual events, and keeping them from happening next year as well. This is difficult to document or point to with pride. Finally, concern about crime simply does not provide a basis for sustained individual participation. As the next section documents, fear of crime does not motivate people to get involved in community activities.

This does not mean that neighborhood organizations have avoided crime problems during the 1970s and 1980s. But in almost every case groups do something else as well. Community studies suggest that few groups initially form around crime, and those that attempt to get started by tackling crime problems have neither long lives nor much success at recruiting members; further, anticrime groups that survive do so by adopting other issues or changing their function entirely, and most strong community organizations have complex, multi-issue agendas (Podolefsky and DuBow 1981; Fowler and Mangione 1982; Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984).

Understanding the circumstances under which existing organizations decide to add crime prevention to their agendas is a research issue with important policy implications. Unfortunately, we have very little systematic knowledge about this process. It is not automatic, for in successful organizations crime has to compete with other issues for agenda status, staff, and volunteers. Many of those issues seem more tractable and are likely to produce benefits for the organization. In principle, the adoption of crime as an agenda item should have something to do with how organizations market themselves to generate the members and resources they need in order to grow in influence.

Insurgent groups representing poor neighborhoods are least likely to feature crime programs, even though the objective threat of victimization in their community may be substantially higher. Like all organizations, they need to articulate their members' concerns and win victories that generate benefits for their constituents. In poor neighborhoods, these concerns are numerous and deeply felt, and the problem of generating material benefits for distribution is acute. Surveys asking city residents about the most important problems facing their area reflect the situation—white and better-off respondents are more likely than blacks and the poor to indicate crime as their leading problem, probably because their list is shorter (Furstenberg 1971; Podolefsky 1983). As organizers have noted, it is difficult to persuade people in poor areas to become involved in project work "when most residents are

worried about putting food on the table" (Cook and Roehl 1982, p. 7). The potential constituents of insurgent groups tend to rank crime low on their lists of pressing problems. Insurgent groups are under more pressure to produce jobs, clinics, and other material benefits.

Groups that can survive pursuing a crime-oriented agenda are likely to be preservationist in character. Crime may serve as convenient shorthand for the more limited set of problems that face them, including population turnover, a softening of the local real estate market, and problems in schools (Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984). These problems strike directly at their interests as home owners and racial dominants. These groups often employ exclusionary tactics, including citizen patrols to monitor outsiders and efforts to control the real estate market. Unlike insurgent groups, preservationist groups can also distribute symbolic benefits for their members—reaffirming their members' status, reinforcing a positive image of their community, and extending local friendship networks (Salisbury 1970).

Preservationist groups sometimes are found walking a fine line between adopting a crime-prevention agenda and continuing to serve as boosters for their area and its real estate. Reporting on the activities of the Back of the Yards Council, a classic preservationist group on Chicago's white Southwest Side, Podolefsky (1983) noted that the council's weekly newsletter studiously avoided mention of local crime stories. Despite offering almost every other imaginable service, this powerful and professionally staffed organization also avoided promoting household protective efforts, crime reporting, or any other clearly labeled anticrime activity. For the council, overt support of crime prevention would bring to the surface a public relations problem it would rather address indirectly.

Money is one source of organizational sustenance. Government agencies, private foundations, and commercial stakeholders have recognized that the potential for meaningful action is enhanced by getting established organizations to take on crime issues rather than nurturing the development of new groups, and they have fostered crime prevention by, in effect, paying groups to do it. They do so in the hope of grafting the organization's visibility, legitimacy, leadership, and membership to their own agenda of local problems. This is discussed in Section IV below, but it should be clear that access to funding could play a potentially important role in increasing the viability of organizations in poor areas. Paid staff appear to be critical to the persistence of local voluntary associations (Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984; Greenberg, Rohe,

and Williams 1985; Garofalo and McLeod 1986) as much today as in earlier periods when settlement houses, the YMCA, and domestic missionaries were on the scene and working on behalf of the immigrant poor.

Provision of funding to encourage local organizations to address crime problems is both more available and in many ways more attractive for preservationist groups than it is for insurgent groups. First, preservationist groups are "safe" recipients of funds because their aims tend to be conservative and conventional. The political risks of supporting insurgent groups are often substantial, for their leadership and ideology are often critical of social institutions. Second, unlike preservationist groups, insurgent groups are unlikely to accept a narrow, technical definition of the crime problem for long.

II. Participation in Organized Anticrime Activity

Participation in community organizations is a form of constrained voluntarism (Emmons 1979). That is, individuals participate within a neighborhood context that defines their alternatives. With the exception of a few organizational entrepreneurs who themselves create groups that turn out to have observable structure and some longevity, people can participate only by affiliating with existing groups that have active agendas. The local distribution of groups of various persuasions thus describes the opportunity structure for individual participation in an area (Stinchcombe 1968). Who participates and in what capacity turns on what opportunities are available, and neighborhoods differ in the opportunities they present.

As a result, it is difficult to make much out of many studies of participation in community organizations. National or even city-wide surveys examining the correlates of participation confound individual and neighborhood factors. They typically find that participants are more likely to be better-off, more educated, longer-term residents of their community who are married, have children, and own homes (Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams 1985). But it is also more likely that those fitting this profile enjoy a richer range of local organizations in which they can participate. One study that examined the influence of both individual and neighborhood factors on participation found that area-level characteristics were at least as important. Controlling for individual factors, program awareness and participation were higher in racially homogeneous, higher-status areas (Bennett, Fisher, and Lavrakas 1986). Participation is not just a reflection of individual attributes;

potential participants are not isolated individuals making choices that assess only the costs and benefits of acting.

Surveys of participation have employed two ways to get around this problem. Podolefsky and DuBow (1981) and others first asked if respondents knew of any local community groups or organizations, and then asked whether they were involved in one of them. Those who were involved were then asked what the group did. Respondents who mentioned crime prevention were identified for analysis as participants in crime-related groups. This turns out to be the best approach for learning about citizen participation in anticrime efforts. An alternative approach is to begin by asking respondents if they are aware of organized anticrime efforts in their community. The correlates of awareness then are treated as indicators of the social distribution of opportunities to participate, and studies are conducted of the individual correlates of participation only among those who report that they are aware of such efforts. The only national study along these lines confirms other research on the distribution of those opportunities—that awareness of anticrime groups is more common among informants from better-off, home-owning, single-family households (Whitaker 1986). However, this approach does not identify both groups that do and groups that do not take action with respect to crime, and it does not reveal any differences between participation in community groups generally and participation in crime-related groups specifically. This is a serious flaw, for the critical factor in understanding individual involvement is whether local groups are involved in anticrime activities.

A factor further confounding participation studies is that many city dwellers face three choices, not two. In addition to participating (if they can) or remaining quiescent, some city dwellers can also move to the suburbs; in Hirschman's (1970) terms, they can "exit" as well as exercise "voice." Research on suburban flight indicates that it is the family-oriented and better-off residents of a neighborhood who are most likely to move away (Skogan and Maxfield 1981). But, although there have been several studies of suburban flight (e.g., Duncan and Newman 1976; Frey 1980), participation in community organizations as one among three choices is not well understood. Emmons (1979) speculates that those who choose to leave rather than participate in community organizations are overwhelmed by the range of problems that confront their old neighborhood, feel that outside help is unlikely to appear, and perceive that there are few opportunities to participate in saving the community. Hirschman (1970) ties flight to a pattern of past failures to

achieve success via "voice." The existence of this tripartite choice may help explain an important factor documented by many surveys of participation: controlling for other factors, blacks report higher rates of participation in community organizations (Skogan and Maxfield 1981; Lavrakas and Herz 1982; Greenberg and Rohe 1983; Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams 1985). In one of the few three-choice studies, Orbell and Uno (1972) also found that blacks were most likely to exercise a voice. If white residents of city neighborhoods truly face a tripartite choice, while for most blacks the real choice is activism or nothing at all, then more limited residential mobility may be the source of the higher levels of local participation by blacks that is indicated by surveys.

Despite these problems, past studies provide a useful portrait of patterns of participation in community organizations that do something with regard to crime.[2] The general lesson is that participation in anticrime groups results from the same factors that stimulate general involvement in neighborhood affairs. Those factors are, above all, indicators of socioeconomic status and class-linked attitudes concerning personal and political efficacy, extent of political information, and civic-mindedness (Verba and Nie 1972; Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams 1985; Lavrakas 1985). In a national survey, Whitaker (1986) found that, among those aware that groups were active in their area, participants in Neighborhood Watch programs were more likely to be better-off home owners. In a three-city study, Podolefsky and DuBow (1981) found the same pattern of participation in groups that respondents identified as "doing something" with regard to crime; in addition, families with children and those who planned to stay in their neighborhood were more likely to report such group involvement. Where there are groups at work, general participation levels run between 10 and 20 percent, and participation in crime-linked groups between 7 and 20 percent (Skogan 1981; Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams 1985).

A great deal of attention has been paid to the relation between peoples' participation in anticrime groups and their fear of crime. This stems from long-standing interest in the question, Can we scare people into protecting themselves? As observers of smokers and seat belt nonusers might guess, the answer is not clearly "yes." Survey studies of the problem report mixed findings. The DuBow, McCabe, and Kaplan

[2] "Do something" is the appropriate phrase; all of these studies were confined to simple "yes-no" measures of participation. None assessed the type or intensity of that participation, and the referent "groups" were totally undifferentiated with regard to their mission, jurisdiction, organization, or effectiveness.

(1979) literature review concluded that participants evidence higher levels of fear, while Skogan and Maxfield (1981) and Podolefsky and DuBow (1981) found they have lower levels of fear, and Lavrakas, Herz, and Salem (1981) report that fear and participation are unrelated. None of this research spoke directly to a hypothesis they all shared—that impulses toward participation are maximal among those who are both aware of local crime problems and are *moderately* concerned about crime. High levels of fear are thought to be incapacitating, while people with no knowledge or concern about local crime are unmotivated. This is a complex hypothesis concerning nonlinear statistical interaction, and it has been suitably tested (and supported) only in England (Hope 1986).

That there are few unique factors directly driving participation in organizations involved in anticrime activities should not be surprising. Participation is a function of opportunity and individual impulse, while what the groups are doing is a function of group leadership and decision making. Where the alternative is available, some people participate in local voluntary associations; in a three-city study, Skogan and Maxfield (1981) found that 44 percent of adults knew of local groups, and 47 percent of those who did (in other words, 21 percent of all respondents) said they were involved in one of them. Joiners participate in much of what their group does, and if and when their group decides to do something about crime, researchers class them as anticrime activists. In the same three-city study, 67 percent of those involved in an organization—defined as a group with a name—said their group did something with regard to crime, and of that subset fully 77 percent (10 percent of all adults) participated in that activity. Participation levels thus stem mostly from the level of success of organizations that pursue multiple goals, which explains why programs organized on the premise that people join groups because of crime usually go astray.

What this shows is that individual decisions to participate in anticrime efforts are not critical to the survival of community crime-prevention initiatives. Rather, the critical factor is the decision by multipurpose organizations to add crime prevention to their agenda. Participation levels are high in areas where organizations are successful and attract members. Most successful organizations have complex agendas; few of them were originally organized around crime concerns, and people join them for a variety of reasons revolving around their stake in the community and their citizenly instincts. It is when these groups take on crime prevention that participation in anticrime activities is high.

III. How Can Community Organizations Affect Crime?

Evaluations of community crime-prevention programs typically take a narrow focus on local Neighborhood Watch, Operation ID, or similar programs. They examine how groups promote property marking or organize block watches. However, studies of what groups do when they confront neighborhood problems point to a much broader range of reactions to crime. This section considers these reactions briefly and summarizes research on their effectiveness.

A. Capture Problem-solving Resources

Community organizations' first instinct is to get others to help. They attempt to leverage their resources by obtaining outside assistance in dealing with local problems; even if those problems are not solved (and few usually are), success in gaining attention downtown and gaining outside resources can be a significant organizational victory.

When the problem is crime, the first resource to which organizations lay claim is policing. They demand more policing in the form of beefed-up patrols in local hot spots. They often want "better" policing, usually foot patrols, as well, and perhaps recognition in the form of a new or reactivated precinct station house or storefront office. This is what Henig (1978) dubbed "the cop-a-cop game." Obtaining more and better policing may sometimes work to reduce levels of crime and disorder, even if problems like street prostitution are displaced into the next neighborhood (which is highly probable; see Cohen 1980). More likely, more policing may make residents and local merchants feel better—perhaps more secure, or more likely to shop in the area after dark. Sophisticated organizers are unlikely to believe that crime is a "winnable" issue, or that police will make any serious inroads into their community's real problems, but an organization-building victory can be won by successfully capturing a visible resource.

However, there is little evidence that organizations can sustain such resources, or at least not for very long. A large body of research on the spatial distribution of urban services points to the clear conclusion that in major cities distribution is almost completely explainable by simple bureaucratic decision rules (Antunes and Mladenka 1976; Lineberry 1977; Jones 1980). Research on police services is confusing because police pursue two somewhat contradictory goals at the same time: equalizing population coverage and equalizing crime coverage. The former tends to favor better-off areas with low crime, the latter worse-off neighborhoods with high crime. However, one rule or the other seems to explain most of the interneighborhood variance in the distri-

bution of manpower, beat cars, or response time (Mladenka and Hill 1978; Jones 1982). In San Francisco, Henig (1978) found no relation between the spatial distribution of community organizations and police allocation of beat cars or foot patrol officers.

However, most resource-capturing efforts involve higher stakes. While promoters of crime prevention usually advance a relatively narrow view of what that entails, the instinctual reaction at the grass roots often is that more fundamental issues are involved. What those issues are depends on whether the groups are preservationist or insurgent in orientation.

Insurgent organizations typically pursue a broad agenda. Their relations with the police are often more antagonistic than those enjoyed by preservationist groups, and they approach the cop-a-cop game warily. Their constituents often fear the police and resent the way they exercise their authority, so the groups may be as interested in monitoring police misconduct and pressing for police accountability as they are in increasing police presence on the streets. Their constituents typically are concerned about a host of pressing problems, including unemployment, housing, health care, and discrimination. Podolefsky (1985) reports how organizations representing a poor, multicultural area in San Francisco rejected participation in a city-wide crime-prevention program because it took a narrow approach to the problem rather than addressing what residents perceived to be the real causes of crime.

Preservationist groups are more likely to pursue a narrower range of issues, and law enforcement may be central to their immediate concerns. This may include, in addition to more police, court-watch and victim-witness programs that promote sanctions for offenders. It often includes the formation of civilian patrols and Neighborhood Watch groups and posting signs indicating their new watchfulness, for they are trying to promote the image that theirs is a "defended" area. The same program that was rejected by a poor neighborhood in San Francisco was the object of intense lobbying by an organization representing a middle-class, home-owning area in the city. They wanted to be included, for there it was perceived that residents of a nearby public housing project were the major source of problems in the area (Podolefsky 1983, 1985).

B. Confront External Enemies

A second task facing local organizations is to identify the forces and actors outside the community that lie at the heart of their difficulties.

This provides an agenda for political action. In this regard, preservationist and insurgent groups usually have few interests in common.

In white neighborhoods, preservationist groups almost inevitably fix on racial transition. In a recent study of community responses to crime in Chicago, Taub, Taylor, and Dunham (1984) report that every successful preservationist organization they encountered defined its central task as controlling neighborhood population turnover and freezing the racial distribution at its current point. At the most elemental level, that was crime control.

Racial transition was also intimately related to the innermost interest of preservationist groups—protecting the value of their property. In all but one of the white neighborhoods Taub and his colleagues studied (except the area enjoying rapidly appreciating real estate prices), the major community organization focused on stabilizing the real estate market. This led organizations to develop political agendas of some complexity. One was to attack real estate sales practices by discouraging "panic peddling" and "block busting." They also challenged institutional decisions shaping the local real estate market, realizing that when mortgaging institutions and insurance companies refuse to make reasonable loans or to issue policies in certain neighborhoods (when they "redline" it), this effectively condemns those areas to decline (Bradford and Rubinowitz 1975). There are federal and state regulations against redlining, so its informal manifestations are more difficult to document now than in the past. In preservationist areas, groups also opposed efforts to locate subsidized housing and drug or mental health treatment centers in the neighborhoods, which are services likely to attract outsiders (Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984).

Insurgent organizations develop a broader agenda because problems in their area are more numerous and solutions to them are more clearly rooted in actions and resources outside of the community. They do not fix on controlling population turnover; insurgent groups typically represent already poor, deteriorated areas. They want subsidized housing and clinics. It is insurgent groups that talk about attacking the root causes of crime. They sometimes reject the narrowly defined programs advanced by crime-prevention specialists as diversionary, preferring instead to focus on what they see as more fundamental social and economic issues (Lewis, Grant, and Rosenbaum 1985; Podolefsky 1985). This also is more likely to generate material benefits for the area and political benefits for the organizations that succeed at redistribution. Crime problems for insurgent groups may be locally generated,

but to focus on anything but root causes would instead legitimate the role of the police.

C. Push Crime Prevention

It is difficult to tell how many or what proportion of community organizations pursue crime prevention as it is more narrowly defined. Henig (1978) consulted San Francisco planning officials, and they identified 25 percent of the community organizations on his list as active on crime issues. By contrast, Podolefsky and DuBow (1981) found that two-thirds of survey respondents involved in any organization said the organization did something with regard to crime (using a survey estimate essentially weights groups by their size). The list of prevention activities these groups could promote is very long, but it is useful to group them into two categories: actions taken by individuals, and actions that can only be done collectively.

Most individual actions are aimed at preventing victimization and reducing losses. While these ultimately are pursued (or not) by individuals or households, they do not take place in a vacuum, and organizations sometimes devote a great deal of attention to encouraging and facilitating their adoption. Household prevention includes target hardening efforts (better locks, bars, and doors), which often are facilitated by home security surveys conducted by police or trained volunteers. Newsletters frequently describe personal precautions ("street smarts") that individuals can take to protect themselves from victimization and explain the benefits of theft insurance for renters. Police departments and organizations also actively promote property marking (Operation ID) and prompt crime reporting.

Studies of the spread of such efforts have found that, with one major exception, they are more common in better-off areas of cities. Home ownership, income, and length of residence best predict who has had a home security survey, has tried household target hardening, has marked property, and possesses insurance against theft (Lavrakas 1981). However, personal precautions (never walking alone, taking care to avoid strangers, staying home after dark) are more commonly taken by people living in poorer, higher-crime areas. Research on the effectiveness of these victimization-reduction activities is not very convincing because of the poor research designs that are typically used to evaluate them. The prevention programs being evaluated often involve a complex package of activities, so it is difficult to judge what may have worked, and few evaluations have gauged the actual extent to which

those activities were carried out. Many evaluations have involved samples too small to demonstrate reliable statistical effects, and they are plagued by poor measurement and statistical analysis. They often employ no control groups or other research design features that would lend credibility to their conclusions. In a review of 102 evaluations claiming that Neighborhood Watch programs were a success, Lurigio and Rosenbaum (1986) found that 92 percent of them were fatally flawed.

Collective prevention efforts are similarly varied but require some degree of organization to pull them off successfully. In one category are efforts to defend the neighborhood, which are actions typical of preservationist groups. These include citizen patrols, whistle-stop campaigns, and block or Neighborhood Watch programs. They have in common the assumption that most local problems are caused by strangers who can be identified and made to feel unwelcome, and that by and large "insiders" can be trusted to watch out for each other's interests. Police crime-prevention officers may help them get started, but these activities typically are unfunded and conducted by volunteers. They probably are viable only in homogeneous, low-turnover areas where residents easily recognize their shared interests (DuBow and Emmons 1981; Garofalo and McLeod 1986; Rosenbaum 1987).

The second set of collective efforts are aimed at reforming the neighborhood and are more typical of insurgent groups. Actions in this category include drug prevention and treatment projects, antigang programs, efforts to control disorder in schools, job programs for youths, and a variety of social programs that are described as attacks on the root causes of crime in the area. In contrast to defensive efforts, these typically require trained staff and significant outside funding. While many defensive activities can operate autonomously, these require political connections, skills in acquiring grants, and professional organizers.

Along the road to success, insurgent groups can find themselves transformed. To manage these programs they may reorganize as nonprofit service organizations or neighborhood development corporations in order to receive grants and contracts. Their former constituents become their "clients"; the neighborhood becomes their "catchment area." There is a danger in this for the independence of these groups, of course. As they join the fabric of local government, there is pressure to swing their interests into line with those of politically dominant groups. But as a result, as long as there is a steady cash flow they may be a reliable mechanism for the delivery of crime prevention

and other services (Mollenkopf 1983). For example, Podolefsky (1983) observed:

> The Woodlawn Organization (TWO) . . . has set aside the adversary approach which characterized its earlier years, and devotes most of its energies to developing local economic institutions and to assisting area residents in their dealings with city and federal agencies. Over the years, TWO has become a neighborhood institution and is probably the largest employer in the community. It has developed its own housing projects and retail outlets. It also provides many services which in other areas would be delivered by private or public agencies. There are roughly 230 people on the TWO payroll, not including those paid by other agencies but who work for TWO. . . . There is some controversy within the community about the direction that TWO is taking. Both staff and outsiders claim that the emphasis on economic development has forced attention away from the severe social problems still plaguing the community. [Pp. 164–65]

There is little solid evidence concerning the effects of any of these efforts on changes in neighborhood crime. McGahey's (1986) review of research on neighborhood development concludes that positive effects of programs attacking the economic roots of crime have yet to be demonstrated. Mostly this seems to be the fault of the programs themselves, which typically have only a marginal effect on the employability of participants, involve only a small percentage of those in need, do not remove potential offenders from a peer environment that encourages misbehavior, and are based on assumptions about the "rationality" of criminal behavior that are themselves unproven.

Garofalo and McLeod (1986) and Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams (1985) conclude that target hardening, Neighborhood Watch, and other tactics pursued by local organizations *probably* can have an effect on crime. This conclusion is suggested by the sheer weight of dozens of studies (usually lacking even a control area) showing declines in official crime counts, testimonials by activists, the enthusiasm of grant proposal writers, and a few statistical studies suggesting that crime is lower in organized areas even when numerous demographic and economic factors are taken into account. However, more sophisticated evaluations of community crime-prevention efforts do not support this optimistic assessment. The best evaluations carefully monitor the actual implementation of the planned program, measure its consequences using observational and survey data (not just official crime statistics),

gather those data both before and after the program goes into action, and contrast what happened in the program area to matched control areas. Evaluations that meet these standards by and large have failed to find clear-cut evidence of the effectiveness of community crime-prevention programs. Well-documented quasi-experimental evaluations of programs in Minneapolis (Silloway and McPherson 1985; see below), Hartford (Fowler and Mangione 1982), and Chicago (Rosenbaum, Lewis, and Grant 1985) found no real evidence of program success. Only a burglary prevention program in Seattle showed positive results, although even there fear of crime went up, not down, in the program area, and the program's effects had disappeared eighteen months later (Cirel et al. 1977; Lindsay and McGillis 1986).

D. Activate Informal Internal Control

In addition to pushing prevention programs of one kind or another, organizations hope to control crime and disorder by initiating and supporting activities that will enhance residents' feelings of efficacy about individual and collective action as well as increase their sense of personal responsibility for these actions; they hope to stimulate attempts to regulate social behavior in the neighborhood by enhancing residents' feelings of territoriality and willingness to intervene in suspicious circumstances, and they hope to facilitate neighboring, social interaction, and mutual helpfulness to enhance solidarity and build commitment to the community. These ideas are as old as the Chicago School of Sociology. They assume (and this is supported by a great deal of evidence) that qualities such as efficacy, responsibility, territoriality, and commitment are undermined by the destabilizing forces of urbanization. Trouble-ridden communities are disorganized as a result, and the way to put them right is to organize them. Since delinquency and crime, in this view, are themselves the product of social disorganization, organizing forces can defeat them as well.

Research on the linkages between organizing efforts, the social processes summarized above, and crime suggests that community crime-control theory contains a nugget of wisdom but may also point in some wrong directions. For example, a great deal of correlational and experimental evidence (summarized by Goodstein and Shotland 1980; Shotland and Goodstein 1984; Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams 1985) stresses the importance of residents' territorial perceptions and willingness to intervene. Intervention is a two-step process: area residents must be alert for suspicious persons and activities, and they must be

willing either to call the police or to challenge those up to no good. To do this effectively, they must know when and where to watch, and what is suspicious and what is not. Block or Neighborhood Watch programs are designed to build the familiarity and exchange of information (who lives where; when they will be away; who the troublemakers are) necessary to make this work. Survey studies of intervention behaviors or (more frequently) predispositions to intervene also point in the same direction—intervention is less frequent in central cities (Boggs 1971), poor neighborhoods (Hackler, Ho, and Urquhart-Ross 1974), heterogeneous communities (Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams 1985), and disorganized areas (Maccoby, Johnson, and Church 1958).

This leaves two unresolved questions: Can organizing efforts turn this around by stimulating higher levels of intervention, and (because we have already seen how such activities are less frequent in less well-off areas) can the necessary organizations be transplanted to places where intervention is currently low? The second question is considered in Section IV. The evidence concerning the first issue is affirmative. Survey studies typically find that participants in community organizations are more likely to take protective measures than are nonparticipants (Schneider and Schneider 1977; Pennell 1978; Lavrakas 1981; Skogan and Maxfield 1981) and report being predisposed to intervene (Lavrakas and Herz 1982; Rosenbaum, Lewis, and Grant 1985). There is less evidence that organizing efforts have much effect on nonparticipants, however. This is very important, for informal control can work only when large proportions of area residents can be counted on to watch and act, probably many more (no one knows what the threshold value is) than can be counted on to join organizations or show up at meetings. A quasi-experimental evaluation of several major organizing efforts in Chicago concluded there were no "rub-off" effects on nonparticipants (Rosenbaum, Lewis, and Grant 1985), while a more modest one-time study of forty-three blocks in New York City concluded there were general effects on participation, individual protection, and informal social activity (Perkins et al 1986). A two-wave panel design like that employed in Chicago is critical for establishing the causal effects of individual or area participation, however. Activists are self-starters with many distinctive attributes, and block groups form more readily where trust and informal social activity are already high (Unger and Wandersman 1983). Because individual activists or active blocks usually differ from their quiescent cousins in many ways other than just their level of participation, it is important at a minimum to take read-

ings of the supposed effects of participation before they begin as well as afterward and to include some unaffected individuals or neighborhoods in the study as a control group as well. Few studies of the effects of anticrime participation have employed even these minimal research standards, however (Lurigio and Rosenbaum 1986).

Individual efficacy and responsibility may be enhanced by what goes on when organizing efforts succeed in getting people together. Reports on these meetings indicate that organizers attempt to lead discussions of local problems, identify the common interests of the participants, emphasize their interdependence, and foster support for the organization's political agenda, including opposition to external forces contributing to the neighborhood's plight. Organizers also stress the efficacy of specific actions such as target hardening, property marking, and setting up "phone trees" so neighbors can contact one another (McPherson and Silloway 1980; Podolefsky and DuBow 1981; Cook and Roehl 1982). The most descriptive reports (e.g., Lewis, Grant, and Rosenbaum 1985) also reveal there is a great deal of confusion, uncertainty of purpose, and poor leadership at meetings and a great deal of frustration among people who have few "meeting" skills and no familiarity with Roberts's Rules of Order. The effects of all this are not clear. In a major review, Rosenbaum (1987) concludes that such meetings may magnify perceptions of area problems, stimulate fear of crime, exaggerate the individual racial fears of participants, and lead participants to feel more helpless as a result of attending. This issue is a critical one and clearly calls for more research.

Research suggests that neighboring, informal interaction, and helpfulness may not be very important aspects of the theory. The assumption is that these rather ordinary aspects of social life are "the precursors of social control" (Fisher 1977). Through them, area residents become familiar with one another, exchange information, develop a sense of community, and define the range of territory for which they feel responsible (Hunter 1974). These behaviors may be facilitated by local organizations (Unger and Wandersman 1983). However, those classified by researchers as active in groups typically attend just one or a few meetings and are often only peripherally involved in group programs (Podolefsky and DuBow 1981; Rosenbaum, Lewis, and Grant 1985). It is asking a lot to expect that attending a few meetings or receiving a newsletter will change day-to-day behavior that is rooted in people's life-styles (and the "dosage" that would be required is unknown). These social behaviors are powerfully affected by many other

factors, including the typical family organization of the community, the age of the residents, and the physical layout of the neighborhood. Moreover, there is only a very tenuous link between the frequency of these behaviors and levels of area crime and disorder, and it runs in the wrong direction (Skogan 1987). These behaviors activate very subtle social processes. They exert control by spreading norms about appropriate behavior and teaching new residents how to behave; their sanctions are gossip, social exclusion, and, at most, embarrassing threats. Finally, these aspects of social life are perhaps too causally distant and difficult to measure for researchers to link them with measures of crime. Whatever the reason, research does not suggest that theories emphasizing the role of social processes in informal crime control will steer organizing efforts in the right direction.

IV. Can Crime-prevention Organizations be Transplanted?

The transplant hypothesis is that collective anticrime activities can be implanted in neighborhoods where they do not currently exist (Rosenbaum 1987). Two strategies have been employed in implant efforts. The first involves identifying existing organizations and encouraging them to make a greater commitment to crime prevention. The money behind this has come from private foundations (Lewis, Grant, and Rosenbaum 1985), real estate developers and private or not-for-profit institutions (Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984), and the federal government (Lavrakas 1985). Subsection A of this section describes two federal efforts of this sort.

The second strategy is to encourage the formation of organizations in communities that lack them. This is a far riskier strategy, albeit one more likely to assist poor communities without an existing infrastructure of successful organizations. The fates of two attempts to create organizations from scratch are described in subsection B below.

A. Reshaping Existing Organizations

Pursuing the implant hypothesis, the federal government mounted two programs during the 1970s designed to spark the interest of existing organizations in anticrime programs. The Community Anti-Crime Program (CACP) was a $30 million effort spawned by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) during its peak budget year of 1976. Bypassing state and local government, it involved the direct transfer of federal funds to established community organizations.

It turned into an administrative quagmire; groups were given no assistance either in applying for the money or in spending it, and the whole effort was poorly implemented (McPherson and Silloway 1981; Lavrakas 1985). The Community Anti-Crime Program was followed by the Urban Crime Prevention Program (UCPP). This was a joint effort by LEAA and ACTION (ACTION is the successor agency to the old Peace Corps and domestic VISTA programs). It funded eighty-five organizations in nine cities over a seventeen-month period beginning in 1981 (Lavrakas 1985). Getting the money was not without cost; while the UCPP funding process was much more orderly than CACP, and technical assistance was available to organizations in applying for the money, it took an umbrella organization in Chicago a full year to prepare a $400,000 proposal and lobby for its acceptance (Lewis, Grant, and Rosenbaum 1985).

Federal guidelines and funding procedures for these programs clearly favored making awards to preservationist rather than insurgent groups. The process rewarded conventional, narrowly defined activities. Most of the funded projects were oriented toward burglary prevention through Neighborhood Watch, target hardening, or property marking; only a small percentage were youth programs or claimed to attack the causes or conditions underlying neighborhood crime problems. Both programs called for guarantees of cooperation with local criminal justice agencies, so organizations solicited letters of support from police and prosecutors. The result was that the bulk of the money went to noncontroversial organizations with uncontroversial proposals (DuBow and Emmons 1981; McPherson and Silloway 1981; Greenberg, Rohe, and Williams 1985). In Chicago, the one organization under the local UCPP umbrella that represented a poor, black neighborhood gave up its share of the money and dropped out of the program in frustration: "Auburn-Gresham wanted to mobilize its community and develop new elites that could articulate the interests of the black community. They were not comfortable with the more limited goals of [the umbrella organization] and what appeared to them to be the patronizing attitude of the latter group's leadership. Participation . . . meant the assertion of black interests and demands" (Lewis, Grant, and Rosenbaum 1985, pp. XI–9).

Despite everyone's cautious stance, it was still necessary to ensure that the funded activities actually were carried out. Critics of the UCPP contended that accepting the money and modifying their organization's agenda in a serious way was only one adaptation groups could make in

response to the program; another was to take the money, do something else with it, and call that "crime prevention."[3] Since the successful applicants were all established organizations with a well-developed view of what their neighborhoods' real problems were, and had staffs committed to taking those problems on, someone should have wondered why they were not committed to crime prevention already.

A process evaluation of the UCPP attempted to monitor this possibility by reviewing the proposals and conducting a telephone survey to catalog what the funded groups were doing before the award, and updates of this list of staff activities and meeting counts were occasionally conducted. The idea was that unexplained shifts in organizational activity could reveal, for example, that groups were spending anticrime money on housing rehabilitation. Of course, this represented the unstated assumption of the funding agencies that housing renewal is not an anticrime activity, and it revealed their commitment to a narrow view of crime prevention that characterized UCPP because of the artificial realities of the funding process. There was a great gulf between LEAA's understanding of the nature of crime problems and that which was operative at the grass roots. Groups could pursue such tactics in good conscience because they did not really see crime problems as distinct from the other ills facing their communities, and they did not think much could be accomplished if they were to see them as distinct (Podolefsky and DuBow 1981).

B. Nurturing New Organizations

To implant collective anticrime efforts in poorer, high-crime areas plagued by fear and other severe social problems will take a great deal of effort. Organizing those areas requires professional staff, material incentives for early distribution to participants, and vigorous support from the police (Garofalo and McLeod 1986). Someone has to make hundreds of door-to-door contacts, distribute fliers, identify and train block captains, organize meetings, and find some way to get people to attend those meetings. Two process evaluations of attempts to do this in Minneapolis and Hartford illustrate how difficult the task can be.

The most recent of these implant experiments took place in Minneapolis in the early 1980s. In brief, professional organizers were hired by the city to identify neighborhoods ripe for organizing around crime

[3] In the grant game this is known as "Robin-Hooding"; it is not "stealing" the money, it is making "better use" of it.

issues and then plan and implement a program. Their efforts were carefully monitored (see Silloway and McPherson 1985). The program involved all of the grass-roots organizing efforts described above, plus the assignment of uniformed police officers to assist block groups in a random half of the treatment areas. Every household on every block in the program areas was contacted, and there were an average of four visits or mailings to each (Pate, McPherson, and Silloway 1987). The Minneapolis project, in effect, created an attractive opportunity structure for participation by neighborhood residents.

People did turn out in substantial numbers, but only in better-off target areas. The lack of any response by residents of poor and minority areas led organizers to increase their efforts, but there still was virtually no response. Systematic counts were made, by block, of organizing activities and the number of people who came to meetings and participated in program activities. They indicated that where block socioeconomic status (SES) was low, measures of organizing effort were high, but that citizen participation was low. As a consequence, there was a strong inverse relation between organizing effort and citizen participation.

An evaluation of a comprehensive, neighborhood-based crime-prevention program in Hartford, Connecticut, illustrates a second obstacle to the implant process—keeping anticrime efforts alive over time (see Fowler and Mangione 1982). The project was conducted by a not-for-profit corporation (the Hartford Institute of Criminal and Social Justice) with the support of an LEAA grant. The program involved more than just community organizing. The intervention involved a modest effort to reshape the flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic through the target area, and a special police team was assigned to the neighborhood. New community organizations were formed to participate in planning the traffic control program and to advise the police district commander about neighborhood problems, and an existing but moribund organization was rejuvenated to tackle crime problems.

After five years, none of the groups activated in the area was still doing what was planned. The only preexisting organization in the area had become sophisticated and professional and more effective than ever before, but it could not sustain its block watch program. Crime had been its catalyst for rebirth, but the group shifted its attention to housing rehabilitation and was successfully raising money. The organizers of the Hartford project succeeded in setting up a second organization that focused exclusively on crime. It grew to forty members, basically

on the strength of the enthusiasm of the organizers, then wasted away for lack of any successful projects. A number of older residents of an area of apartment buildings were organized into a block watch group. They were trained by the police, and the institute bought them CB radios. A few years later the evaluators found them still in business, but they did not do much patrolling; rather, they transformed themselves into a senior citizen's social group.

Another group was a committee composed of representatives of the other three. They met regularly with the district police commander to discuss neighborhood problems. The committee persisted even though their sponsoring groups drifted away from crime problems because the commander continued to meet with them. This gave them a bit of influence, which they later capitalized on. The final organization in the area was a nonprofit local development corporation set up by area business leaders to do something about housing. It failed to do anything, was unable to establish any relation with area residents, and was virtually moribund, when suddenly the citizen's committee meeting with the district commander needed a corporate shell to receive an LEAA grant. The nonprofit housing corporation became the vehicle for hiring a professional staff to organize new crime-prevention efforts in the area, but the evaluators were not sanguine about the future of this new activity after the money ran out again.

V. Conclusions

Attempts to create new opportunities for participation and to manipulate the agendas of successful local community organizations provide a test of the transplant hypothesis. They also test earlier conclusions concerning the relation between community organizations and crime, conclusions that were based on studies of "naturally occurring" groups. This section summarizes the implications of these two streams of evidence and then offers a few caveats concerning how generalizable they may be.

A. Implications of Past Research

First, voluntary participation cannot easily be initiated or sustained in poorer, higher-crime areas. Studies of where organizations arise find they are disproportionately concentrated in homogeneous, better-off areas of cities. Surveys indicate that better-off city residents more frequently know of opportunities to participate and are more likely to participate when they have the opportunity. Attempts to transplant

organized anticrime efforts are more likely to succeed in better-off target areas. This does not mean that organizing areas that are more in need is impossible, but it will not be easy. Government, in particular, must find relatively simple and direct mechanisms for effectuating social change if it is going to engineer change across many areas and among many kinds of people, using relatively blunt policy instruments.

Second, voluntary organizations do not of their own accord narrowly focus on crime if they have anything else to do. Many, perhaps a slim majority of them, do not feature crime-prevention activities. Organizers think crime is a no-win problem. Insurgent organizations representing worse-off areas have few reasons to focus intensively on local crime problems. If organizations are formed that do not have anything else to do, they will perish.

Third, what voluntary organizations prefer to do about crime on their own accord varies but rarely resembles the narrow, technical view favored by funding agencies, law enforcement agencies, and evaluators. This is most true in the highest crime areas. There, insurgent groups push for redistributive social and economic policies that will bring outside resources into their community. If it is necessary to do so, they will dub this an attack on crime's root causes. Preservationist groups, by contrast, battle social change and the mounting crime rate they see that is sweeping it into their neighborhoods.

Fourth, outside funding can purchase traditional crime-prevention efforts for a while. Evaluations of federally and foundation-funded attempts to steer existing organizations in that direction find they do succeed, albeit in the face of strong centripetal forces. Established organizations have entrenched agendas that are based on their analysis of their external enemies and internal strengths, and they will want to bend the program to support those agendas. Insurgent organizations will press for more broadly focused efforts to meet both their constituents' and their own organization's needs, which are real and pressing. Preservationist groups link crime problems to their own economic interests and focus on the real estate market.

Fifth, however, since the 1960s, it has been difficult for insurgent groups to succeed at pushing their own agenda under the rubric of crime prevention. Current arrangements favor preservationists. The LEAA and ACTION programs described above favored narrow, technical approaches to crime. Since those big organizing experiments, federal activity with respect to community crime prevention has changed. While previously money was distributed directly to organiza-

tions without being filtered through local criminal justice agencies, the federal government has adopted a much more modest role. It now just sponsors a resource center that distributes pamphlets and recommends model programs. The government and foundation funds that are available for community mobilization efforts are now more scarce and are scooped up by a few more aggressive and already well-organized neighborhoods, while most languish without support (Henig 1982).

Sixth, several observers have noted that crime-focused groups begin and persist more easily when they operate in cooperation with the police (Garofalo and McLeod 1986; Yin 1986). Garofalo and McLeod's (1986) study of 550 Neighborhood Watch programs found that only 6 percent received no help from the police. The police provided training, information, technical support, and equipment. They also can lend visibility and apparent legitimacy to organizing efforts, which can be important in neighborhoods starting out with lower levels of mutual trust (see Skolnick and Bayley in this volume). The Minneapolis organizing experiment described above included a "cop-on-the-block" component that was to graft these advantages onto the program, but it proved to be a logistical failure (Silloway and McPherson 1985). On the other hand, an attempt by the Houston police to organize a community and spawn a viable group concerned with both crime and other neighborhood issues appears to have been a substantial success (Pate et al. 1986). Unfortunately, securing this cooperation is likely to be difficult in poor and minority communities in which relationships with the police are often strained, and it will not be the first impulse of insurgent groups to attempt to borrow legitimacy from the police.

Seventh, the more successful groups are, the less transferable their programs will be. The more precise the analysis of their community's real problems, the more fully articulated their programmatic response; and the more accurately both the analysis and the action plan reflect the interests of their community, the less transferable it will be to other settings.

Eighth, troubled communities need organizations, notwithstanding all the difficulties involved in forming and sustaining them. Serious neighborhood problem solving admits to few avenues for autonomous action. However, social change at the end of the twentieth century is working in the opposite direction. The bulk of the demographic correlates of opportunities for participation and levels of actual participation (income, ownership, education, family status, length of residence) are

trending in the wrong direction in cities. Demographic projections of these factors predict declining activism in the future. To a certain extent, theories that stress the importance of resurrecting informal social control reflect nostalgia for a village life that is long gone from cities and that certainly does not look like what life will be like in them in the twenty-first century.

Ninth, even if extensive organizing efforts are mounted, it is not clear that they will have their intended effect. Two recent quasi-experimental evaluations—in Chicago (Rosenbaum, Lewis, and Grant 1985) and Minneapolis (Pate, McPherson, and Silloway 1987)—found that sophisticated, professional organizing campaigns increased both the awareness of target area residents of prevention measures and stimulated participation in organizing meetings. However, in neither case (and both projects involved several target areas) was there any evidence of the hypothesized *effects* of this on such presumed consequences of participation as exercising informal control, intervention behavior, feelings of community solidarity, the perceived efficacy of prevention, neighborhood satisfaction, or fear of crime. These findings raise the issue of whether "program failure" or "theory failure" was at work in the two experiments. It may be the former—that the programs were too weak, that their "dosage" levels were too low, or that they were not correctly targeted at neighborhood problems. However, in both cases there was a documented program of some magnitude, and it was reflected in measures of resident awareness and participation. An alternate explanation is that community crime-prevention theory may be wrong, or misdirected in terms of what it presumes can be accomplished by organizing neighborhoods against crime.

Last, much of this works to the disadvantage of the poor. Group formation succeeds more easily in better-off and white neighborhoods, and these groups appear to be preponderately preservationist in character. They want to freeze the current race and class distribution of desirable real estate. Residents of those areas find it much easier to work in conjunction with the police, and their programs frequently can function autonomously and without external funding. To the extent that organizations make a difference with regard to crime, the differential distribution of opportunities to participate also has distributional implications. Assigning voluntary local organizations a major role in achieving public safety "places lower-class communities at a disadvantage relative to middle-class groups" (Rich 1980, p. 590).

B. Caveats

This essay paints a broad picture of the relation between neighborhood characteristics and leadership orientations on the one hand, and the manner and extent to which local voluntary organizations participate in crime-prevention efforts on the other. The generality of the portrait may be open to debate. First, most of the research reviewed here was conducted in particular neighborhoods and cities during the late 1970s and the early 1980s. Events in other places (e.g., in ideologically politicized environments or in largely minority-controlled cities) and at other times (during the politically charged 1960s, or in the retrenching 1980s) might look different. The poor are far from incapable of organizing; there is considerable variation in the extent of organization within categories of neighborhoods, and not all middle-class communities have proven capable of responding collectively to external threat (Henig 1982). Further, the changing complexion of some great cities (involving both large numbers of newly enfranchised Hispanics and a significant influx of new immigrants from Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere) may foretell changes in the structure of their turf-based politics in the future. There is no reason for the agendas of community organizations or the motives of individual participants to remain static either in time or space. However, I would judge that the period that spawned most of this research probably involved maximal participation in crime prevention by established neighborhood organizations, which both earlier and later had different ideological and budgetary battles to fight.

A second question involves the generality of my conclusions regarding the strength and persistence of local organizing efforts. In preparing this essay, I focused on the crime-related activities of neighborhood organizations. It turns out that one of the most interesting aspects of this topic is that the very definition of what crime prevention *is* hinges on the political outlook of the beholder, which I in turn related to the preservationist or insurgent neighborhood base for specific politics. However, the evidence also suggests that what most groups do most of the time is *not* really focused narrowly on crime (for good reasons), and I have tried *not* to speak generically on the potential for their success in other endeavors. Astute local groups are forever attempting to capture control over resources and the way community problems are to be solved. As I noted, crime problems may sometimes be their weapon of choice for pursuing power. However, their success or failure at dealing with crime problems, or at using crime problems for leverage on other

issues, does not necessarily speak to their potential for success in gaining that power. Reports on many powerful groups pursuing other economic and social agendas doubtless never entered my field of search at all. From the point of view of criminal justice practitioners interested in using neighborhood organizations to deliver narrowly defined crime-prevention services, this may be another "nothing works" paper; from the point of view of community residents trying to capture control of their lives, it may be a "crime doesn't work" paper; but it is not a "community organizations don't work" paper.

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